

## CHAPTER I

### EVALUATING THE TRADITIONAL VERSUS THE MODERN PRESIDENCY AND THE EVOLUTION OF PRESIDENTIAL RHETORIC

“ He [The President] shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient.”

--The Constitution, Article II Section III

On the eve of January 29, 2002, George W. Bush delivered a State of the Union Address in an atmosphere like the nation had not seen in almost sixty years. On the heels of September 11, 2001, and the deaths of nearly 2500 individuals, the president spent over half of the State of the Union Address proposing plans to fight domestic and foreign terrorism. He spoke in abstract terms, telling the nation that, “tens of thousands of trained terrorists are still at large. These enemies view the entire world as a battlefield, and we must pursue them wherever they are.” He then spoke concerning terrorism stating, “Our nation will continue to be steadfast and patient and persistent in the pursuit of two great objectives. First, we will shut down terrorist camps, disrupt terrorist plans, and bring terrorists to justice. And, second, we must prevent the terrorists and regimes who seek chemical, biological or nuclear weapons from threatening the United States and the world. But some governments will be timid in the face of terror. And make no mistake about it: If they do not act, America will.” He continued with even more rhetoric on specific policies and goals. “We need to replace aging aircraft and make our military more agile, to put our troops anywhere in the world quickly and safely. Our men and women in uniform deserve the best weapons, the best equipment, the best training—and

they also deserve another pay raise. My budget includes the largest increase in defense spending in two decades—because while the price of freedom and security is high, it is never too high. Whatever it costs to defend our country, we will pay.”

While addressing terrorism on many different levels, he addressed his audience at many different levels, speaking as one of the people, addressing the duties of Congress, and speaking to the obligations of the people of the United States. He identified himself as one of the people of America, proposing “*we* [the people of the United States] will work closely with *our* coalition to deny terrorists and their state sponsors the materials, technology, and expertise to make and deliver weapons of mass destruction. *We* will develop and deploy effective missile defenses to protect America and *our* allies from sudden attack. And all nations should know: America will do what is necessary to ensure our nation’s security. History has called America and *our* allies to action, and it is both *our* responsibility and *our* privilege to fight freedom’s fight” (emphasis added). The average citizen did not have the ability to develop and deploy security missile systems, yet the president spoke as one of the people, attempting to build support for a particular policy.

He also identified himself as the leader of the county, referencing policy initiatives that he would like to see passed by the Congress. He changed his method of address and spoke next as a member of the governing body of the nation, and more specifically as a leader establishing a plan for Congress to follow. He explained that “*our* first priority must always be the security of our nation, and that will be reflected in the budget *I* send to Congress. *My* budget supports three great goals for America: *We* will win this war; *we’ll* protect our homeland; and *we* will revive our economy. *I’m* a proud

member of my party—yet as *we* act to win the war, protect *our* people, and create jobs in America, *we* must act, first and foremost, not as Republicans, not as Democrats, but as Americans” (emphasis added). This was a plan of attack and defense not developed by Congress, but speaking with the authority of the office of the presidency of the United States, Bush passed down policy that he hoped would be agreed upon quickly.

This use of the authority that comes with the office of the presidency for policy passage can be clearly seen in policy proposals, in which he speaks not only as one of the legislators he addresses (as seen above), but directly to Congress, saying “*this Congress* must act to encourage conservation, promote technology, build infrastructure, and *it* must act to increase energy production at home so America is less dependent on foreign oil. Good jobs depend on expanded trade. Selling into new markets creates new jobs, so *I* ask *Congress* to finally approve trade promotion authority. On these two key issues, trade and energy, the House of Representatives has acted to create jobs, and *I* urge the *Senate* to pass this legislation.” He was advocating policy and using the “bully pulpit” of the State of the Union Address to achieve these ends.

The modern-day State of the Union Address is undeniably a rhetorical tool that presidents today use to convey their thoughts, propose their own programs, communicate with the public, and set the tone for new administrations. The examination of the State of the Union Address of George W. Bush in 2002 illustrates many different aspects of presidential rhetoric today. The President was able to address issues, both in the abstract and in their most specific sense, and still propose his policy agenda while doing so. He utilized the State of the Union Address to convey his goals and objectives in both large and small terms in order to get the information to the American people and Congress, and

to initiate policy on Capitol Hill. Bush also used many rhetorical techniques of address, speaking as a citizen of the United States, as a member of the governing body in America, and as the president of the United States passing policy recommendations to Congress in order to make his positions known and advocate the policy objectives he sought to be accomplished. Notably, this kind of policy activism and popular address is not often viewed as a tendency of the presidencies of the 19th century, and certainly not when examining the founding presidents of the nation.

On January 8, 1790, George Washington approached the podium in front of a joint session of congress to deliver the first State of the Union Address in presidential history. Although some scholars have dismissed this Address as one simply updating policy and informing the Congress on the relations with foreign countries (Campbell and Jamieson, 1990), a close examination of the text illustrates that much more than a simple update on the country is being presented.

Washington was indeed the country's first and unanimous choice for president. During the struggle of the colonies against the accused tyranny of King George, Washington had been one of the most able generals in the Revolutionary Army and one of the most clever tacticians, as seen in his Christmas Day crossing of the Delaware to defeat the Hessians who were drunk, asleep, and unprepared and turn the tide of the Revolutionary effort against Britain. Indeed, his presence as presiding officer at the Constitutional Convention, although he was largely silent, gave stability to the proceedings and a feeling to the delegates that they were both in capable hands and that they were civilly following the operations of government-building. "Both at Philadelphia and in the ensuing months, Americans of every viewpoint seemed to have assumed that

there was only one man who could and would inaugurate the presidential office: General Washington” (Cunliffe, 1971, 8). Even those suspicious of the new system of government kept their oppositional rumblings to “other features of the constitution, or—like Franklin—on the hazards that would befall America after Washington had gone” (Cunliffe, 1971, 9).

Washington himself was hesitant about accepting this post which could seemingly go to no one else. He worried about the neglect of his affairs at Mount Vernon, the distance from his family, the possibility that his reputation and service to the country would be dragged through the mud if challengers arose, and, at 56 years old, that he had already given many years in the service of the United States; however, when the vote was tallied, each of the 69 electors had their vote to George Washington.

The first State of the Union Address, however, was not simply a Address by a hesitant president, unsure of his position and worried about his future. Washington did more than simply summarize the state of the colonies; he proposed many policies that succeeding presidents would also advocate and expand upon. Giving the address on the heels of the Revolutionary War, a president who was afraid to act would surely not delve immediately into the necessity of armaments and weapons of war; however, that is exactly what Washington did. He addressed Congress with authority, suggesting,

“among the many interesting objects which will engage your attention that of providing for the common defense will merit particular regard. To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace. A free people ought not only to be armed, but disciplined; to which end a uniform and well-digested plan is requisite; and their safety and interest require that they should promote such manufactories as tend to render them independent of others for essential, particularly military, supplies.”

After making this military stand for the necessity of the troops, he continued to propose that, “the proper establishment of the troops which may be deemed indispensable will be entitled to mature consideration. In the arrangements which may be made respecting it will be of importance to conciliate the comfortable support of the officers and soldiers with a due regard to economy. We ought to be prepared to afford protection to those parts of the Union, and, if necessary, to punish aggressors.” For many years to come, this propriety of a standing army would be battered back and forth between Congress and the presidency.

As a former General, Washington did not limit his policy proposals to military aspects of the colonies. He proposed that “various considerations also render it expedient that the terms on which foreigners may be admitted to the rights of citizens should be speedily ascertained by a uniform rule of naturalization.” In addition he proposed that, “uniformity in the currency, weights, and measures of the United States is an object of great importance, and will, I am persuaded, be duly attended to.” Washington boldly touched on the emerging economic, educational, and postal concerns of the nation, directing the Congress towards the subjects that he believed were of greatest import for the fledgling country.

“The advancement of agriculture, commerce, and manufactures by all proper means will not, I trust, need recommendation; but I can not forbear intimating to you the expediency of giving effectual encouragement as well to the introduction of new and useful inventions from abroad as to the exertions of skill and genius in producing them at home, and of facilitating the intercourse between the distant parts of our country by a due attention to the post-office and post-roads...Nor am I less persuaded that you will agree with me in opinion that there is nothing which can better deserve your patronage than the promotion of science and literature...Whether this desirable object will be best promoted by affording aids to seminaries of learning already established, by the institution of a national university, or by any other expedients will be well worthy of a place in the deliberations of the legislature.”

A national university, promotions of sciences and literature, and encouragement of invention were policies that the very first president saw as indispensable. And, far from simple reports on naval positions or the budgetary situations of the country, Washington's Address included policy advocacy similar to that proposed by George W. Bush almost two hundred years later.

### Presidential Rhetoric and Policymaking

The variety of rhetoric exhibited by George W. Bush in the 2001 State of the Union Address, as well as the appeal to different levels of the audience in order to achieve his goals is no strange shock to the listening ears of the American community. However, that which was demonstrated above by George Washington might be. From "going public" to achieve his plans and goals as described by Samuel Kernell (1997), to bargaining with the public and Congress as observed by Richard Neustadt (1960), the contemporary president uses his rhetorical skills for many different purposes and to many different ends. After all, "a president who wishes to lead a nation rather than only the executive branch must be a loquacious president...Speeches are the core of the modern presidency" (Gelderman, 1997, 8-9). But to many scholars who advocate a distinction between a "traditional" presidential era and a "modern" presidential era, it is asserted that this kind of behavior was not always associated with our chief executive. Indeed, it is widely held that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and especially during the time of Washington in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, presidential policy activism, as well as public appeal in the content of Addresses, was not only infrequent, but also discouraged.

According to Jeffrey Tulis (1987), “most of the presidents in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were constrained by settled practices and the doctrine behind them” (79). He characterizes this ‘doctrine’ of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century presidencies by a *lack* of policy proposal, *lack* of public appeals, and an absence of public speaking in general, or popular rhetoric (viewed as pandering to the masses). This is, in effect, the “traditional” presidency. Tulis states that “popular rhetoric was proscribed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century because it could manifest demagoguery, impede deliberation, and subvert the routines of republican governance” (95). Presidents, according to Tulis, could have acted and spoken the way that they do today, but instead obeyed a “common-law” doctrine of governance that separated itself from popular rhetoric and position-taking and adhered itself to the constraints and formality of the Constitution.

On the other hand, beginning with the benchmark presidency of Wilson, Tulis sees the “modern” rhetorical presidency with “three broad 20<sup>th</sup> century changes: (1) Less rhetoric would be addressed primarily to Congress and more to the people at large; (2) more emphasis would be placed upon oral speeches and less upon written messages; and (3) the above two changes would bring with them a change in structure of argument, with the 20<sup>th</sup> century sample manifesting structures more appropriate to ‘inspirational’ and ‘policy stand’ rhetoric” (138). The “modern” therefore is the antithesis of the “traditional” in that the presidents speak with vision, advocate many policy positions, and talk to the people. The “modern” presidents speak under expansion of the office, expansion of the media, and rise in inter-institutional activity. These elements have created a “second constitution” which governs presidential rhetoric and displaces the supposed Constitutional restraints that bound those in previous periods. Tulis views the

change from the “traditional” to the “modern” as a significant transformation in the institution as opposed to a evolution of the powers and activity of the office.

This distinction between two eras of presidential activity as well as two classifications with which to measure presidential activity, greatness, and popular leadership raises issues of simplicity. The “traditional/modern” divide has become an easy way to conceptualize an understanding of the presidency and its officeholders. However, there is a danger that this paradigm may be too quickly adopted without full evaluation. As suggested by David Nichols (1994), the “traditional/modern” dichotomy resembles a disproven myth to the discipline in one large respect—“it has been accepted largely on faith. There has been little scholarly work devoted to defining and outlining the development of the ‘modern presidency.’ While many works use the term, few bother to provide a precise definition or account of its origins” (Nichols 2, 1994).

Other scholars, such as Halford Ryan (1993), Smith and Smith (1985, 1990, 1994), Colin Seymore-Ure (1982), Richard Ellis (1998), Ellis and Kirk (1998), and Greenstein (2000), Laracey (2002), and Lim (2002) have further examined the rhetorical past of the presidency in order to discover clues about how it began, when it changed, and the implications of this institutional shift for our political process. Drawing evidence from presidential rhetoric, these scholars attempt to trace the evolution of the modern-day president. This effort involves not only identifying trends in the presidency, but also clarifying which presidents, if any, were responsible for these changes. These numerous studies have merits, but they suffer at times, not only from an inability to obtain consistent documents across time, but also from generalizations made from small samples and limited comparisons.

My work builds from prior presidential rhetorical studies and attempts to provide a more refined and nuanced understanding of the evolution of the contemporary presidency and presidential rhetoric. To accomplish these goals, I undertake a systematic reading of presidential rhetoric. In particular, I make use of State of the Union Addresses from George Washington to George W. Bush to examine format changes, rhetorical shifts, presidential policy-pushing, and ultimately evaluate the “rhetorical” and the “traditional/modern” presidencies characterized and debated by scholars. Others have made use of the addresses, but not in as systematic or complete of fashion as I propose. Exactly when the transformation took place, and why, therefore remains in dispute (Gamm and Smith, 1998; Tulis, 1998; Milkis, 1998; Kernell, 1997). My hope is that with a systematic look at the rhetorical behavior of presidents, I can shed more light on these important issues.

The findings detailed herein do not support suggestions that a “modern” rhetorical presidency began with Theodore Roosevelt as argued by some (Gamm and Smith, 1998; Milkis, 1998; Kernell, 1997), Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Eisenhower (Smith and Smith, 1990; Greenstein, 1977, 1978, 1982, 2000), or Woodrow Wilson (Tulis, 1987); I do not find a strong empirical basis to such claims. Nor do my findings support the general adoption or use of a “traditional/modern” demarcation (Liebovich, 2001; Pfiffner, 2000; Rozell and Peterson, 1997; Stuckey, 1997; Campbell, 1996; Shaw, 1987; Landy, 1985; Greenstein et al, 1977; Polsby, 1973; McConnell, 1967). Instead, it appears that presidential rhetoric may not be easily categorized as simply “traditional” or “modern.” Policy proposal and the use of popular rhetoric appear throughout the “traditional” period and some “traditional” presidents exhibit more “modern” characteristics than do those

presidents classified as “modern” themselves. Consequently, the assumptions and generalizations set forth by Tulis’ work must be called into question as well as the simplicity of a “traditional/modern” characterization of presidential rhetoric suggested by Greenstein and other contemporary scholars.

I do not simply seek to refine scholarly interpretations of the “traditional” versus the “modern” presidencies (Greenstein, 2000; Bimes and Skowronek, 1998), and presidential development of policy and agenda (Hill, 1998; Cohen, 1995; Ragsdale, 1987; Brace and Hinckley, 1991; Parry-Giles, 2001; Gleiber and Shull, 1999)<sup>1</sup>. I propose to examine the presidential rhetorical tradition itself, from the outset of the nation to the present day through the consistent medium of the State of the Union Address. Its availability makes it a source that can be readily found and compared across all the presidents in order to mark changes in rhetoric, address, and policy proposition.

In this study, I specifically compare word lengths, content, policy proposal, and specific word usage across all State of the Union Addresses, thereby gaining possible insight into the political activity of past presidents such as Washington, who might have been overlooked, as well as being better able to determine whether or not the modern-day rhetorical president is a result of an individual president and their efforts at change or whether that categorization may be a misnomer. Although David Nichols approaches the topic in his study, *The Myth of the Modern Presidency* (1994), he does so largely from observances of the evolution of the governmental system as a whole and less from the explicit rhetorical developments of the presidency. My data set, due to its

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<sup>1</sup> I do not attempt to comprehensively address or debate such important issues as the changes in campaigns, elections, congressional relations, and political parties as examined by Peabody (2001), Powell (1999), Dahl (1990), Gamm and Smith (1998), Lowi (1985), Skowronek (1997) and Schlesinger (1973) that have had significant impact on our understanding of the institution of the presidency and the operation therein.

comprehensiveness, will provide the opportunities to better test a host of questions about the changing nature of the chief executive. This type of examination will attempt to provide a more complete overall picture of what we speak of when we reference presidential rhetoric as well as evaluate the findings and insights of the “traditional/modern” presidential paradigm.

### Testing and Re-examining the Traditional and the Modern

It is clear that the American presidency has changed since its start in 1788. Through congressional cession of authority and administration, the office of the presidency has expanded its original powers. It no longer consists of only a president and his secretary (whom Washington was forced to pay out of his own pocket before budgetary approval from Congress), but is now an institution with extensive executive offices, a huge staff, and many financial and budgetary duties. A new president will make over 3000 appointments and preside over an Executive Office of the President that will encompass over 1600 staff members and have a budget of over 200 million dollars (Edwards and Wayne, 1997, 180). The president today is presented with more media outlets, as well as coverage, than ever before (Laracey, 2002; Kumar, 2001; Hart et al, 1996; Dayan and Katz, 1992). The office of the presidency has gained global influence as well. The media has displayed images of presidents from Nixon to George H.W. Bush touring the third world, speaking at international summits, or even presidents such as Carter and Clinton, attempting intervention in peace processes between war-torn countries.

However, a possible problem arises when this general assumption of change is expanded to the individuals who hold the office as well as their actions and communications as the President of the United States. To say much has changed in the office of the presidency is beyond denial, but to say that the activity, rhetoric, and leadership of the men who held that office has changed similarly necessitates re-examination. Tulis claims, “since the presidencies of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, popular or mass rhetoric has become the principle tool of presidential governance” (Tulis, 1987, 4). He also makes the claim that in the “traditional” period, “presidents preferred written communication between the branches of government to oral addresses to ‘the people’...Very few were domestic policy speeches of the sort so common now, and attempts to move the nation by moral suasion in the absence of war were almost unknown” (Tulis, 1987, 5-6).

This conception of the presidency is problematic because it fails to give consideration to the fact that popular rhetoric might have been used within written Addresses or that presidential address was commonly carried in the medium of newspaper, and would reach the public and have the possibility of popular appeal long before 1900. This approach also fails to consider that presidents of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries would propose policy at all, or that those who might propose policy, would do so in the name of the people, or invoke the reasoning of the constituency in policy proposition and advocacy (in other words, utilize popular address rhetoric).

Further, although the State of the Union Address was presented in written form following the presidency of Jefferson and until that of Wilson, it does not follow that these written addresses were necessarily incapable of the same kind of activity and

rhetoric proposed to be exclusive domain of a “modern” president. Just because a president was sending his message directly to Congress, does not mean that he was not proposing large amounts of policy nor attempting political leadership within those statements. Most significantly, however, the “traditional/modern” distinction does not account for the possibility that presidents have always had a motivation to act on the policies and environment that has surrounded them. Instead, it compiles all the presidents into designated periods and uses those designations to characterize the actions, behavior, and proclivities of any presidents who came to govern during that period. Moreover, the “traditional/modern” paradigm fails to account for the possibility that as the domestic and international demands on the office of the executive have increased since the founding, so each successive president has adapted his Address and behavior to deal with the changing and increasingly pressing contexts.

These shortfalls necessitate a re-examination of the current “modern” and the “traditional” conceptions of presidents and presidencies. In much the same way that Barber (1992), Genovese (2001), and Skrownek (1997) propose varying definitions of presidential greatness as a concept to be re-examined in terms of personality, specific guidelines, and context respectively, so might a re-evaluation of presidential rhetoric be needed to better indicate changes in policy initiative and popular leadership. In order to make a generalization of presidential behavior and address, it is especially important to thoroughly examine the neglected “traditional” period to determine if it truly existed under constitutional constraint and was significantly different from the modern-day executives.

## Problems of Presidential Research

Because of the small number of men who have held the office of the presidency, as well as the drastically changing contexts during which they have governed, research and generalizations concerning the office are often difficult. Accordingly, past scholars who have examined presidential address have attempted to build consistent samples of presidential rhetoric. However, the contributions of many of these studies are weakened by the innate complexity associated with the presidency.

As the seminal work in this genre, Jeffrey Tulis' study, *The Rhetorical Presidency* makes the above examined claims regarding the "traditional" and the "modern" periods on the basis of a sampling of 900 presidential documents from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. "His account which emphasizes the impact of a new rhetorical norm established by Woodrow Wilson, is fast becoming the conventional wisdom" (Gamm and Smith, 1998, 87). Although he claims that "one purpose of the book is to articulate a series of explicitly systemic perspectives with which to identify and assess change and development in the American presidency" (Tulis, 1987, 9), his work suffers from various methodological weaknesses that lead to questions concerning the generalizability of his conclusions. First, his sample consists of "a considerable number of documents to be read and coded—just over 900" (1987, 138). This sample derives from a collection of "the entire nineteenth-century corpus of presidential messages and papers, commissioned by Congress and compiled by James D. Richardson...our major source for the twentieth century is the set of public papers extending from Truman through the third year of Carter's term" (1987, 137). He selects a random sample from each of the available documents from each decade; yet, "because my primary sample could produce few

examples of two important categories of rhetoric, inaugural addresses and State of the Union messages, I supplemented it with another, composed of all of inaugural and State of the Union messages in both centuries” (1987, 137). In addition, Tulis uses each document as the level of analysis for coding according to whether or not the document itself could be classified into one of four categories: developed argument, series of arguments, list of points, and mixed (series and list). On the basis of these methodologies, Tulis concludes that “not only do we have presidential ‘speech’ today, whereas there was virtually none in the previous century,” but also that “none of the nineteenth-century messages...were characterized as ‘lists’” (1987, 139; 142).

Although these findings are indeed consistent with his data, he attempts further generalizations concerning the policy activity of the president as well as the innovations of the Wilson presidency on the basis of the conclusions above. In the outset he proposes that “I examine the full array of nineteenth and twentieth century practices as reflections of underlying doctrines of governance...I will devote considerable attention to description of nineteenth and twentieth-century practices because those practices reveal the fact and consequence of basic change in the understanding of the place of the presidency in the political order” (1987, 13). Yet his sample of 20<sup>th</sup> century presidential documents present papers from only 7 of the 13 presidents at the time. He also only deals glancing blows to examination of a few 19<sup>th</sup> century presidents, examining single speeches of only 7 of the 23 presidents preceding Theodore Roosevelt to make his conclusions of the inactivity of the “traditional” presidents. Tulis fails to provide depth of analysis as well, using the entire document as the level of analysis and dropping those presidential communications of less than half a page from consideration in his study.

Additionally, his conclusion that Wilson is the father of the “modern rhetorical presidency” stems only from an examination of the theoretical perspectives presented by Wilson in his academic writings, *Congressional Government* and *Leaders of Men*; indeed, his sample of presidential speech includes no public papers from Wilson, utilizing only the State of the Union and the inaugural address and these are not even relied upon as evidences toward his conclusion of Wilson’s transformation of the office. Tulis “provides no explanation for why the Wilson administration—or why the 1910s—should be expected to be a turning point in presidential relations with the public... Second, Tulis presents no systematic evidence that this institutional change coincided with the Wilson presidency” (Gamm and Smith, 1998, 88).

Other scholars have also presented less consistent samples or examinations of presidential rhetoric in pursuit of their study. Greenstein looks at the “modern” rhetorical presidency beginning only with Franklin Roosevelt (Greenstein, 2000, 12-13); Kernell samples presidents since Hoover (Kernell, 1997, 107-114); and Theodore Lowi’s study emphasizes the period subsequent to 1932 (Lowi, 1985). In “Presidents, Parties, and the Public: Evolving Patterns of Interaction, 1877-1929” (1998), Gerald Gamm and Renee Smith take the beneficial step of looking further into the past to study presidential rhetoric, evolution, and change. These scholars reflect on rhetoric both further into the past and dealing with specific audiences in order to gain insight into presidential rhetoric and function. However, they are still limited by an incomplete survey of presidential rhetoric and presidential history.

Some in the field have examined presidential address across all presidents, and patterns and differences between presidential address and address makers. Studies by

Beasley (2001a, 2001b), and Benoit (1999) examine presidential inaugural addresses, local addresses to specific audiences, and nomination acceptance addresses. Jeffrey Cohen's study (1995) does examine a sample of State of the Union Addresses, but looks at policy implications of the Address as opposed to its reflection on the "traditional" or "modern" presidency debate or the overall development of presidential rhetoric and address.

Mel Laracey's study (2002) goes even further to expose different mediums by which presidents in the 19th century "go public," and in this way attempts to reject both Kernell (1997) and Tulis' (1987) assertions that only "modern" (20<sup>th</sup> century) presidents "go public." His study is very useful in confirming that the State of the Union Address was indeed distributed to the populous from very early in the country's history.

However, he does not fully explore going public within presidential addressmaking itself (he looks at newspaper communications between the president and the public), and neglects to examine the issue of the absence of policy active presidents before the 20th century, which is a major claim made by such scholars as Tulis (1987), Kernell (1997), and Greenstein (2000). Laracey's focus is much more the act of the president saying something to the public as opposed to the language that the president uses when he addresses them.

Lim (2002) takes the most recent step with a simple computer content analysis of the body of State of the Union Addresses and presidential inaugurals to make several sweeping characterizations of the contemporary president. However, simple counting of the occurrences of words may miss implicit elements or meanings within presidential rhetoric. By relying on the repetition of words in an address to symbolize a particular

policy or assertion, the study misses the context in which the word is situated. For example, Lim's study suggests that today's presidential rhetoric is more democratic because pronouns of "family" as well as the word "America" occur with more frequency since Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt. However, "democracy" and "family" word repetitions may not indicate democratic speech at all, but simply a greater awareness by the speaker of the audience and their identifications. In addition, making generalizations from trends that only appear in both inaugurals and State of the Union Addresses may not accurately reflect rhetorical change due to the constraints placed on certain types of presidential address (e.g. the inaugural address).

I first would like to acknowledge that this study does not claim to be a panacea for the difficulty faced in conducting research on the presidency. As Gary King explains, "the process of reducing real world phenomena to published work involves two phases: the representation of the real world by essentially descriptive quantitative and qualitative data, and the analysis of these data. Both phases are important components of the replication standard. Future scholars, with only your publication and other information you provide, ought to be able to start from the real world and arrive at the same substantive conclusions. In many types of research this is not possible, but it should always be attempted" (King, 1995, 445). The study of the presidency is one of the categories into which collecting complete, systematic samples and producing clear and generalizable results is very difficult. Because of the small number of presidents as well as the changing circumstances that surround each, we, as political scientists may feel that it is either too difficult or incidental to our subject to attempt a full survey of presidential history.

However, it is of utmost importance to apply the same rigor to the study of the presidency as to all areas of political science. In this way, I have attempted to build on Tulis' and other prior studies by providing a more consistent and complete picture of presidential rhetoric and behavior. My study attempts to examine every State of the Union Addresses—not just for the keywords that might appear with frequency, or using the whole address as a level of analysis—by a line by line reading of each Address, to determine how these words are properly situated and procure a better idea of the message that is trying to be sent by the president. By expanding not only the timeline of some of the studies above, but also conducting a more thorough examination of a consistently delivered presidential Addresses, I here attempt to shed more light on the development of the contemporary rhetorical presidency and the understanding of the evolution of presidential rhetoric from the founding. In addition, by looking at the entire history of presidential State of the Union Addresses I hope to re-evaluate and add nuance to our understanding of the evolution of the behavior and rhetoric of the contemporary presidency, as well as provide a re-evaluation of the “traditional/modern” paradigm from a direction that may have been approached, but not fully explored.

### The State of the Union Address<sup>2</sup>

The State of the Union Address is a particularly good medium through which to examine presidential communication because it has its origins in the Constitution itself. The executive branch, as part of accountability to the Congress, and no doubt part of the

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<sup>2</sup> This historiography was drawn from and can be found at <http://www.clinton4.nara.gov/textonly/WH/SOTU00/history/FAQS.html>.

system of checks and balances, was expected to inform the legislative branch of presidential desires, observations, and general thoughts.

“Article 2, Section 3. He shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary Occasions, convene both Houses, or either of them, and in case of Disagreement between them, with Respect to the Time of Adjournment, he may Adjourn them to such time as he shall think proper; he shall receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers; he shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed, and shall Commission all the Officers of the United States.” (Foster and Leeson, 1998, 1134)

At the time of Washington’s first State of the Union Address, the Address was simply known as the “Annual Message to Congress” (Tulis, 1987, 55). He delivered the address live to both houses of the Congress. John Adams kept with Washington’s style of brief address and live delivery throughout his presidency as well.

However, with the swearing in of Thomas Jefferson, the format of delivery of the state of the union would change for almost 113 years (Tulis, 1987, 56). Jefferson, feeling that a delivery of a speech to both houses of Congress likened itself to a king’s pronouncement, ended the live delivery of the address and sent it instead in letter format for the legislative branch to read. He felt this move would end a “speech from the throne” and simplify the way the federal government operated (Tulis, 1987, 56). From that time, presidents then continued to send the address in letter form to the Congress. Early presidents also had freedom about when to give the address, or even to give an address at all. There was little following of the short structure of the founding presidents, and the addresses grew drastically in length.

In 1913, Woodrow Wilson, revived the delivery of the Address in person to the Legislative branch. In 1923, Coolidge was the first to utilize new technology in the United States, and used the radio for a public address. In 1934, Franklin Delano

Roosevelt officially made the Address a permanent fixture of the presidential duties and set a standard its yearly-required delivery. These changes to the address culminated in 1945, when the annual communication officially became known as “The State of the Union Address.” The Address then saw further technological advance in 1947, as Truman’s state of the union was the first to be televised. Although televised, this Address took place during the day. In 1965, Johnson shifted the address from midday to evening televised delivery.

Each technological change was an attempt to enable the public to be witness to and obtain more political information from the Address, and although the consumption of that knowledge is debatable—given the decline in current and historical voting turnout—technology has become a new weapon in the arsenal of the politically active president. Widespread media broadcast has become the permanent standard for the address, and presidents now are able to use the medium of satellite television and even the internet to update the Congress and the world on the state of the nation, as well as to propose programs, legislative action, and address the people of the United States.

As such, the State of the Union Address provides a particularly good foundation from which to examine the development of presidential rhetoric, and the claims regarding the “traditional/modern” presidency dichotomy. As mentioned above, it is Constitutionally mandated in nature, and its consistent audience (Congress and the people), make the address an excellent source from which to analyze content. In addition, from the founding, the State of the Union Address has been widely available and disseminated to the public whether delivered in written or in oral form (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/stateoftheunion/2004/history.html>; Tulis, 1987, 16;

Laracey, 2002). For example, the full text of the very first State of the Union Address by George Washington, delivered on January 8, 1790, was published less than two weeks later by the newspaper the *Massachusetts Spy* on January 21, 1790 (<http://www.lexrex.com/enlightened/writings/wash1.html>). As Charles Beard reflected, “Whatever may be its purport, the message is the one great public document of the United States which is widely read and discussed” (Quoted in Campbell and Jamieson, 1990, 52).

The examination of varied rhetorical sources in prior studies makes declarations and definitions difficult to ascribe across all presidents and presidencies. In fact, most studies use and examine executive rhetoric aimed at many different sources from Congress, to the president’s party, to the public, to special audiences (Powell, 1999). Use of presidents’ innumerable addresses to varied audiences makes discovering trends and developments, as well as generalization and proposition of a “modern” or “traditional” era, difficult because most small addresses are geared specifically to a certain audience with a very specific message intended. Studies sampling all genres of presidential rhetoric, although providing new nuances of understanding to the discipline, may produce skewed findings because of these “audience-specific” or “policy-specific” addresses. This becomes a problem when scholars attempt to use these varied sample studies to not only classify different periods in presidential history, but also to attempt to define the origins of presidential rhetoric and the contemporary presidency (Ellis, 1998). My study, although limited by the same changes in context and personality faced by other scholars of the presidency proposes that use of the State of the Union Address will provide a more consistent sample with which to survey the entire history of presidential rhetoric.

At first blush it may appear as though inaugural addresses may be seen as similar to the State of the Union Addresses in audience and delivery, and that they could then be used as another logical and consistent medium from which to evaluate presidential rhetorical development. However, as discussed by Campbell and Jamieson (1985), and as I discovered through preliminary examinations, inaugurals present a different style of presidential rhetoric, dealing not with policy, but possessing a more ceremonial tone. “Inaugurals unify the country...discuss shared values and standards rather than divisive issues...establish the president’s suitability by noting the awe in which they hold the office, the potential for power excesses, and their personal humility and responsibility in the face of this role...They provide the president with a highly symbolic moment in which to address history as well as a nation” (summary of Campbell and Jamieson (1985) in Smith and Smith, 1990, 238). The inaugural, therefore, is a more ceremonial speech in which partisan position and issue proposition are largely absent in the stead of reverence and general reflection on the past and its unification with the present. Indeed, Campbell and Jamieson note that “If policies are not proposed [in the State of the Union Address], the speech comes to resemble the inaugural, and presidential legislative leadership must be asserted by other means, if at all” (1990, 69). Although it would certainly require further evaluation, this difference in format may make inaugurals less reliable sources from which to trace the development of policy proposition or changes in presidential rhetoric.

## Defining Rhetoric as Power

Smith and Smith (1990) explain “the American presidency is fundamentally a rhetorical role” (236). In dealing with and researching presidential rhetoric, it is of great importance to first clarify what I mean by presidential rhetoric and the framework under which presidential Addresses will be considered for this study. A “framework,” as expressed by Mary Stuckey, is a necessary component to understanding and adding to the body of political communication scholarship. “The challenge of political communication research is to unite, in a systematic way, theories on information processing and cognition, of social activity, on persuasion, and on political processes and behavior in such a way as to make sense of the communicative aspects of our shared political worlds” (Stuckey (a), 1996, viii).

In examining the body of State of the Union Addresses, I will do so considering each as its own unique construction of both policy and rhetoric. A line-by-line reading of each State of the Union Addresses will provide a better understanding of the context of the presidency of the time. This method will also provide better insight into the president’s purpose in employing different types of rhetoric than would be possible with a simple word count of each. I have taken great pains to account for changing language and formality through the years to insure that the difference in time periods in no way alters the policies that I find or hinders in any way the comparison of each State of the Union Address to any other. In addition to examining each individual State of the Union Address, I will examine developments in presidential rhetoric from the founding as well. My data will compare both between State of the Union Addresses of different

presidencies and between State of the Union Addresses of the same president to find changes or patterns in format, policy proposition, and popular address rhetoric.

For the purposes of this study, I define presidential rhetoric from the Machiavellian/ Aristotelian perspectives that all relations are power relations and that linguistic tools (logos, pathos, ethos) are used to express and claim this power—ethos, or appeal to the speaker’s authority, being the paramount rhetorical element at work. According to David Lorenzo (1996), this definition of rhetoric “assumes that persuasion depends as much or more on what people say than on how their words reach the eyes or ears of their audience,” and study is “primarily concerned with the substance of messages, and their relationships with environments that are structured by symbols rather than mechanisms” (Lorenzo, 2, 1996). Kenneth Hacker also explains that “it can be said that all forms of power for political leaders, whether pharaohs, kings, or presidents, have stemmed from arguments grounded in language that legitimize the rule of the governing and guarantees the consent of the governed... political leaders may give special attention to language as a tool of power” (Hacker, 28, 1996). Presidents cannot be considered different in this respect as language and rhetoric is undoubtedly the tool by which they conduct the business and perform the duties of the office.

As such, I agree with Neustadt (1960) that the power of the president is the power to persuade. Tulis correctly states that “rhetorical power is a very special case of executive power because simultaneously it is the means by which an executive can defend the use of force and other executive powers and it is a power itself” (Tulis, 1987, 203). I would further suggest, as posited by Mary Stuckey, that rhetoric possesses strong symbolic power (Stuckey (a), 1996, vii). Hence, at base, rhetoric may be defined as the

expression or assertion of an individual's power. "It is only in the light of people's speech that we can see and assess the character displayed in their deeds. So the access to presidential character is through presidential speech" (Thurow, 1996, 17). Therefore, presidential rhetoric is the president's attempt to exhibit, claim, or enact powers.

Roderick Hart concludes that presidential "public speech no longer attends the processes of governance—it is governance" and suggests that the "remarks of presidents exert influence not found in the speeches of others" (Hart, 1987, 14;79). Whenever speaking publicly or issuing a statement, this is, in effect, the president's exertion of his power. Indeed, Jeffrey Cohen observes, "The more attention presidents give to policy areas in their State of the Union Address, the more concerned the public becomes with those policy areas...Mere presidential mentions of a policy area seem to elicit a public response...The office bestows a credibility onto the speaker, such that the public listens to all that presidents deem important...the public does not necessarily buy their prescriptions about what to do, only the diagnosis that a problem exists" (Cohen, 1995, 102).

Because of his position and his elevated station, everything that the president says, whether written or publicly delivered holds a significance that in itself is power. A message from the president is given almost unparalleled importance in contrast to other communications. Speeches and addresses of any sort should therefore be read as statements of presidential power; they are all attempts to assert the power of the presidency in some way—either through policy proposal, attempts to move public opinion through appeals to the people, or direct address to specific audiences. Indeed, "a

president's power depends not only on his ability to command, but his ability to persuade" (Thurow, 15, 1996).

Under this framework of rhetoric as power, every proposal of policy, every suggestion for inquiry, every recognition of past success in address is a president's invocation of the powers that he holds as well as the powers of the office.<sup>3</sup> Presidential rhetoric is a flexing of executive power in an attempt to achieve some goal or convey some message that is deemed important. In addition, study of the evolution of presidential rhetoric raises important questions as to rhetorical style utilized in each State of the Union Address and its impact on subsequent presidents. Does the president speak as one of the people? Does he issue commands to Congress or the people? Does he set standards for speaking that subsequent presidents follow? Alternatively, does he speak with assumed authority derived from the auspices of the office that he holds? This seating assumes that there is no presidential drivel and that there is no unimportant (or unintentional for that matter) address. This framework is especially important because it gives us a way of understanding and viewing presidential behavior, innovation, and change in exercise of power that is neither reliant on the success of policy proposition nor resonance in Washington or in the general public.

This power-centered view of presidential rhetoric allows an encompassing framework and mindset within which to examine presidential rhetoric and addresses. Each Address can be read as an assertion of the presidential voice. "If rhetoric is the principle subject of investigation, then one might well be concerned with the principles of

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<sup>3</sup> For specific examinations of the formation and evolution of political communication and rhetoric of the presidency, see also Houck (2001); Watts (1997); Crigler (1996); Edwards (1996); Graber (1996); Negrine (1996); Stuckey (1996 (b), 1996 (c)); Valls (1996); McNair (1995); Ryan (1995, 1988); Hart (1994);

the art and how those principles function to allow the speaker or writer—who might happen to be a U.S. president—to achieve his ends by symbolic means” (Medhurst, 1996, xiv). Tulis explains that “all presidents are rhetorical presidents. All presidents exercise their office through the medium of language, written and spoken” (Tulis, 1996, 3). He further suggests that “from a president’s perspective, the only salient rhetorical issue is this: Will my ability to persuade the people at large advance my ability to secure policy objectives?” (Tulis, 1996, 9) And if “the president’s own interests and those of the polity as a whole, conjoin” (Tulis, 1996, 10), presidential rhetoric is a power expression by the president invested with the voice of the people. “The president’s ultimate task is to express the unspoken desires of the people...The skill needed by a president is the rhetorical skill...The president, as head of the embodiment of expertise, the executive branch, can supply what the people lack” (Thurow, 1996, 24).

### Research Design and Collection of Data

Now that the rhetorical guidelines for my study have been defined and set, the system by which the actual data is collected must be specified. I will conduct two different types of content analysis: simple and extensive. Simple content analysis will be here defined as content analysis in which the State of the Union Addresses are searched for specific word reoccurrences on the whole without regard to context or location within the document. This may be done by any number of computer programs or relatively simple scans of the source material. I will here conduct these word searches through all

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Zernicke (1994); Dolan and Dumm (1993); Neuman et al (1992); Hinckley (1990); Swanson and Nimmo (1990); Geis (1987); Malone et al (1987); and Thompson, (1987).

of the State of the Union Addresses to count elements such as word length, and specific word usage (ex. “you” “our” “we” “I” and policy specific words (See Appendix B)).

Scholars describe many possible pitfalls in presidential content analysis research such as small sample size, generalizations made from addresses in differing contexts, and comprehensiveness of study (King, 1993; Edwards and Wayne, 1983; Krippendorff, 1980; Carney, 1972). However, I propose that content analysis in this study has many benefits in evaluating the prior arguments concerning presidential rhetoric, as well as providing a valid and reliable study from which to make inferences and generalizations relating to presidential rhetoric. The extensive content analysis that I will conduct is a thorough and cautious line-by-line examination and reading of each State of the Union Address in order to determine policy proposition and advocacy. Although simple content analysis might be able to determine the frequency of the word “policy” or the occurrence of words such as “welfare” or “Medicare,” this form of content analysis would miss many implicit suggestions for policy as well as make a overall count of policy proposal almost impossible unless keywords were designated for every policy imaginable and then counted.

Some studies attempt to determine policy proposals or policy subjects in presidential address by coding the sentence, line, paragraph, or document in which a word indicating a policy occurs as only one policy. However, counting a sentence or line of the speech as a policy proposal does not fully identify presidential policy advocacy or proposal within the Addresses. For example, In Bush’s 2003 State of the Union Address he states, “I am proposing that all income tax reductions be made permanent this year.” This can easily be counted as one policy proposal and would most probably be recorded

the same by my content analysis as anyone else who may have simply looked for the occurrence of the word “propose.”

However, in Theodore Roosevelt’s State of the Union Address in 1902, he recommends that “1) all future legislation on the subject should be with the view of encouraging the use of such instrumentality as will automatically supply every legitimate demand of productive industries, 2) and of commerce, 3) not only in the amount, 4) but in the character of circulation, 5) and of making all kind of money interchangeable, 6) and at the will of the holder, convertible into the gold standard” (my insertion of numbers). This sentence may have very well been counted as a single policy proposition (if the sentence is the unit of analysis) or not at all in the absence of the word “propose.” Through a line-by-line reading however, I am able to fully realize and account for the six policies proposed in the single sentence.

Throughout this study, I found that many of the presidents would use different terminology or put forth many different policy proposals under one heading (See Appendix A). If these differences were not accounted for, it would prohibitively limit what would be found in a simple search for “policy.” Therefore, to gain an accurate account of presidential policy-making, presidential position taking, and even popular rhetoric usage in the State of the Union Address, a thorough reading of each address provides a richer and more complete account of presidential activity.

The addresses have been coded and then re-coded, as well as read and re-read, employing standard content analysis practices to insure that there is consistency and reliability in the data. Concepts such as “policy proposition/advocacy” and “public address words” have been defined and re-defined throughout the process. Appendix A

gives an example of the many different possible definitions or concept phrasings that may define something so seemingly simple as a policy proposal. “The ability to extract implicit concepts is vital to much research as meaning is lost when only explicit concepts are used...when implicit as well as explicit concepts are coded, it is possible to enact from the text a richer definition of meaning” (Carley, 1993, 86; 88).

In order to bolster the validity of the study as well as prevent any misconceptions of a seemingly arbitrary examination and count of policies with presidential address, I have followed close and careful guidelines and qualifications for determining what merits inclusion and counting in the study as a “policy” or “policy proposition” and what does not.

In King’s “The Methodology of Presidential Research” (1993) he suggests that presidential research must provide rigor and relevance (389) as well as being comprehensive enough to provide a certain degree of certainty for inferences (390). King et al’s “Replication, Replication” (1995) also details the need for data to be collected carefully so that replication and competitive testing by other scholars is possible. It is my belief that this study can be replicated because of my adherence to specific guidelines. For example, if the president directly recommended a policy to the Congress or the people in his State of the Union Address, such as “Tonight I ask Congress and the American people to focus the spirit of service and the resources of government on the needs of some of our most vulnerable citizens — boys and girls trying to grow up without guidance and attention and children who have to go through a prison gate to be hugged by their mom or dad” (Bush 2003) it was counted as a policy. If the president expressed favor in a policy proposal of one of his departments or a member/bill in congress, such as

“I have sent you a Healthy Forests Initiative, to help prevent the catastrophic fires that devastate communities, kill wildlife and burn away millions of acres of treasured forest. I urge you to pass these measures, for the good of both our environment and our economy” (Bush 2003), it was counted as well.

In addition, if the president recommended a policy several times or reiterated his position over and over again, each individual incident was included as a policy proposition because, according to the understanding of rhetoric as power laid out above (as well as common sense), reiteration of a policy expresses the gravity and importance which the president obviously feels the subject deserves and his repeated desire and stressing of an issue that he would like to see considered. An example of this can be seen when Bush stated that “Some might call this a good record. I call it a good start. Tonight I ask the House and Senate to join me in the next bold steps to serve our fellow citizens. Our first goal is clear: We must have an economy that grows fast enough to employ every man and woman who seeks a job,” this was counted as a policy proposal dealing with the economy. When Bush followed up by saying that “I am proposing that all the income tax reductions set for 2004 and 2006 be made permanent and effective this year” (Bush 2003) it would be counted as another policy proposal dealing with the economy. It would actually be counted as two proposals because the first proposal in the last quote is that the income tax reductions be made *permanent* and the second policy proposal is that they be made *effective this year*.

However, presidential predictions on the effects of the initial policy proposal and his estimation of future policies would not be included in the count because the president was specifically asking for only a single policy at the time and therefore any predictions

of future action necessarily would hinge on that single policy. Examples of this are such rhetoric as “Lower taxes and greater investment will help this economy expand. More jobs mean more taxpayers and higher revenues to our government” (Bush 2003). This is not proposal of policy, but instead is the reasoning behind the tax breaks and other specific policies that he has proposed. By carefully determining beforehand the guidelines for counting policy proposal and issue advocacy, I was able to avoid inconsistent coding or readings in a process of State of the Union perusal that took nearly a year to properly conduct.

Content analysis does face a problem of validity if sample size is small or a sample contains sources too dissimilar in their format or context, as mentioned by King (1993), Edwards and Wayne (1983), Carney (1972), and Krippendorff (1980). The increase in sample size over previous studies as well as examination of a address whose delivery and origins are similar across time, provides data from which fuller generalizations or observations may be made. These provisions may overcome the constraints of quantitative analysis as explained by Edwards and Wayne (the frequent failure to pose analytic questions; the small number of cases; lack of data (1983; 105)) and provide multivariate analysis that combines both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of presidential study.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PRESIDENT AND TOTAL POLICY

"Leaders are visionaries with a poorly developed sense of fear and no concept of the odds against them...they make things happen."

--Thomas Jefferson

"If he [the President] speaks to Congress, it must be in the language of truth."

--Andrew Jackson

Newly elected presidents often claim that they have a mandate from the people of the United States as a result of their victory (Kelly, 1983). They then use this mandate to propose the policies and push the agendas of their administration. However, as was referred to in previous chapters, many scholars believe that this proposition of policy did not begin until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, it is only with the rise of a "modern" presidency that the executive actively pursues his own policy agenda and discards the trappings of constitutional constraint for the freedom to pursue his own goals. However, as this chapter explains, this characterization of political activity may not only be an overly simplistic view, that assumes pacifism of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century president regarding policy proposal.

For Example, when Andrew Jackson succeeded John Quincy Adams to the office of the presidency of the United States in 1828, he entered the position on the heels of some of the most partisan and assumedly corrupt politics in a presidential election the nation had seen. Only four years earlier, Jackson had lost the presidential election, not by losing the popular vote or the electoral college in which no majority was achieved, but by

a vote in House of Representatives that was decided by a political deal between the president-elect Adams and Henry Clay (Adams' soon to be Secretary of State). The time of reverent governing by the founding fathers was through; partisanship had entered the American scene. Jackson had won the popular and the electoral plurality and had still not won the election in 1824.

He entered the office of the presidency in 1828 as a “man of the people,” claiming a popular uprising from the common man against the aristocracy that had encompassed the presidency for nearly 50 years. From the inauguration speech in which “some twenty thousand people from all parts of the country converged on Washington to witness the triumph of their candidate,” to the raucous reception at the White House in which Jackson was “nearly pressed to death and almost suffocated and torn to pieces by the people in their eagerness to shake hands with Old Hickory” (Remini, 1971, 435), the election of Jackson was a vocalization from the average citizen that had seemingly been unrealized up to that point in presidential history. The people had spoken (he had won by estimates of nearly two to one), and they wanted Jackson as a president who would lead them away from the corrupt caucus and aristocracy that had stigmatized the presidency. “The majority is to govern,” he said in his 1829 State of the Union Address. Indeed, “Jackson insisted that it was the president who was the direct representative of the people and as such spoke for the people” (Genovese, 2001, 60).

Jackson, claiming the mandate from the public, went on to propose amounts of policy in his State of the Union Addresses previously unrealized. The average number of total policy proposals from 1789-1828 was about 33 policies proposed per State of the Union Address. Yet Jackson, in his eight years in office from 1829-1836 proposed an

average of almost 120 policies per State of the Union Address. It was an average number of policies unmatched by the likes of presidents such as JFK (97), Franklin Roosevelt (53), Wilson (71), LBJ (102) and even Reagan (99) in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and an un-“traditional” and very “modern” showing from Jackson only 50 years into the country’s lifespan.

This chapter examines the policy propositions made by the presidents in their State of the Union Addresses. According to the conception of the “traditional” president presented by scholars, that president does not propose policy, nor does he actively advocate popular policy. In fact,, Tulis asserts that “the architects of the constitutional order and most 19<sup>th</sup> century presidents believed that a strong national government led by a strong executive was compatible with, indeed *required*, the proscription of most of the rhetorical practices that have now come to signify leadership” (Tulis, 1987, 27).

In addition, Tulis, Greenstein and others find that this “modern” policy-proposing president begins as late in presidential history as the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Edwards and Wayne (1997) propose that Theodore Roosevelt set the stage for the “modern” presidency and that by “assuming an assertive posture in both foreign and domestic affairs, Roosevelt expanded the president’s policy making roles” (6). They quote Roosevelt himself espousing the position that his “view was that every executive officer, and above all, every executive officer in high position, was a steward of the people bound actively and affirmatively to do all he could for the people, and not to content himself with the negative merit of keeping his talents undamaged in a napkin” (7). This proactive stance by Theodore Roosevelt continued to succeeding presidents, and Edwards and Wayne find that “with the exception of three Republican presidents of the 1920’s,

occupants of the oval office of the 20th century have assumed active political and policy making roles” (7).

However, even as active as Theodore Roosevelt was, Edwards and Wayne propose that the “modern” presidency truly began with the other Roosevelt—Franklin Delano. They assert that Franklin Roosevelt’s “modern” presidency “is characterized by presidential activism in a variety of policy making roles. Many of the practices that Roosevelt initiated or continued have been institutionalized by his successors and/or required by Congress” (7). This is the same position earlier touched on by Greenstein, who also posits that the true “modern” presidency begins with the leadership and governance of Franklin Roosevelt. During Franklin Roosevelt’s terms, “the chief executive became the principle source of policy initiative, proposing much of the legislation considered by Congress. Presidents began to make an increasing amount of policy independent of the legislature” (3). Michael Genovese also echoes this conclusion, concluding that “FDR established what many refer to as the ‘modern presidency,’ a strong, activist model of leadership most of his successors felt compelled to try and emulate” (2001, 139).

According to these scholars then, the trappings of the contemporary presidency and especially the initiative of the president to propose policy in his addresses did not begin until anywhere between the early 1900s and the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt in 1934. How then can we attempt to take into account the policy proposals made by Andrew Jackson almost 100 years prior to this rhetorical evolution? In order to address this question, I will first examine different lengths of the State of the Union Addresses and then look at different numbers of policies proposed and their implications in order to

clarify the evolution of presidential policymaking as well as the questions raised by the “traditional/modern” categorization above.

### Word Lengths and Activity

The first element to be examined is the word length of the addresses themselves and the trends exhibited by that assessment.

Figure 1:

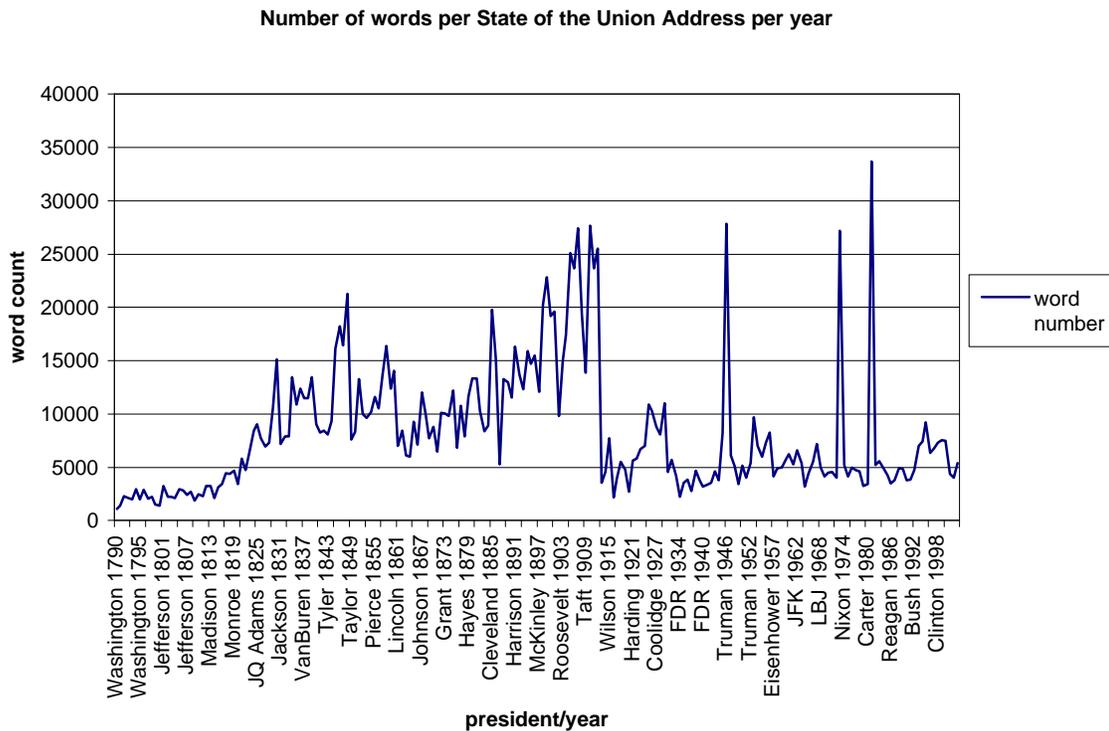


Figure 2:

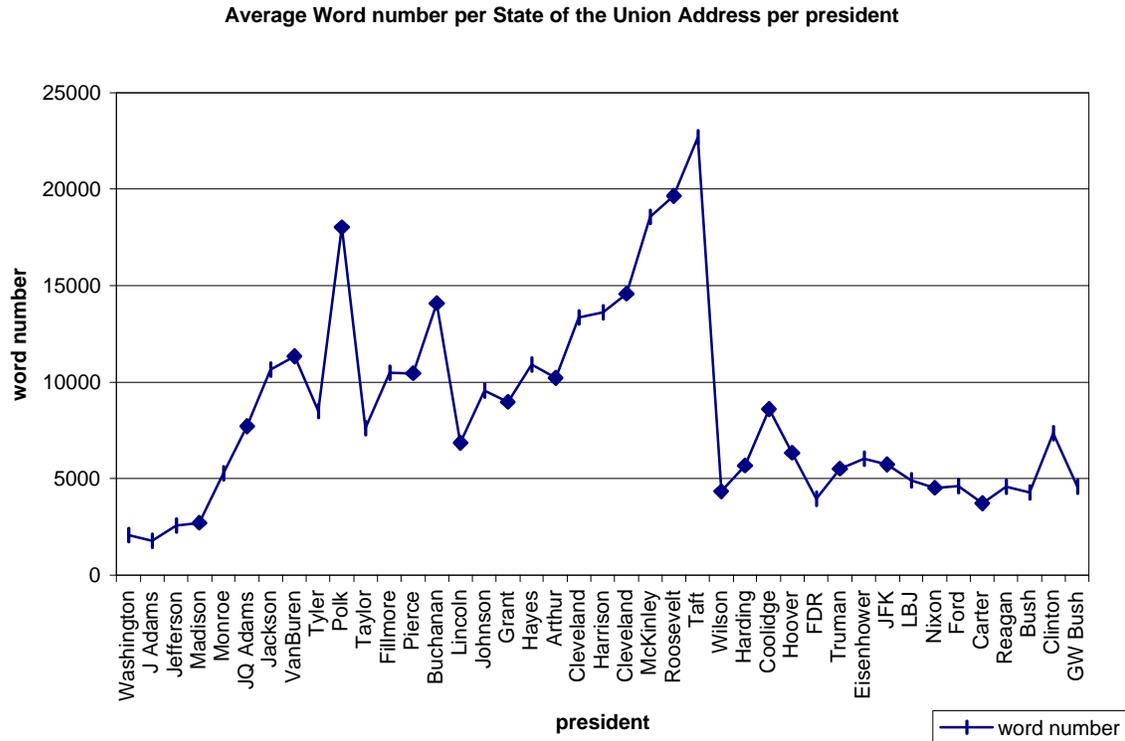


Figure 1 illustrates the number of words per State of the Union Address from 1790-2003. Figure 2 is an examination of the average number of words used in the State of the Union Address per president.<sup>4</sup> The above figures show several important points. First, we see that the founding presidents presented State of the Union Addresses of short length; the average length of the State of the Union Address from Washington through Monroe was just over 3,000 words. From 1790 until 1820, the word length did not even reach 5,000 words. However, this “constraint” soon appears to end and, beginning with John Quincy Adams in 1825, the word length of the State of the Union Address jumps to

<sup>4</sup> Because of the similarity in the patterns that occur in graphs detailing each year as well as each president, for our purposes, unless there is a significant discrepancy between the pattern shown per year as opposed to per president, those which are compiled by president are more relevant to the discussion and will be used from this point.

almost 9,000 words. Andrew Jackson follows Adams with a address almost double that length with around 15,000 words.

This sudden rise in address length which was begun by Adams and Jackson is the next consistent finding of the figures and, as seen above, word length increases steadily following the Adams presidency until 1914. During the period between 1825 and 1912, the length of State of the Union Addresses grew from the founding (1790-1824) average of 3,000 words to an average of over 12,700 words per State of the Union Address. This increase in word length is important to observe because its appearance is seemingly inconsistent with the tenets put forth as part of a “traditional” presidency constitutionally bound to brevity. Although the revolutionary participants who became president did indeed keep their messages “short and sweet,” the presidents immediately following them felt more and more comfortable giving lengthier addresses.

There may be several reasons for the sudden increase witnessed with the presidencies of Adams and Jackson. First of all, spurred on by the circumstances surrounding the election of 1824, the presidential election became a popular vote contest and the nominations were the result of convention and not congressional caucus. As a possible result of this new awareness that the public held the keys to the White House, the State of the Union Addresses not only lengthened, they may have accordingly contained more issues, positions, and activity than in previous addresses.

Contrary to the proposition that the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century presidency was much less active than the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century presidency (Tulis, 1987; Greenstein, 2000), the increasing word lengths of State of the Union Addresses discussed above suggest the possibility that presidents were becoming very active through their addresses and within

their relations with Congress. In fact, from 1864 until the Wilson Administration, the addresses never decreased in length. Instead, they grew steadily from 5,887 words in 1864 to 27,338 words in 1910.

In addition, in Figures 1 and 2 we see that with Woodrow Wilson, the word length of the State of the Union Address per year and per president undergoes a significant and permanent decline. The word count dropped from 25,518 words in the address of 1912 to 3,553 words in the address of 1913. Furthermore, the average length of the State of the Union Address for the Taft presidency was almost 23,000 words to just over 4,000 words per address in Wilson's tenure. However, the drop in address length is not solely attributable to the presidency of Wilson, because it was also in 1913 that the State of the Union Address changed from a written to an orally delivered format.

It may well be that Wilson was responsible for making the decision to change the form of delivery of the State of the Union Address from written form sent to Congress to orally delivered format. Indeed this is consistent with the style that many scholars attribute to him of seeking "to inject new energy in government by viewing the president as the 'only governmental officer with a national mandate,' whose function was to understand the 'true majority sentiment' and explain it to the people" (Crockett, 2002, 112). However, this does not necessarily indicate that Wilson had originated a "modern" style of leadership to be imitated by successive officeholders. In fact, shortening of address length may simply indicate that convention and format of personal delivery did not allot the same kind of address seen in previous presidencies. An address consisting of 30,000 words would neither be practical nor probable for presentation in a public address.

Instead, a State of the Union Address given directly to Congress would necessarily be shorter, and presented within a manageable time span.

The permanent decline in the length of the State of the Union Address following its return to oral delivery can be seen also in the fact that there has been no hint of a return to the address lengths of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. We can see that there have been some presidents in the modern-day era whose verbosity in single situations (Truman 1946, Nixon 1973, Carter 1980) has returned the address to the length of “traditional” addresses in single State of the Union Addresses (27,841, 27,150, and 33,675 respectively). However, without these rare spikes (which are not included in Figure 2 and will not be included in further data because they are all addresses that the president delivered in written format to Congress at various points during that year), the presidents of the 20<sup>th</sup> century appear not to mimic the lengths of 19<sup>th</sup> century presidents, but instead resemble those of the original founding period. In fact, the average, as discussed above, between 1825 and 1914 was over 12,000 words per address, whereas the average length of State of the Union Address including and following Wilson (1913-2003) was almost half of that at just over 6,000 words per address.

Because of the extended Address lengths that existed prior to Wilson, and the significant change with the return of the State of the Union Address to oral delivery, questions arise as to what the presidents during the 19<sup>th</sup> century period were doing in addresses that tripled and sometimes quadrupled the lengths of 20<sup>th</sup> century presidents. The “traditional/modern” paradigm suggests that the presidents of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were policy inactive and constrained by the formality of precedent as well as constitutionally mandated duty. However, as seen above, these presidents were making State of the

Union Addresses that almost quadrupled the lengths of those of the 20<sup>th</sup> century presidencies. As a result of this finding, the next step here is to examine the number of policies proposed in those State of the Union Addresses to conclude whether or not the increasing address lengths of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are indeed indicative of a policy active president that is unrecognized by many scholars today, or if they confirm the categorizations of the “traditional/modern” distinction.

#### Total Policy Proposition and the Presidency

As seen in Figures 1 and 2, the founding presidents were characterized by the delivery of short State of the Union Addresses. However, we cannot accept the assertion of Tulis and others that no policy activity necessarily follows that brevity. In addition it must be questioned as to whether or not a longer State of the Union Address meant increased policy proposition.

Although the correlation between word number and the number of policies proposed is high (0.806), we cannot assume that the greater address lengths of the presidents of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century are necessarily indicative of increased policy activity. The above changes in address length do require that we re-evaluate Tulis and others proposals that the “modern” president alone is the proactive president who proposes policy and becomes very active on issues and advocacy. Accordingly, it is first important to look at the total number of policies that were proposed by the presidents in their State of the Union Addresses and the implications of any patterns. Although it will be necessary shortly to control the number of policies proposed for the length of the addresses, as presidents delivering the Address orally were constrained by lengths that

written deliveries were not, it is important that the general view of policy totals be examined for their possible contribution to our understanding of presidential activity.

Figure 3:

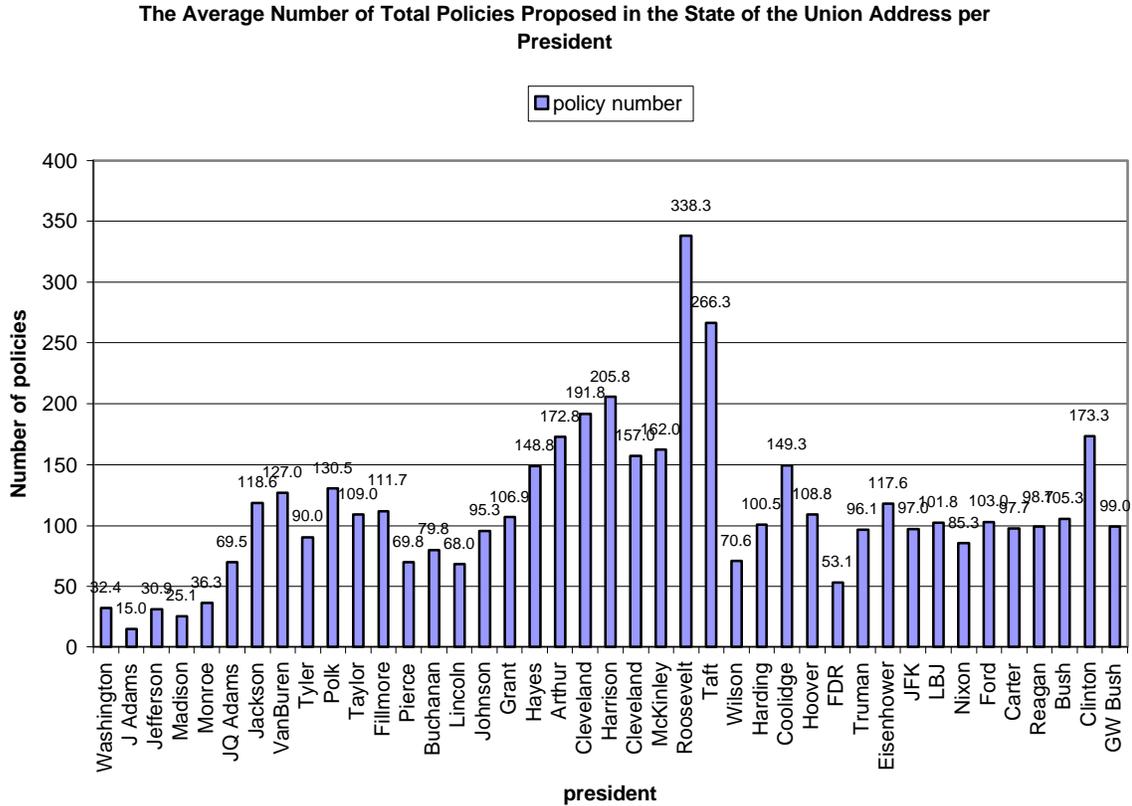


Figure 3 is a comparison of the average number of policies proposed in the State of the Union Address per president. When the data are compiled to individual presidents, we see the findings illustrate that policy proposals seem to allow for classification into three periods. The Founding period (1790-1824) is characterized by presidents who proposed very little total policy per State of the Union Address. If we were to demarcate the above results in a similar way to “traditional/modern” scholars, the

19<sup>th</sup> century (1825-1913) might be characterized by a generally ever-increasing level of policy proposition and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present (1913-2003) could be characterized by a drop in policy proposition totals and a return to levels of policy proposition in State of the Union Addresses seen immediately following the founding period.

Figure 4:

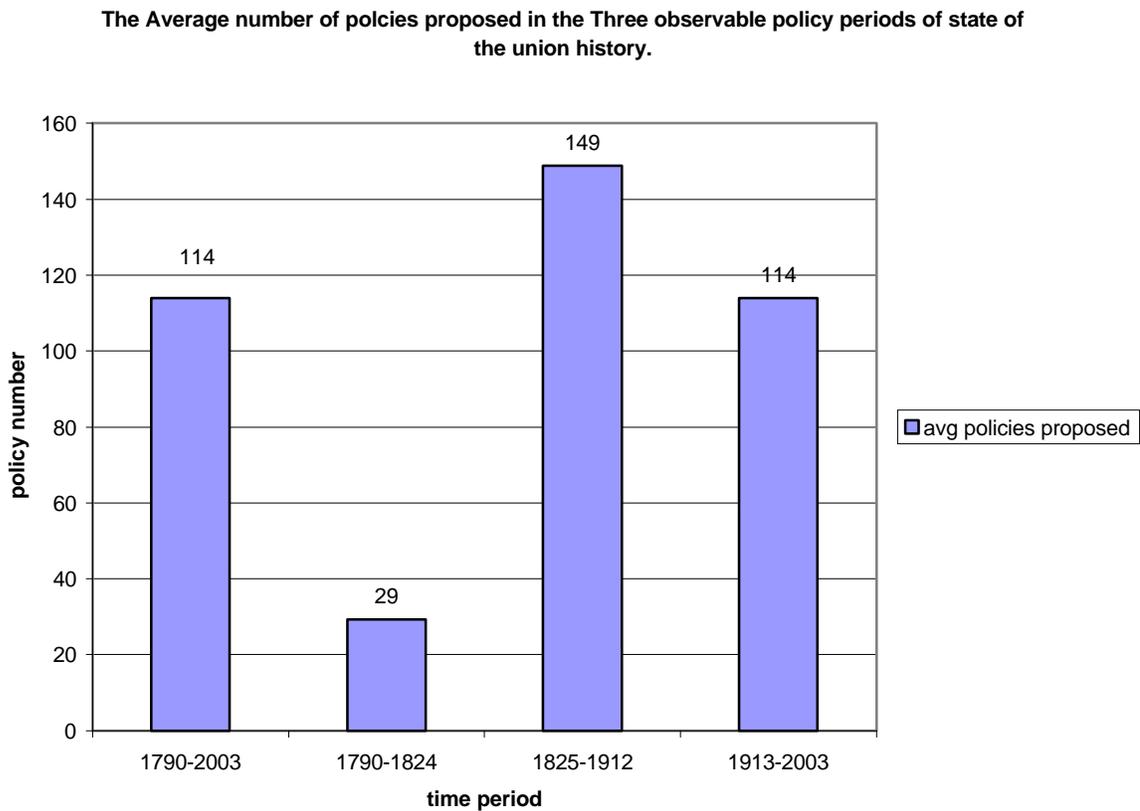


Figure 4 is an illustration of the average number of policies proposed per State of the Union Address if we were to separate presidential history into different time periods discussed above. However, although Figure 4, as well as others subsequent to it may break presidential history into different periods, doing so (similarly to scholars'

“traditional/modern” period categorizations) misses nuances of individual presidents as well as creates divisions that might not be as significant as the periods might suggest (as seen in Figure 3, presidents such as Roosevelt and Taft would skew the result for any period in which they are placed because of the huge numbers of policy they propose). The distinctions are simply made here for the purpose of determining trends in presidential policy proposal as well as evaluating proposed “origins” of the contemporary presidency.

Regardless of the treatment of a “modern” or “traditional” period, the founding period can be seen as a period of presidential history in which total policy proposal was dramatically lower than any other. In fact, the average from 1790 to 1824, as seen in Figure 4, was only about 30 policies per State of the Union Address. That there were policy propositions by presidents during the founding period cannot be denied however. As mentioned earlier in this study, Washington proposed policy relating to the military, education, and on the economy. In one sweeping statement, Adams addressed both defense and the economy stating that, “I should hold myself guilty of a neglect of duty if I forbore to recommend that we should make every exertion to protect our commerce and to place our country in a suitable posture of defense as the only sure means of preserving both...it is necessary that provision be made for fulfilling these obligations” (Adams 1797).

Although presidents of the founding period did indeed advocate various policies in small quantities, they tended to approach their subjects from a general perspective. Jefferson gives example of this addressing the issues of tariffs in his State of the Union Address of 1802 by stating that, “it rests with the Legislature to decide whether they will

meet inequalities abroad with countervailing inequalities at home, or provide for the evil in any other way.” As illustrated here, although he broached the topic of the tariffs and duties, no specifics for remedy were offered; he only suggested generally that Congress do something about the subject and deferred to the legislative power. Madison also took this broad approach to many policies as well, addressing the economy and stating in his State of the Union Address of 1811 that, “the decrease of revenue arising from the situation of our commerce, and the extraordinary expenses which have and may become necessary, must be taken into view in making commensurate provisions for the ensuing year; and I recommend to your consideration the propriety of insuring a sufficiency of annual revenue at least to defray the ordinary expenses of Government, and to pay the interest on the public debt, including that on new loans which may be authorized.”

Again, we are presented with generalities instead of specific policy details.

Presidents of the founding did, however get into the specifics when dealing with one topic of discussion. The military was a subject on which presidents felt free to give specific policy recommendations. In the same 1802 State of the Union Address by Thomas Jefferson examined above, he states, “a small force in the Mediterranean will still be necessary to restrain the Tripoline cruisers, and the uncertain tenure of peace with some other of the Barbary Powers may eventually require that force to be augmented. The necessity of procuring some smaller vessels for that service will raise the estimate, but the difference in their maintenance will soon make it a measure of economy.”

Madison also proposed specific changes to the commissioning of officers in the military suggesting that, “toward an accomplishment of this important work I recommend for the consideration of Congress the expediency of instituting a system which shall in the first

instance call into the field at the public expense and for a given time certain portions of the commissioned and non-commissioned officers.” (Madison 1810).

He continues with military specifics in 1811 recommending, “accordingly, that adequate provisions be made for filling the ranks and prolonging the enlistments of the regular troops; for an auxiliary force to be engaged for a more limited term; for the acceptance of volunteer corps, whose patriotic ardor may court a participation in urgent services; for detachments as they may be wanted of other portions of the militia, and for such a preparation of the great body as will proportion its usefulness to its intrinsic capacities.” Although other realms of policy were relegated to general propositions, the military was an area in which the founding presidents, as almost every president succeeding them, felt free to propose specifics and give details of action.

In contrast, beginning with the extremely partisan contested election of 1824 and the entrance into presidential office of John Quincy Adams, we see the number of policies proposed in each State of the Union Address begin to rise significantly. The men who preceded Adams had been integral parts in the formation of the Constitution as well as integral parts in shaping the nation in her incipient years. Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison and Monroe were seen as the founders of the nation, heading a government free of partisan party conflict and inheriting all of the deference and honor bestowed upon their predecessors. However, Adams’ entrance in a highly politically charged election signified more than the end of the “Virginia Dynasty” (called such because every one of the presidents before John Quincy Adams except his father, John Adams, originated from Virginia), it signaled the end of the evident constriction felt by presidents about proposing policy.

As seen in Figure 3, Adams himself proposed almost 69.5 policies per State of the Union Address and began his term by proposing 95 policies in his annual address in 1825. As Figure 4 illustrates, the average number of policies proposed in the State of the Union Address for presidents from 1790-1824 was only 29 policies per address. Adams began his very first address in contrast to the generality based State of the Union Addresses of his predecessors, giving detailed changes that he saw as necessary concerning tariffs and trade. “The removal of discriminating duties of tonnage and of impost is limited to articles of the growth, produce, or manufacture of the country to which the vessel belongs or to such articles as are most usually first shipped from her ports. It will deserve the serious consideration of Congress whether even this remnant of restriction may not be safely abandoned, and whether the general tender of equal competition made in the act of 1824-01-08, may not be extended to include all articles of merchandise not prohibited, of what country so ever they may be the produce or manufacture.” This is an example of a statement that not only proposes three different policies, but also gives specifics on acts of Congress that he feels are lacking and specific changes in policy that may be necessary.

He continued to advocate specific policies in addressing veterans pay—“I submit to Congress the expediency of providing for individual cases of this description by special enactment, or of revising the act of 1820-05-01, with a view to mitigate the rigor of its exclusions in favor of persons to whom charity now bestowed can scarcely discharge the debt of justice.” He also proposed detailed policies relating to such subjects as education and science, “connected with the establishment of an university, or separate from it, might be undertaken the erection of an astronomical observatory, with provision

for the support of an astronomer, to be in constant attendance of observation upon the phenomena of the heavens, and for the periodical publication of his observances.”

Adams also made specific policy recommendations relating to the military as seen in his proposal “to counteract the prevalence of desertion among the troops it has been suggested to withhold from the men a small portion of their monthly pay until the period of their discharge; and some expedient appears to be necessary to preserve and maintain among the officers so much of the art of horsemanship as could scarcely fail to be found wanting on the possible sudden eruption of a war, which should take us unprovided with a single corps of cavalry.” Adams moved specific presidential policy proposal from solely the realm of the military, which prior presidents may have felt was really their only constitutionally granted power, to the subjects of the economy, science, education, health, the frontier, Indians, and trade. He gave each of these issues in-depth examinations with proposals including dollar amounts, and congressional acts of the past, instead of simply addressing them generally as subjects into which Congress should inquire. Due to these findings, Adams could as easily be denoted the “founder” of the modern rhetorical presidency as Wilson.

Jackson followed Adams lead, and began his presidency by proposing 217 policies in his inaugural State of the Union Address, and, as illustrated in Figure 3, proposed an average of 119 policies per address over his tenure. As seen in Figure 4, this was almost five times the average number of policies proposed during the founding period of presidencies.

Jackson claimed his election was a victory for the common man and wasted no time in framing his policy propositions as programs for and supported by the common

man. He began the address claiming that “in discharging the responsible trust confided to the Executive in this respect it is my settled purpose to ask nothing that is not clearly right and to submit to nothing that is wrong; and I flatter myself that, supported by the other branches of the Government and by the intelligence and patriotism of the people, we shall be able, under the protection of Providence, to cause all our just rights to be respected.” (Jackson 1829).

He again claims the trust of the people when he addresses the policy relating to Great Britain, stating “with Great Britain, alike distinguished in peace and war, we may look forward to years of peaceful, honorable, and elevated competition. Every thing in the condition and history of the two nations is calculated to inspire sentiments of mutual respect and to carry conviction to the minds of both that it is their policy to preserve the most cordial relations. *Such are my own views, and it is not to be doubted that such are also the prevailing sentiments of our constituents.*” (emphasis added). In advocating policy in this way, Jackson not only introduced innovation to presidential rhetoric by arguing that his policies were obviously supported by the people, he used their name to propose policy numbers never before seen in the State of the Union Address.

The proposal of specifics in policy advocacy can be illustrated further in Jackson’s discussion of the necessity for revision of the method of election of the vice-president and president. “I would therefore recommend such an amendment of the Constitution as may remove all intermediate agency in the election of the President and Vice-President. The mode may be so regulated as to preserve to each State its present relative weight in the election, and a failure in the first attempt may be provided for by confining the second to a choice between the two highest candidates.” He appears

neither bound by precedent nor constitutional restraint from making specific policy suggestions even relating to alteration of the Constitution itself.

Roosevelt and Taft, as seen in Figure 3, were the two of the most prolific presidents in terms of both the word lengths for their State of the Union Addresses (Figures 1 and 2) as well as the sheer number of policies that they were able to propose in each. As seen above, they were the pinnacle of both length and policy proposition throughout the history of the presidency. The average length of a State of the Union Address during the tenure of Roosevelt and Taft was 20,675 words. Figure 3 illustrates that the average number of policies proposed by the two men was 338 and 266 policies per State of the Union Address respectively. This is far and away beyond the averages of both the 1825-1912 eras and the 1913-2003 eras in which presidents averaged only 149 and 114 (Figure 4) policy proposals per State of the Union Address respectively.

Taft and Theodore Roosevelt ran the gambit of general and specific policy proposals during their addresses, touching on many different and diverse subjects and issues; they even provided subheadings so that the readers might not forget which topic was being discussed. To repeat the example given in Chapter 2, Theodore Roosevelt's State of the Union Address in 1902 shows how he would often encapsulate three or four policy proposals within one sentence of the address. For example, he states that "1)It is suggested, however, that all future legislation on the subject should be with the view of encouraging the use of such instrumentalities as will automatically supply every legitimate demand of productive industries 2) and of commerce, 3) not only in the amount, 4) but in the character of circulation; 5)and of making all kinds of money

interchangeable, 6) and, at the will of the holder, convertible into the established gold standard” (By my count, there were six policies alone proposed in this single sentence).

In addition, Roosevelt would explain in extraordinary detail the policy propositions that he was making or the issues that he wanted to see acted upon by the Congress. In one discussion of the Panama Canal plans in his seventh State of the Union Address on December 3, 1907, he gave the following detailed description of the locks in the canal:

“The chief engineer and all his professional associates are firmly convinced that the 85 feet level lock canal which they are constructing is the best that could be desired. Some of them had doubts on this point when they went to the Isthmus. As the plans have developed under their direction their doubts have been dispelled. While they may decide upon changes in detail as construction advances they are in hearty accord in approving the general plan. They believe that it provides a canal not only adequate to all demands that will be made upon it but superior in every way to a sea level canal. I concur in this belief.”

Was this level of detailed policy advocacy necessary to inform the Congress on the state of the union? It is debatable. However, it was considered a necessity by Roosevelt in order to achieve exactly those policies that he wanted and done in exactly the way that he desired. This finding is contrary to Tulis assertion that Theodore Roosevelt, as one of the last “traditional” presidents shied away from policy proposal and political initiative. “Theodore Roosevelt’s ‘middle way’ was, in fact, a campaign for moderation—moderate use of popular rhetoric, moderate appeals for moderate reform” (Tulis, 1987, 96). Far from moderate, Roosevelt was prolific in the number of total policies he proposed as well as the details that he used to propose them.

Taft continued the ostentatious style of State of the Union Addresses of his predecessor and continued with lengths and policy propositions that are unmatched in State of the Union Addresses to this day. In 1910, Taft’s State of the Union Address was

27,651 words long, containing 397 policy proposals. In addition, Taft continued the format, begun in the eighth State of the Union Address of Theodore Roosevelt, of providing headings and subheadings for the subject matters of which he spoke and for the policies that he wanted to propose. In his Taft's first Address, he had over 35 headings detailing his policy proposals. *Europe, The Near East, Latin America, The Far East, the Department of State, Other Departments, Government Expenditures and Revenues, Frauds in the Collection of Customs, Maximum and Minimum Clause in Tariff Act, Use of the New Tariff Board, War Department, The Navy, Department of Justice, Expedition in Legal Procedure, Injunctions Without Notice, Anti-Trust and Interstate Commerce Clause, Jail of the District of Columbia, Post Office Department, Second Class Mail Matter, Postal Savings Banks, Ship Subsidy, Interior Department, New Mexico and Arizona, Alaska, Conservation of Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce and Labor, The Light House Board, Consolidation of Bureaus, The White Slave Trade, the Bureau of Health, Civil Service Commission, Political Contributions, Freedman's Savings and Trust Company, Semi-Centennial of Negro Freedom, and Conclusion* were all subject headings used by Taft during his first State of the Union Address in 1909. Each heading was followed by a detailed examination of the subject as well as many detailed policy propositions for the Congress to examine.

This activist stance towards policy proposal continued with relative consistency until 1913 and the change in format from the written State of the Union Address to the orally delivered address. The average number of policies proposed in the State of the Union Address during the 19<sup>th</sup> century/early 20<sup>th</sup> century period (1825-1912) was almost 150 policies, as illustrated in Figure 4. It is with the presidency of Wilson, in which the

address is returned to oral delivery, that the State of the Union Address sees significant and almost permanent decline in both policy proposal and word length, as seen in Figures 1 and 3. Wilson's addresses, out of a necessity that probably would not have allowed the listener to stay awake for a 20,000 word Roosevelt-ish address, dropped to an average of 4,342 words. His addresses were almost five times shorter than what the written State of the Union Address had grown to prior to 1913. In fact, Wilson proposed only 74 policies in his first State of the Union Address and, as seen in Figure 3, averaged only about 71 policy propositions per State of the Union Address (with some addresses proposing as few as 30 (1917) policies). This was almost five times less than the average number of policies proposed per year during the presidencies of Theodore Roosevelt and Taft.

This decreased level of policy proposition continues to the present day, as seen in the fact that George W. Bush proposed around only 80 policies in his 2003 State of the Union Address and averages only 100 policies per address; this is a far cry from the 200 and 300 policy propositions in State of the Union Addresses given in the written format period by such presidents as Roosevelt or Taft. As a result, it appears that presidents in the early to late 20<sup>th</sup> century, into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, have proposed almost 35 fewer total policies, on average, in their State of the Union Address than the presidents of the mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

These findings present evidence that the presidents of the 19<sup>th</sup> century may not have been the policy-shy and "propositionally challenged" executives as proposed by Tulis and others. It appears as though there are no clear patterns of policy proposition proclivity presented in Figures 3 or 4 to suggest that the presidents of the 19<sup>th</sup> century proposed on the average more policies in their State of the Union Addresses than their

counterparts in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century. In fact, if we examine the total number of policies proposed throughout presidential history, as well as broken down into a “modern” and “traditional” period, we are given a different picture than presented by Tulis.

Figure 5:

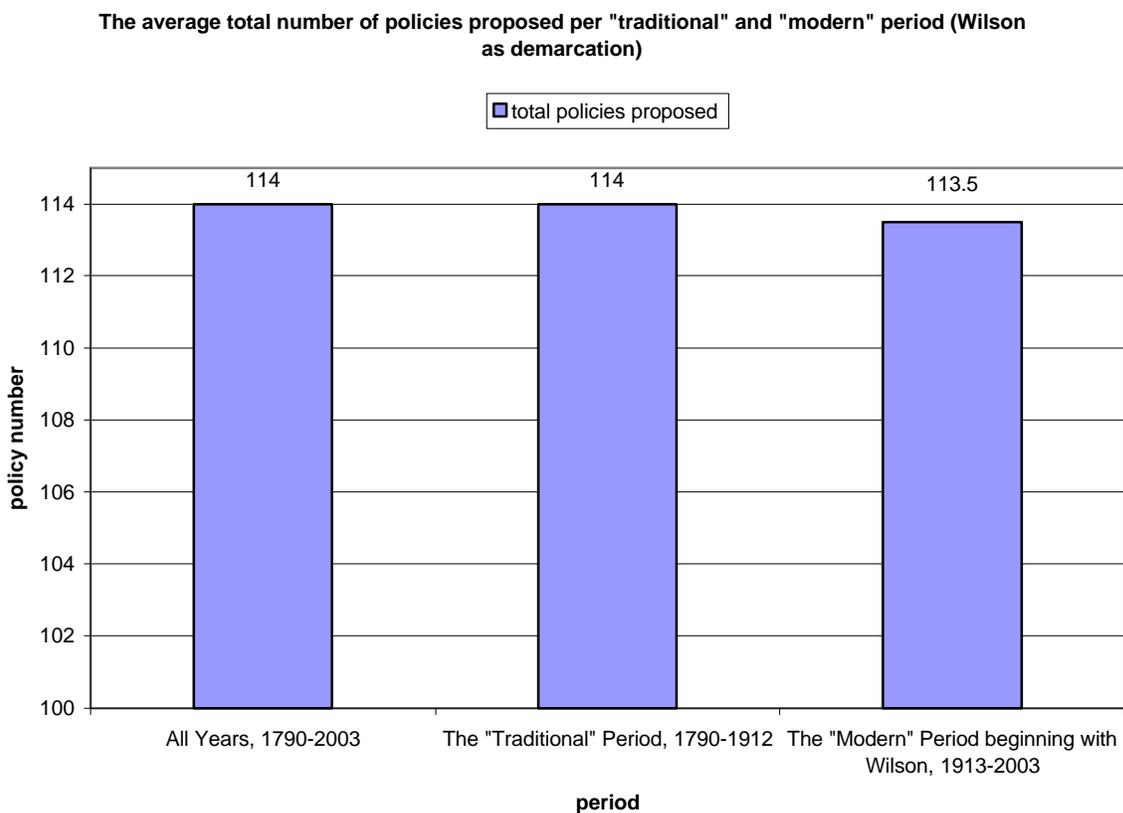


Figure 5 is an illustration of the average number of total policies proposed per State of the Union Address from 1790-2003, a “traditional” period from 1790-1912, and a “modern” period from 1913-2003. If we consider the totality of State of the Union Addresses and do not separate the founding period as I have done previously, we see that

the results do not support a difference in total policy proposal activity between a pre- and post-Wilson period, nor a significant difference between an orally and written presentation of the State of the Union Address. In fact, the total number of policies proposed in the “traditional” period from the founding to Wilson mirrors the average number of total policies overall, and still presents a higher average than the period including and succeeding Wilson. As a result, a consideration of State of the Union Addresses in the aggregate finds little support for Wilson’s presidency as an administration that had a dramatically different production on policy proposal.

In addition to Wilson, scholars advocating the division of presidential history in the “traditional” and the “modern” periods use presidents such as Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin Delano Roosevelt as the benchmarks and beginnings of the “modern” period. In order to evaluate the claims that these presidents began the era of presidential policy activity and innovations, we can look at contrasts in different periods of total policy proposal as well.

Figure 6:

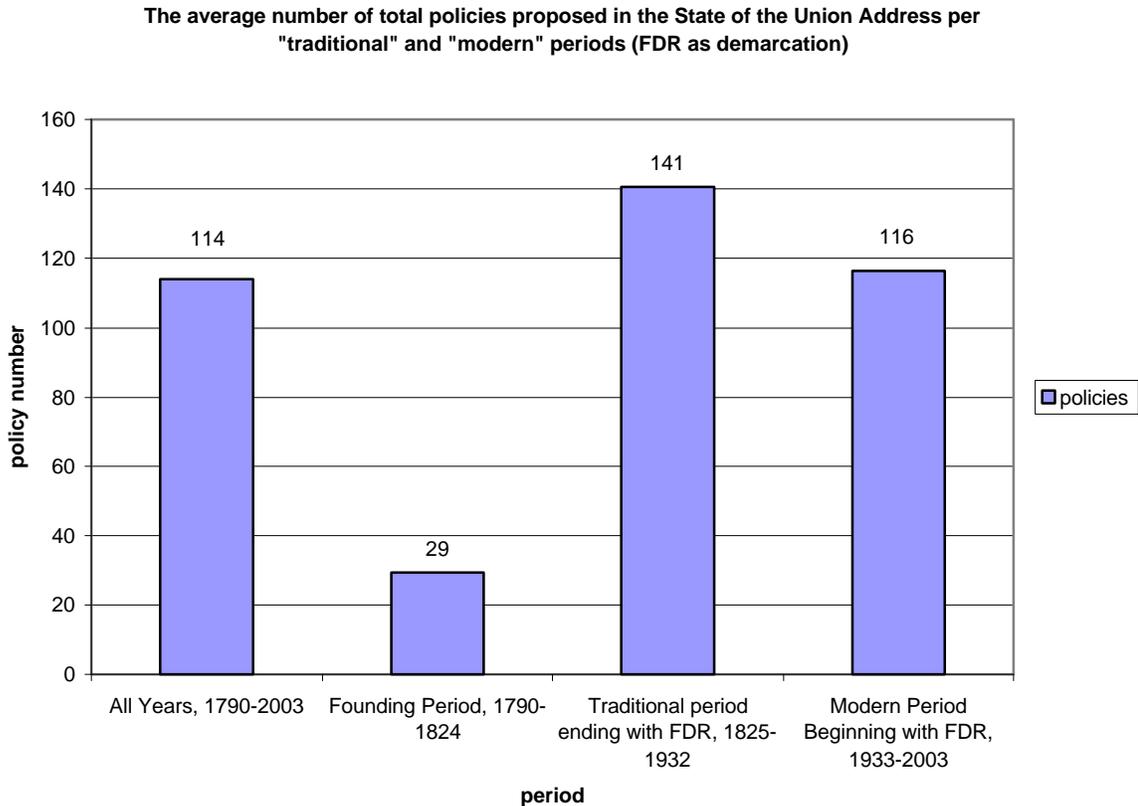


Figure 6 is an illustration of the average number of total policies proposed in presidential history (1790-2003), the founding period (1790-1824), the period ending before the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt (1825-1932), and the period beginning with the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt (1933-2003). In the “traditional” period before Franklin Roosevelt, the average number of policies proposed does appear to have decreased from 149 to 141 total policies per State of the Union Address, and that the “modern” period average has increased from 114 to 116. Regardless of the small change in the averages, the results still paint a picture of a policy-active “traditional” presidency and a “modern” period in which presidents propose more policies per State of the Union Address than the historical average or their “modern” counterparts. Therefore, changing

the demarcation of the “modern” presidency from Wilson to Franklin Roosevelt still does not provide a definitive point of change that might correspond to the proposals of Greenstein and others that Franklin Roosevelt is clearly the originator of the behaviors of the contemporary president.

Other scholars have also pointed to the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt as possibly indicative of the innovations and traditions that would evolve into the presidency as we know it today. If we examine policy averages in this light, the picture of policy initiative changes.

Figure 7:

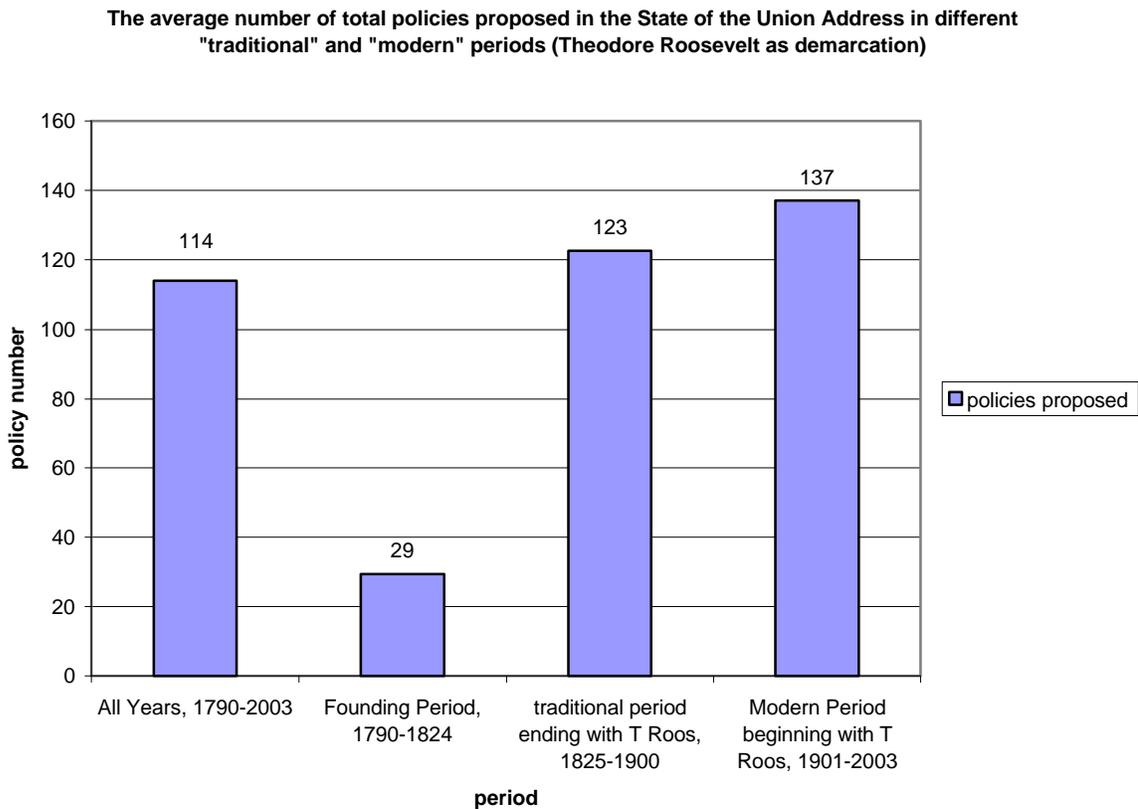


Figure 7 shows the comparison of the average total number of policies proposed for all years of the presidency (1790-2003), during the founding (1790-1824), during a period that ends before Theodore Roosevelt (1825-1900), and during an era beginning with Theodore Roosevelt (1901-2003). This figure also marks a change in the relationship between the average of the “traditional” and the average of the “modern” period; with the assumption that Theodore Roosevelt was indeed the father of the “modern” presidency and, that as a result there should be increased policy activity including and following his terms of office, we see that indeed more policy on the average is proposed in the new “modern” period than in the “traditional” period.

However, a problem exists when considering Theodore Roosevelt as the father of the “modern” presidency as well as including he and Taft in the data that is compiled to determine the average number of policies that are proposed in the State of the Union Addresses. Roosevelt and Taft, as explained above, are outliers in terms of both the sheer numbers of words that they used (see Figure 1) and the average number of policies that they proposed in their presidencies (see Figure 3). In fact, when we consider the total number of policies that have been proposed in the history of the State of the Union Address (24,628), Roosevelt and Taft are responsible for an astounding 15 percent of the total policies ever proposed (3,771 policies total in their State of the Union Addresses over 12 years). Also, as shown in Figure 3, Taft proposed an average of 266 policies per State of the Union Address and Roosevelt proposed 338 policies per State of the Union Address. No other president has come within 50 policies of matching the average of Taft, and only two (Cleveland’s 1<sup>st</sup> Term (192), and Harrison (206)) have even gotten within 150 policies of the average number of Roosevelt.

If conclusions can be made by the data and examinations above, they are twofold. First, the “modern” and “traditional” periods characterized by scholars as showing a marked change in presidential policy proposal activity do not appear to be appropriate when the entire history and body of presidential policy proposal is examined through the lens of total policy proposition in the State of the Union Addresses. Presidents as early as the 1820s were proposing policy, dealing with the specifics of issues, and presenting an active agenda for work in their State of the Union Addresses. In addition, the policy numbers proposed in the State of the Union Addresses of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are, if anything, very similar to those of the presidencies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Roosevelt and Taft appropriately excepted).

Second, we are unable to say with any certainty that a categorization between the periods of presidential history can be appropriately made (as even the distinction that I made in regards to the founding was for illustration purposes and misses any nuances that may have occurred during that period). Instead, the conclusion that must be drawn is that there are significant similarities (instead of distinct differences) between the presidents of the recent and far-removed past. Instead of attempting to reclassify the presidents and their policy proposing behavior into simplistic categories, we must look deeper into individual presidents and their activities. We must examine the forces at work on each of the presidents that may have caused different levels of policy proposition and political activity. Were there significant differences of policy proposal in times of war? In times of economic crisis? When the president ruled a unified government? In addition, we must examine how these presidents proposed these policies. What rhetoric was used and what form did the address take? Has presidential rhetoric and format changed in more

than just the simple written versus oral delivery? The data examined here have illustrated that a “traditional/modern” paradigm may be misleading in its simplicity. The next step in this process of analyzing policy proposal and presidential behavior must be to standardize the length differences between the written and oral periods of delivery and flesh out the underlying messages from the rhetorical past.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PRESIDENT AND CONTROLLED POLICY

As demonstrated in the previous section, the “modern” and “traditional” distinctions presented by scholars does not appear to hold when the total number of policies proposed in each State of the Union Address are compared across the entirety of U.S. presidential history. Because of the similarities expressed above between those presidents in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, it is important to look at the act of proposing policy within the State of the Union Addresses and what that act tells us about presidential policy activism as well as environmental factors that might affect it. In order to address these issues, it is important to view policy proposal in the State of the Union Address in a controlled comparison.

#### Policy Proposition and Length Control

To present a more comparable picture of the presidents and their policy proposals, it is especially important that we control for the type of delivery that was utilized in the State of the Union Address. The data presented in the prior chapter was simply an examination of the total number of policies proposed in the State of the Union Address that was presented without any effort to take into account the length differences as a result of the format change of the State of the Union Address. The preceding chapter proved that those presidents from Jefferson until Wilson who delivered the State of the Union Address in written format continuously increased the address length. As noted earlier, Wilson changed the delivery of the State of the Union Address from that

expanded written form to the orally delivered format, making a 20,000-word address impractical and implausible for personal delivery. As a result, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the address length dropped to around 5,000 words per address and this trend has continued to the present day.

In order to account for the format shift and more clearly see exactly what is taking place regarding policy proposal in the State of the Union Address, the next step is to control for that change. By dividing the number of policies by the number of words of each State of the Union Address we are able to get a consistent measure of policy proposal with which to compare across addresses and presidents.

Figure 8:

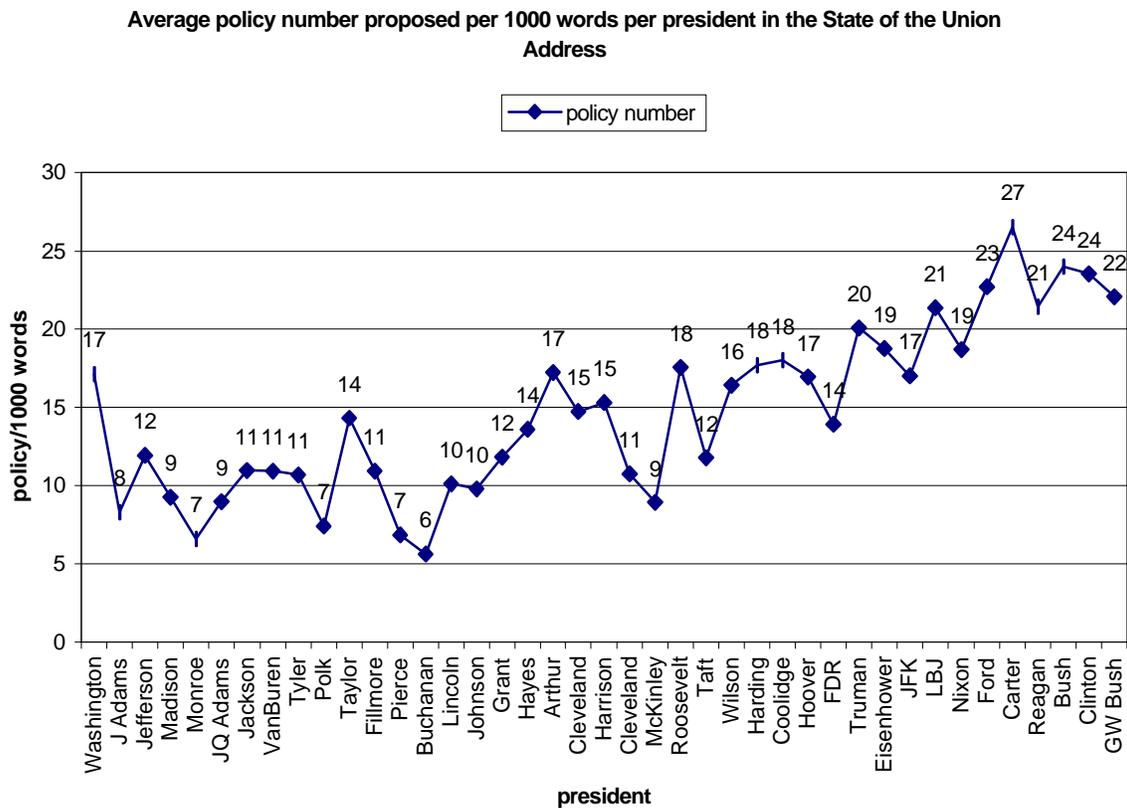


Figure 8 illustrates the average number of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address per president. The line graph exhibits a pattern much different from the trends illustrated in Figure 3 above. Instead of providing significant demarcations of policy proposal, Figure 8 shows a much clearer illustration of a consistent evolution of policy proposal activity. There are several spikes in the number of policies proposed per 1,000 words but nothing substantive that would indicate separate times of policy proposal, enabling a grouping of presidents according to a specific characterization of policy proposal activity.

We see that, prior to Roosevelt, no presidents propose more than, on the average, 18 policies per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address. However, we do see a slight increase over the years prior to Roosevelt from an average of about 10 to an average of 15-16 policies per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address. However, with Roosevelt this increase becomes much more constant and dramatic. From McKinley, who averaged 9 policies proposed for every 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address we see a jump to 18 policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address with Roosevelt. Indeed, this upward trend continues to the 1990s and 21<sup>st</sup> century where we see presidents such as Nixon, Reagan, and George W. Bush proposing an average of 22 policies for every 1,000 words of their State of the Union Address.

Although Figure 8 shows a contemporary difference of 10-12 policies per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address from the founding presidents, it may be difficult to realize the large differences that they suggest. Indeed, in practical comparison, a change in individual presidential average from 9 to 22 or a shift from 12 to 19 policies per 1,000 words, as seen in the period of written versus oral delivery, might not seem like

a substantively significant enough shift to mention. However, we must realize that the size of the address is controlled for and that the number of policy proposals is per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address.

If we consider that the average address length from the period between 1825-1912 (From Adams to Taft) was around 13,000 words per State of the Union Address, and adjust the average number of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address accordingly, the increase in the policy proposition activity of the modern-day presidents can be more fully appreciated.

Figure 9:

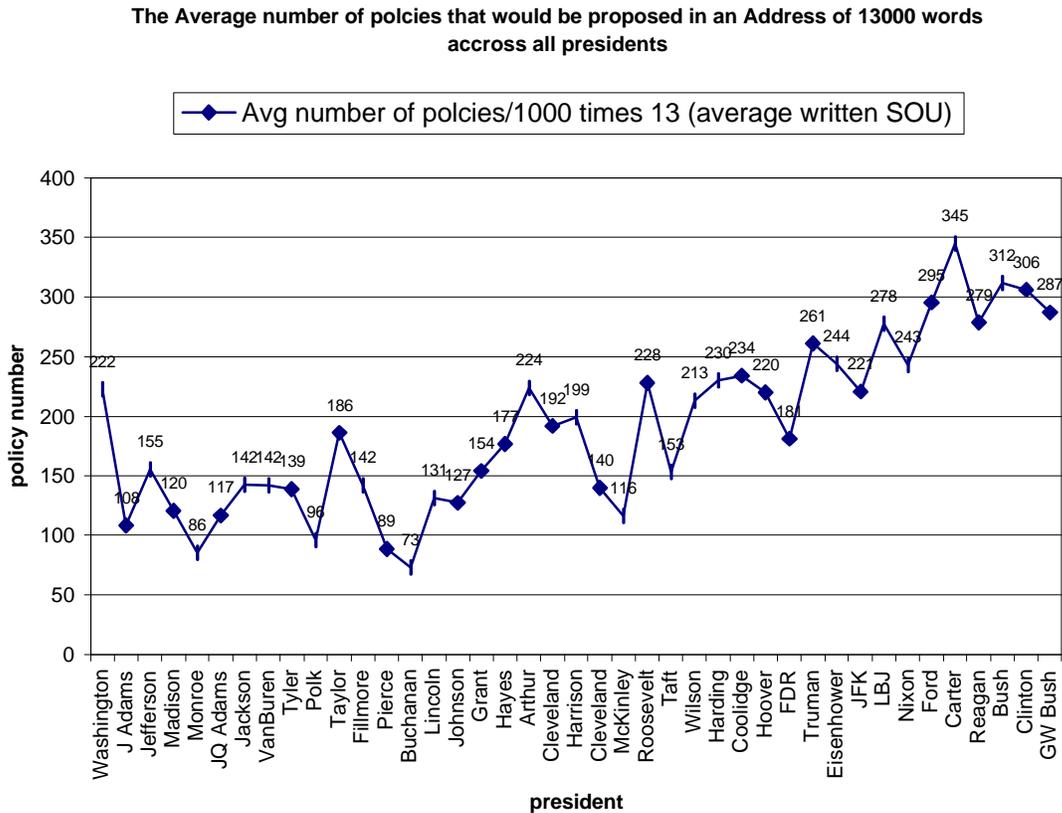


Figure 9 is an illustration of the average number of policies that would be contained in an address of about 13,000 words (the average length during written delivery) if we multiply the average number of policy proposals per 1,000 words per president by 13. This simple multiplication and standardization of the average policies for a 13,000-word address illustrates the huge impact associated with the fact that today's presidents are proposing 9-10 more policies per 1,000 words than their predecessors. Although we saw earlier that contemporary presidents propose fewer total policies overall than their predecessors in the period of written delivery, presidents since Wilson are proposing more and more policies within fewer words.

This parsimonious policy loading of short addresses in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century shows that if the same average policy numbers per 1,000 words were proposed in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries they would produce anywhere from 1/4 to 1/2 the number of policies that the presidents of the modern-day propose in the same number of words. Figure 9 illustrates that presidents such as Jackson and Adams, who seemingly broke the constraints and formalities of executive rhetoric by proposing large amounts of policy compared to the founders, would only average 117 and 142 policies as opposed to the 300 policies that would be proposed, on the average, in an address of 13000 words by modern-day presidents. Even if we look at Theodore Roosevelt (228 policies/13,000 words), Wilson (213 policies/13,000 words), or Franklin Roosevelt (180 policies/13,000 words), these benchmark presidents would still propose 90-120 fewer policies per 13,000-word address than such presidents as George H.W. Bush (312) and Clinton (306) would on the average in the same number of words (13,000).

Figure 10:

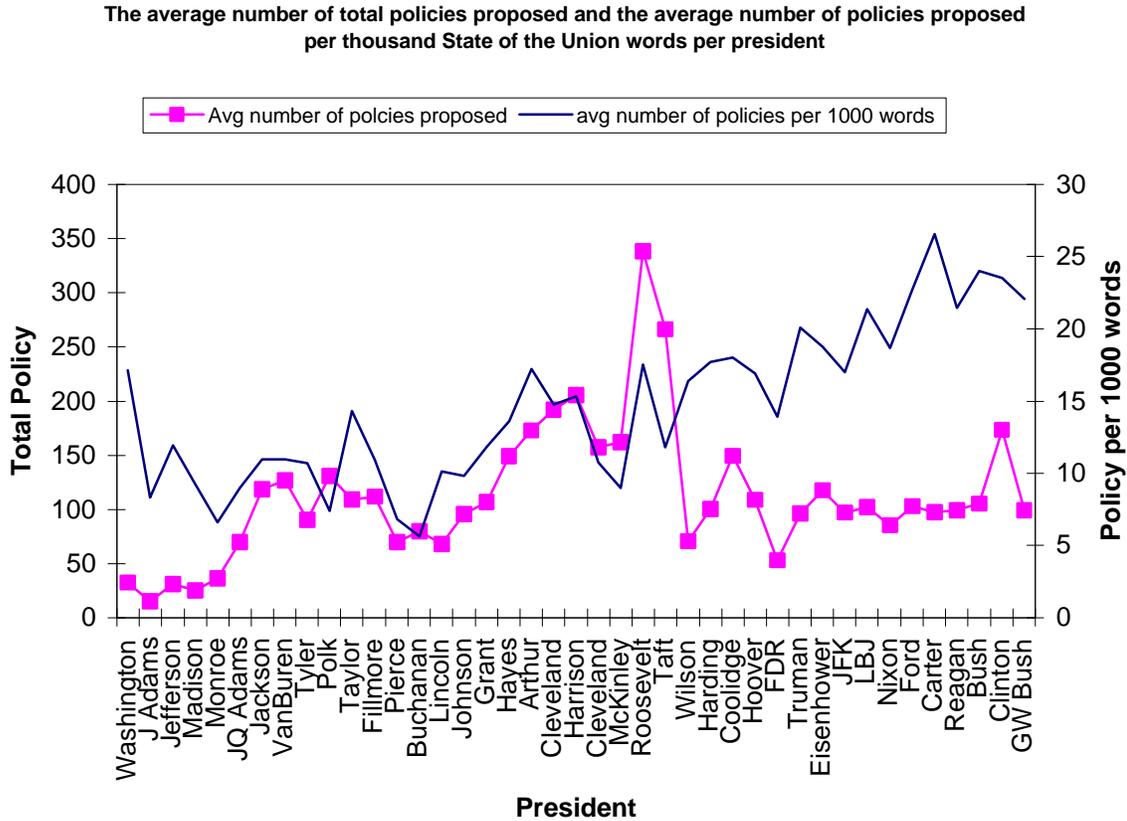


Figure 10 illustrates the difference in the trends between the total number of policies proposed per State of the Union Address and the number of policies per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address. It shows that without a control for length, we might mistakenly get the impression that the presidents of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century were more policy active than their 20<sup>th</sup> century counterparts. However, once length is controlled for, there appears to be little difference between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century presidents in regard to policy proposal activity. Instead, there appears to be a consistent increase in the policy proposal activity of the presidents from the founding to the present day.

This suggests that when length is controlled for, we see that the increase in words in the State of the Union Address is not necessarily accompanied by a matching increase in the number of policies per words. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, presidents became much more verbose when delivering the State of the Union Address in written format and proposed larger numbers of total policy on the whole, but were seemingly less concise when they were without the practical length constraint of oral delivery.

By contrast, when the State of the Union Address returned to oral delivery, presidents were forced to speak with lower word counts than with the written format. As a result, presidents since that transition are using the same number of words as presidents such as Wilson and the founders, but are able to propose many more policies in that same length than their predecessors.

Table 1: The Average Number of Policies per 1,000 Words Proposed Assuming Different Traditional/Modern Origins

Time Period	The Average Number of Policies Proposed Per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address
<u>Lincoln as Origin of Modern Pres:</u> Traditional period, 1825-1860	9
<u>Founding period, 1790-1824</u>	11
<u>T. Roosevelt as Origin of Modern Pres:</u> Traditional period, 1825-1900	11
<u>Oral/Written Delivery:</u> Written Delivery, 1825-1912	12
<u>Wilson as Origin of Modern Pres:</u> Traditional period, 1825-1912	12
<u>FDR as Origin of Modern Pres:</u> Traditional period, 1825-1932	13
All Years, 1790-2003	15
Post Founding to Present, 1825-2003	15
<u>Lincoln as Origin of Modern Pres:</u> Modern period, 1861-2003	17
<u>Oral/Written Delivery:</u> Oral Delivery, 1913-2003	19
<u>T. Roosevelt as Origin of Modern Pres:</u> Modern period, 1901-2003	19
<u>Wilson as origin of Modern Pres:</u> Modern period, 1913-2003	19
<u>FDR as Origin of Modern Pres:</u> Modern period, 1933-2003	20

Table 1 illustrates the average number of policies per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address throughout different periods in presidential history. It examines several different periods: all the presidential years (1790-2003); a separated founding period (1790-1824); the periods in which the State of the Union was delivered in written form (1825-1912) and orally (1913-2003); and periods demarcated by different presidents that scholars claim are the originators of the “modern” presidency. As we can see, the

overall average throughout the history of the State of the Union Address is around 15 policies proposed for every 1,000 words.

But, what is remarkable about the data from Table 1, however, is the similarity with which all the “traditional” or “modern” periods examined can be compared. The “traditional” periods that may be classified as presidential history prior to a specific president (Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Franklin Roosevelt) are not significantly different from the founding period, the period during which the State of the Union Address was delivered orally, or even a “traditional” period that uses Lincoln as the founder of the “modern” rhetorical presidency. In fact, all of those categories are within 3 policies per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address from the others and the average for the entire history of the presidency as well. This suggests that parsing the presidential past into a “traditional” period to characterize policy proposal in the State of the Union Address is of limited utility at best and shows no real significant difference from the overall average or even a supposedly different “modern” period.

In fact, if we examine the average number of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address under different “modern” periods that begin with Theodore Roosevelt, Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt (or even Lincoln), we see that the averages that they produce are almost exactly the same as well as similar to the averages of policy proposition produced in the period during which the State of the Union was delivered orally. In addition to a difference of 2 or fewer policies that separates all of the “modern” periods, the averages that they present are only 4-5 policies away from the average for the entire survey of presidential policy proposals from 1790-2003. As opposed to providing real observable differences between periods of presidential

behavior, the above averages seem to suggest that the periods were neither different from each other nor different from the overall averages from the founding to the present day.

Similarities also appear when we do further statistical work to examine the relationship between the periods asserted by scholars to differentiate the beginning of the “modern” presidency by regressing the number of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address on the time periods that have been demarcated by scholars as the beginning of the “modern” presidency.

Table 2:

Regressions of policy per 1,000 words on various traditional/modern periods

Period	policy per 1,000 words
Modern period beginning with Buchanan	6.336***
Modern period beginning with Lincoln	7.0797***
Modern period beginning with Hayes	7.7859***
Modern period beginning with Arthur	7.7786***
Modern period beginning with McKinley	7.7619***
Modern period beginning with T. Roosevelt	8.4011***
Modern period beginning with Taft	8.2344***
Modern period beginning with Wilson	8.6933***
Modern period beginning with Harding	8.733***
Modern period beginning with Coolidge	8.679***
Modern period beginning with Hoover	8.6327***
Modern period beginning with FDR	8.7612***
Modern period beginning with Truman	9.33***
Modern period beginning with Eisenhower	9.2139***
Modern period beginning with JFK	9.3307***
Written period 0, oral period 1	8.0154***

\*\*\* = significant at the  $p < .001$  level

Table 2 is a regression of the average number of policies proposed per 1,000 words on different possible presidents that could be indicators of a new “modern” period as well as the periods in which the State of the Union Address was orally delivered versus

the period that it was delivered in written form. It illustrates the number of policies that are proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address including and after the term of a specific president as opposed to the average number of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address in the period prior to that individual holding office.

What is noteworthy in all of the above regressions is the similarity of the coefficients that appear regardless of the president that is used to denote the end of the “traditional” period and the beginning of the “modern” presidency. The regression does not illustrate a sudden increase in the number of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address by any single president. Instead, the regressions show a gradual increase from the founding to the present day of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address. Each president and his successors, with few exceptions, will propose more policy on the whole than did presidents in the period before his governance.

In addition, when the relationship between the form of delivery and the policies proposed per State of the Union is addressed, we see that an average of 8 more policies per 1,000 words are proposed during the period when the State of the Union Address is delivered orally than when it is delivered in written format. We can also evaluate the “traditional/modern” paradigm according to the delivery constant above to assess the true impact, if any, that these demarcations provide to the number of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address. In Table 2, using Theodore Roosevelt as the dividing line between the “traditional” and the “modern” we see that presidents in the “modern” period propose almost 8 more policies per 1,000 words than those presidents

before Theodore Roosevelt in the “traditional” period. We also can observe that Wilson and subsequent presidents average almost 8 policies per 1,000 words of address more than during the time preceding them (the “traditional”). And this statistic is repeated, almost 8 policies more per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address in the “modern” than the “traditional” period, when Franklin Roosevelt is seen as the father of the “modern” presidency.

The regressions do not show a major difference between any of the three “founders” of the “modern” presidency and the written versus the oral period of State of the Union delivery. Instead, they simply show an increase in the parsimony and policy activity of the presidents in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Table 2 illustrates that there is no regression that produces a considerably different prediction than that before it that might indicate a presidency signifying a new standard for policy initiative. Furthermore, presidents from Lincoln to Franklin Roosevelt, who exhibit similar numbers to Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt, must all be considered as possible demarcations for a “traditional” and “modern” paradigm if we are insistent on finding one. Therefore, the increase that we can see related to the average number of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address cannot be conclusively attributed to any single president as those espousing a “modern” and “traditional” divide would suggest; instead, there seems to be more a result of the format change as well as incremental increase attributed to each individual president since the change to oral delivery in 1913.

Adoption of the “traditional/modern” demarcations proposed above also ties policy proposal estimates to their propositions that presidents before and after a certain

point will propose roughly the same amounts of policy regardless of context or individual behavior.

Table 3:

The Impact of the "Modern" or the "Traditional" Period or Overall Presidential Time on the Number of Expected Policies Proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address.

	<u>Regression Stats</u>		<u>Expected policies proposed</u>				<u>R-sq</u>
	<u>Intercept</u>	<u>Slope</u>	<u>Jefferson</u>	<u>McKinley</u>	<u>Harding</u>	<u>G.H.W. Bush</u>	
<u>Traditional/Modern period</u>	11.3	8.69	11	11	20	20	0.63*
<u>Linear Presidency</u>	7.3	0.37	8	15	17	21	0.66*
<u>Actual number of policies</u>			12	9	18	24	

\*p<.001

Table 3 illustrates the number of policy propositions per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address that should be expected given a “traditional/modern” division with Wilson, as well as a simple dummy variable measure that accounts for time passage in general. What we find above is that under the assumption that there is a demarcation before which presidents only propose a specific number of policies, *all* presidents prior to that point (Wilson is used here) are assumed to propose the same number of policies (11). In addition, each president following the origins of a “modern” period are again expected to propose a certain number of policies more than in the “traditional” period (here 20 policies per 1,000 words).

When we look at the actual policy propositions of the presidents per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address we see that they are quite different from those predicted with a “traditional/modern” model. Presidents such as McKinley and Harding propose

less policy than they would be predicted to, and presidents such as Jefferson and G.H.W. Bush surpass the expectations of the “modern” or “traditional” presidencies. Even if we provide a variable that simply examines policy proposal as a function of time, there are still discrepancies between the predicted and actual values of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address. Although time seems to provide a better model for understanding policy proposition, it is still unable to account for the many differences in policy proposition, such as Jefferson and McKinley, that might occur. As a result of these findings, it appears as though by limiting ourselves to any kind of classification or prediction on presidential behavior we might miss many of the nuances or differences that may occur in presidential history. The only measure that might be used with confidence seems to be an individual examination of each president and their contributions to the contemporary presidency as well as their policy proposing behavior while holding office.

We can again conclude that although 20<sup>th</sup> century presidents appear to propose many fewer total policies on the whole than their counterparts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in actuality, they are proposing a much higher number of policies per word number than their predecessors. If the presidents of the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century gave addresses that equaled the lengths of those produced during the period when the State of the Union Addresses were written, they would propose hundreds more policies than did the presidents of that time. In addition, these findings suggest that we cannot conclude with confidence that a single individual was responsible for making the executive a policy proposing entity, since the average number of policies per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address has been steadily increasing from the founding to become the short and

heavily policy laden addresses of today. Dividing presidential history into a “modern” and “traditional” period neither allows us to look at presidents such as Washington and Cleveland who proposed, on the average, as much policy as did Theodore Roosevelt in his enormously long State of the Union Addresses, nor does it force us to examine the possible influence of other variables on presidential policy proposition than simply the period in which the presidents spoke. The next section of this paper will attempt to examine factors that may have led individual presidents to propose more or less policy on the average during their terms than those who might have come before them or those presidents that followed.

### The Conditions of Policy Proposal

Although the above examinations of policy proposal enable us to determine that presidents neither fit into an easy mold of a “modern” or “traditional” period, nor exhibit such stark dissimilarities as that paradigm might suggest, we are not able to see why some presidents propose more policy on the average than others or under what conditions they might do so. This section will look at several contextual variables throughout the history of the Address in order to evaluate their effects on the number of policies proposed and whether they prompted on or inhibited policy proposal in presidential history.

In order to determine the relationship between governmental conditions, economic conditions, and domestic and foreign conditions in the history of the presidency and their effect on policy proposal, I have introduced variables that measure whether, at the time of the delivery of the State of the Union Address, the format was oral

or written, there was a war or no war, the president faced divided or unified government, the economic conditions of the country were good or bad, and whether or not the year of the president's tenure had an effect on the number of policies that were proposed.

Table 4:

Regression Analysis of Policy proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address

	Per President	Per Year
Divided (0) versus unified (1) government <sup>5</sup>	-2.0479*	-2.1532**
Economic index (bad 0, good 1) <sup>6</sup>	1.2257	0.5915
the presence of war (no war 0, war 1) <sup>7</sup>	-0.9683	-1.1298
Written 0 oral 1 <sup>8</sup>	8.2851**	8.0983***
Time <sup>9</sup>	0.3668***	0.0659***
year in office (total, 1-12) <sup>10</sup>		-0.6555***
Intercept	11.5164	14.5065
N	41	216
r-squared	0.5925	0.3905

\*\*\* = significant at the  $p < .001$  level

\*\* = significant at the  $p < .05$  level

\* = significant at the  $p < .10$  level

<sup>5</sup> Divided government is defined as a year or a presidency in which at least one of the Houses of Congress were of a different party than that of the president. Unified government is defined as a year or presidential term in which the party of both houses of Congress were the same as that of the President.

<sup>6</sup> I developed an economic indicator from a synthesis of the Quantitative Index of Financial Conditions, 1870-1997, and the Qualitative Index of Financial Conditions, 1790-1997, as provided in the National Bureau of Economic Research's working paper, "Aggregate Price Shocks and Financial Instability: An Historical Analysis," available as Working Paper 7652, at <http://www.nber.org/papers/w7652>. Both Indexes provide a five-point scale of Severe Economic Distress to Euphoria for each year. I synthesized both of the indexes to produce a common measure of economic wellness using both quantitative and qualitative data (when available) into a two point dummy variable in which years where there was reportedly Severe distress, or Moderate distress were categorized as 0 (bad economy), and those which received a Normal, Moderate Expansion, or Euphoria rating were classified as 1 (good economy).

<sup>7</sup> A measure of war was determined according to the tenets of the Correlates of War project and literature. According the CoW data, a war is determined by 1000 battle deaths. In addition, the civil war (which is left out of CoW coding) was included. If war was absent, the year/presidency was coded as 0. If there was war during the given time period, it was classified as 1.

<sup>8</sup> This variable was determined by whether the State of the Union Address was delivered in written (coded as 0) or oral (coded as 1) format.

<sup>9</sup> Time was measured by creating a dummy variable for all of the entries. (The years were given a value of 1-213, the presidents, 1-41)

<sup>10</sup> Year in office is a measure of the amount of time that a president held the executive office. Presidents who served two terms would therefore have a coding of 1-8 on those respective years. If a president was killed in office, the succeeding president's first year in office would begin immediately and not at the next formal election.

Table 4 illustrates the relationship between the number of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address and the years in office of the president, the type of government with which the president worked (divided v. unified), the presence of war at the time of the State of the Union Address, the state of the economy at the time of the State of the Union Address, and whether or not the State of the Union Address was delivered in written or oral format. First, we see that there is a negative relationship between the number of years a president stays in office and the number of policies that are proposed in those years. The data proposes that a president proposes almost 1 policy less per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address for every year that he continues in office. This may be suggestive of the presidential tendency to enter the office with decisive plans and clear policy agendas that may grow less pronounced as the president nears election periods.

Secondly, we see that the president actually proposes 2 fewer policies per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address when he is facing a united government than when he is forced to work with divided government. This is perhaps the finding that is most contrary to our view of presidential policymaking and party support within Congress. A president who has the support of his own party, we might assume, would propose more policies than when he faces a hostile Congress due to the fact that these policies should have an easier passage in a Congress under the president's party label. However, the regression above suggests the opposite. The president proposes more policy during a time of divided government when either a split or entirely hostile Congress faces him.

We might suggest that a president facing divided government proposes more policy so that more policy can have a chance of consideration by the divided Congress; the president may also play the odds that a large number of policies will fail and increased policy proposition might provide him with the same amount of policy success as he would normally face in unified government. In addition, we could posit that a president facing a divided Congress may propose larger numbers of policies because he would be able to use the policies that were not acted upon as an electoral tool to give him support in the next presidential or congressional election. However, these possibilities, as well as whether a president facing a unified government proposes less policy because the party itself adopts and is aware of his agenda without the need to stress it in the State of the Union Address, are a matter for further study that would examine the success rate in Congress of those policies that were proposed in the State of the Union Address.

Table 4 illustrates the fact that presidents also propose less policy in times of war (almost 1 policy per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address) than in times of peace. It further suggests that presidents propose 1 more policy per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address when the economy is going well than when it is functioning poorly. Finally, the regression again reinforces the fact from Table 4 that presidents who present the state of the union in oral format propose over 8 more policies per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address than do those presidents who delivered the State of the Union Address in written format.

Overall, the data from Table 4 may surprisingly suggest that the best atmosphere in which prolific policy proposal by a president can be witnessed would be a State of the Union Address, delivered in oral format, in the first year of a president's term, with an

absence of war, a good economy, and facing a divided Congress. We might posit that these conditions are usually met in the president's "honeymoon" period. We could also suggest that presidents coming into office with a good economy and an absence of war propose more policy (and on many more subjects) because they are not simply tied to a discussion of economic or defense issues. However, from the data above we cannot make these assumptions with surety and the logic behind the results in this chapter deserves further investigation.

### Policy and Policymaking in Presidential History

Today's president is generally assumed to initiate and propose policy in his addresses. It is a given that a State of the Union Address will present outlines for programs and policies that the president would like to see Congress take action upon. Whether the subject is the economy, education, the budget, or the military, the podium from which the modern-day president speaks is a catapult from which he launches various policies and proposals upon Congress and the United States. That this is characteristic of a modern-day president is not a surprise; it is, in fact, common sense. However, the findings here that presidents from the founding may have been utilizing the State of the Union Address forum for the same "modern" purposes is perhaps very surprising.

The "modern" rhetorical presidency presents an image of a presidency which has recently empowered itself with policy proposal and proposition. It presents the image of a "modern" president who speaks unfettered by constitutional precedent or constraint of the issues that he would like to see enacted and the paths that Congress and the people

must take in order to fulfill this plan. This characterization of contemporary presidential policy proposal is not really a misnomer to be disproved. Presidents of today do propose policy; they do advocate positions that they would like to see taken by the Congress; they do speak of plans for the people of the nation and policies that will improve or alter their lives. In this respect, there is no error with the characterization of a “modern” policy-proposing president.

The inconsistency, it seems, occurs when we examine the policy proposing activity and policy advocacy of the presidents before the 20th century and since our founding. What the data illustrated above have presented is a significantly different picture of the presidents of the far past than is presented by scholars labeling them “traditional” presidents. The figures depict presidents as early as Adams proposing amounts of policy that rival the policy propositions in State of the Union Addresses today. The data show proactive presidents in the 19<sup>th</sup> century who showed few signs of constraint when they continually increased both the length of the State of the Union Address and the number of policies that they proposed therein. In addition, there is not a single president that can be cited as the exception to the definitional “traditional” rule; instead, as the figures above indicate, the presidents of today bear a strange resemblance to the presidents of yesteryear when we compare their policy proposition and advocacy in State of the Union Addresses.

This does not suggest, by any means, that the presidents of today are not different in many ways from those presidents of two centuries ago. There have been technological advances as well as issue developments heretofore unseen in the past history of the presidency. In addition, we see that presidents are becoming more frugal with their

words by proposing more policy in shorter amounts of rhetoric than the prolific (Roosevelt and Taft as examples) address-writers of the past.

However, if we simply consider that presidents faced changing environments as well as changing issues in their tenure, the findings above propose that presidents overall have proposed similar numbers of policies on the subjects with which they were faced since almost the beginning of the nation. Presidents of the past can be considered different less for policy proposition and involvement with issue advocacy than for a simple difference in context and history of the times. Yes, presidents did propose policy on some dramatically different things in 2000 (however, issues such as the economy, education, and the military were staples in State of the Union Addresses from the beginning of the office) than they did in 1900 and even more so than 1800.

The undeniable similarity comes when examining that tenet of the “modern” presidencies and the policy that separates them from presidents long past. No, presidents today do not propose significantly higher total amounts of policy in their addresses than the presidents of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. No, the “traditional” presidents were not seemingly bound by a constitutional constraint that prohibited them from taking political action or being closely involved with issue proposition. And no, there is no largely observable increase in modern-day policy proposal than as seen in the past; Taft and Roosevelt, in fact, were the pinnacle of both policy proposal and address length in the history of the presidency, and yet very standard in terms of policy proposal when we control for those great lengths.

The examination and illustration of my data presented above suggests that beginning as early as Adams and Jackson, the presidency began to break free of the non-

political, constitutionally proper position of the president who stayed away from the limelight and out of the realm of proposition of public policy. It appears as though Tulis, when commenting that Jackson's "reputation as a popular leader derives not from his activities as a popular speaker, but his attempt to address the people through the annual message" (1987, 73-4) was more accurate than he knew in recognizing the fact that Jackson used a popular message for popular address. Indeed, Jackson, and Adams as well, seem to have started a trend in policy proposition that, even though altered by method of presentation, reflects the current levels of political activity and initiative of the president in his State of the Union Address.

## CHAPTER IV

### SPEAKING TO OR FOR THE PEOPLE

“The President is the people’s lobbyist.”

--Hubert H. Humphrey

“There is but one national voice in the country and that is the voice of the President”

--Woodrow Wilson

According to scholars of the presidency and proponents of the “traditional/modern” rhetorical presidency, the initiative to speak to, as one of, and for the people of the United States is a 20<sup>th</sup> century development. “Popular address” and “popular rhetoric” as they have been coined, are used by the president in his addresses to appeal to Congress and the people. According to the tenets of the “traditional/modern paradigm, those presidents of the “traditional” presidency were, by the reverence of their position or the limited powers directly granted in the Constitution, prevented from utilizing popular rhetoric in their addresses that would attempt to move or speak to the greater populous of the country. However, as seen in this chapter, this type of public-address rhetoric was not necessarily foreign to even those who predate the official formation of government in the United States.

The focus of this chapter is to examine the usage of public address rhetoric within the State of the Union Addresses in order to identify trends and determine whether presidents since the founding of the United States have used popular appeal and rhetoric in their address, or whether the introduction of going public is indeed a “modern” development that was little used in the rhetorical past of the presidency. Specifically, I look at instances in which the president attempts to address his audience as one of them,

attempts to use his presidential position as justification for his arguments, and those instances in which the president actually makes a command or request in his State of the Union Address.

### The Rhetoric of Popular Address

Although rhetoric by its very nature is diverse, I will classify, and focus on, four types of popular address rhetoric in general and note their occurrences within the State of the Union Addresses. These are: identification rhetoric, authority rhetoric, directive rhetoric, and referential rhetoric. The labels given to the types of rhetoric are for parsimony more than anything else, but accurately reflect the type of rhetoric that is examined under the given label. Each label effectively measures a different attempt of the president to speak as one of the people, to the people, in reference to the people, or as the president using different pronouns. “Politicians make use of pronouns to good effect: to indicate, accept, deny, or distance themselves from responsibility for political action; to reveal ideological bias; to encourage solidarity; to designate those who are supporters (with “us”) as well as those who are enemies (against “us”) and to present specific idiosyncratic aspects of the individuals and personality” (Wilson, 1990, 76). In addition, the four typologies of rhetoric above seek to delineate presidential purpose in policy proposal and popular address. “The meanings of selected pronouns shift and change depending on the way in which they are textually employed...selectional choices such as those which operate between exclusive and inclusive ‘we’ for example, offer politicians ways of directing attention towards or away from their own existential center, i.e. themselves” (Wilson, 1990, 76).

The president uses these variations in his rhetoric to account for the many different interests of his audience as well as different environmental contexts he may face. Wayne Fields remarks that in the State of the Union Address, the president “must manage to be both apart and included, must be at once particular and universal, present challenges that do not necessarily confront Congressmen or Senators... The job is always, as Washington foresaw, the difficult business of building affection, affection for one another and for the union itself” (Fields, 1996, 16;228). The president attempts to accomplish this inclusion and unification through a manipulation of the ways in which he speaks to, for, and about his audience using identification rhetoric, authority rhetoric, directive rhetoric, and referential rhetoric.

Identification rhetoric will be the use of the words “our,” “we,” and “us.” These words are used within State of the Union Addresses in order to make the public, or the listening audience, feel that the president is indeed one of those to whom he speaks. In his 2003 State of the Union Address, George W. Bush proposed that “*We* will not deny, *we* will not ignore, *we* will not pass along our problems to other Congresses, to other presidents, and other generations. *We* will confront them with focus, and clarity, and courage.” This was an exercise in the use of identification rhetoric. George W. Bush portrayed himself as one of those in America who would confront the problems of the country and work toward their correction. He continues with this type of identification rhetoric in his attempts to influence the people to support any action that might be taken against the regime in Iraq. “*We* will consult, but let there be no misunderstanding: If Saddam Hussein does not fully disarm, for the safety of *our* people and for the peace of the world, *we* will lead a coalition to disarm him. And if war is forced upon *us*, *we* will

fight with the full force and might of the United States military and *we* will prevail. And as *we* and *our* coalition partners are doing in Afghanistan, *we* will bring to the Iraqi people food and medicines and supplies and freedom.” This constant repetition of “we” is the president’s attempt to build consensus and agreement by creating identification between the citizens of the United States and himself; if they identify with what he speaks, he will receive greater support and have the ability to proceed further with policy objectives.

From the example of George W. Bush’s State of the Union Address above, we might be able to reasonably suggest relationships between the use of identification rhetoric and policy proposal. First of all, the president, by wishing to obtain support from the people (or even make himself seem as a member of Congress in order to build consensus on an issue), should use greater amounts of identification rhetoric when proposing greater amounts of policy. In addition, we might predict that in the period where the State of the Union Address was delivered in written form, there might be less use of identification rhetoric than in the orally delivered period due to the fact that a president delivering a written address through a courier to the Congress is not necessarily directly addressing them as a fellow lawmaker, but could be seen as a president delivering his policy proposals for Congress to act upon. Although further study would enrich our understanding of whether or not identification rhetoric is used more for controversial policies as opposed to valence issues that really face no opposition, that dissection is not addressed here.

The second rhetorical label that will be used here is that of authority rhetoric. Authority rhetoric is usage of the words “I,” “me,” and “my” within the State of the

Union Address. By using these specific pronouns, the president is attempting to exert the power of his station and the power of the presidency to propose policy and programs.

Again in 2003, George W. Bush proposed numerous policies regarding the environment, stating that “*I* have sent you a comprehensive energy plan to promote energy efficiency and conservation, to develop cleaner technology and to produce more energy at home. *I* have sent you Clear Skies legislation that mandates a 70 percent cut in air pollution from power plants over the next 15 years. *I* have sent you a Healthy Forests Initiative, to help prevent the catastrophic fires that devastate communities, kill wildlife and burn away millions of acres of treasured forest. *I* urge you to pass these measures, for the good of both our environment and our economy. Even more, *I* ask you to take a crucial step, and protect our environment in ways that generations before us could not have imagined. Tonight *I* am proposing \$1.2 billion in research funding so that America can lead the world in developing clean, hydrogen-powered automobiles.” This repetition of the word “*I*” in the midst of policy proposals sends a message to Congress that the President has been active on certain issues and has certain policies that he would like to see activity on by the Congress. In addition, this use of authority rhetoric reminds the people of the United States that the President is working hard towards many different environmental goals, and that Congress only need approve his plans to get the protection that the President sees as necessary. It is this flexing of the muscle of the power of the presidential position that makes authority rhetoric effective.

The example above suggests that identification rhetoric may be used more when the president is emphasizing issues that have yet to be acted on by Congress, or used when he explicitly wants the Congress to understand the policy suggestion originates

from the president, as opposed to originating from the people, and he would be willing to use the power of his station to see that this issue is considered. In addition, because the presidents who delivered their addresses in written format were interacting almost directly with only Congress, the level of authority rhetoric might be greater during that time than in during the period of orally delivered addresses. After all, a president speaking face to face with Congress does not necessarily want to appear dictatorial, but a president who does not interact directly with them might have fewer hesitations in placing the power of his station behind policy suggestions.

The third classification of rhetoric in this chapter is that of directive rhetoric. This type of rhetoric employs the words “you,” “yours,” and “your.” These three words are labeled directive rhetoric because they are used to send a direct command of action to the audience, whether it is Congress or the people. The examples from the 2003 address for authority rhetoric above also show how these many different types of rhetoric are often closely associated. The 2003 State of the Union Address also saw George W. Bush address Congress with this directive rhetoric: “*You*, the Congress, have already passed all these reductions, and promised them for future years. If this tax relief is good for Americans three, or five, or seven years from now, it is even better for Americans today. We should also strengthen the economy by treating investors equally in our tax laws. To boost investor confidence, and to help the nearly 10 million seniors who receive dividend income, I ask *you* to end the unfair double taxation of dividends.” He also proposed, “Even more, I ask *you* to take a crucial step, and protect our environment in ways that generations before us could not have imagined” and “I ask *you* to protect infants at the very hour of their birth and end the practice of partial-birth abortion.” These policies are

not simply suggestions that the President is giving for directions the country *could* take. These are commands from the president himself framed in the format of a request that combines both authority and directive rhetoric. Bush uses “I ask *you*” to convey the point that the President of the United States is asking the Congress of the United States to follow his policy initiatives. He does not simply hope they examine his policy; he wants the Congress to act as he has requested on the issues he has discussed.

Without breaking down the policy proposals into subject type and examining the level of controversy associated with each, it is difficult to say for sure that the president might use more directive rhetoric when he felt he had the support of the people, and could therefore almost command Congress to take action on their behalf. However, we can suggest that, because the people are an integral piece of directive rhetoric, in that their absence makes its use appear demanding or bossy, that a president might use greater amounts of directive rhetoric during the period of oral delivery, or in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as opposed to earlier times or during written State of the Union Addresses.

The fourth and final type of popular address rhetoric addressed here will be that of referential rhetoric. This type of rhetoric can be observed through the employment of the words “them,” “they,” and “their.” This is referential rhetoric because it is used to refer to others on whose behalf the president is either proposing policy or suggesting action. In addition to the other types of popular address rhetoric examined above, George W. Bush used referential rhetoric in his 2003 State of the Union Address as well, saying, “In all of these efforts, however, America's purpose is more than to follow a process. It is to achieve a result: the end of terrible threats to the civilized world. All free nations have a stake in preventing sudden and catastrophic attack. And we are asking *them* to join us.”

He continues, “As we continue to work together to keep Social Security sound and reliable, we must offer younger workers a chance to invest in retirement accounts that *they* will control and *they* will own...Instead, we must work toward a system in which all Americans have a good insurance policy, choose their own doctors, and seniors and low-income Americans receive the help *they* need.” He further explains, “Americans are doing the work of compassion every day — visiting prisoners, providing shelter for battered women, bringing companionship to lonely seniors. These good works deserve our praise, *they* deserve our personal support and, when appropriate, *they* deserve the assistance of the federal government.” Reference is made in each of these cases to behavior, people, and policy that Congress should examine and act upon.

Because this type of popular address rhetoric is specifically a referral to others or the activities that are necessary on their behalf, larger amounts of popular address rhetoric might be found in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries than in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

Presidents during the founding were speaking to a Congress about how the country should be set up for the benefit of its residents, and should speak about those residents very frequently. In addition, during the period of written delivery of the State of the Union Address, presidents were sending a message that, although it would reach the people, could be largely *about* them and the policies necessary on their behalf. Without the direct audience, the president was speaking much more about the citizenry than directly to them.

When looking at each type of rhetoric and its employment in the State of the Union Addresses, it is again important to realize that different presidents speak with different address lengths and propose different numbers of policy as well. In order to

make the connection between the use of popular address rhetoric to policy proposal clear, address length is controlled for by dividing the number of popular address words by the total number of words in the State of the Union Address. This enables popular address rhetoric to be expressed as a percentage of the overall address, thereby controlling for the differing address lengths and providing a clearer picture of the frequency with which popular address rhetoric has been incorporated by presidents from the founding to the present.

Before examining the State of the Union Addresses however, a simple examination of Jefferson's use of rhetoric within the Declaration of Independence illustrates political employment of popular address rhetoric that dates back to the founding and challenges the assertion and assumption that audience analysis and adapted rhetoric are relatively new, or even 20<sup>th</sup> century, innovations of the presidency.

### The Rhetoric of the Declaration of Independence

When Thomas Jefferson was drafting the Declaration of Independence, he was forced to walk a very thin rhetorical line in order to please and address all of the different factions and their positions in the American colonies. He created the document under the weight of a divided nation, in which some of the colonists supported action against England, some colonists felt that the colonies should remain loyal to the King of England, and some colonists who really did not care either way as they were having enough difficulty trying to establish a life for themselves in the new wilderness. In addition, Jefferson had to create a document in which the founders and those attempting to influence the people of the colonies toward a movement for independence would not

come across as elitist, pretentious, or disdainful of the views and the needs of the common man. As a result of his realization that the colonies were being pulled in so many different directions at once, Jefferson formed a document in which the rhetoric and the object of address was to coax the reader or listener into a feeling of fellowship and identification and then utilize a different rhetoric of authority in order to move the average citizen from simple agreement to action and rebellion. In the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson used “three forms of persuasive appeal: to reason (logos), to emotion (pathos), and to the speaker’s authority (ethos)” (Bizzell and Herzberg, 1990, 4).

The first part of the argument in the Declaration of Independence can be interpreted as Jefferson’s attempt to set the foundation for the rest of the document and convince the reader that this document deserves attention. He begins by using identification rhetoric appealing to the logos of the reader or the listener. This is done through the presentation of facts that he establishes as widely accepted and the use of language that identifies those who created the document with those who will read it. “We hold these truths to be self evident, that *all* men are created *equal*, that they are endowed by the creator with certain *unalienable Rights*, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness...That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the *right of the people* to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government” (emphasis added)(Levy, 1988, 81).

The reader or the listener, therefore, existing within the same context and identifying with the same principles, comes to the conclusion that these are logical facts. This appeal to logos is the logical centering that allows Jefferson to continue his argument with every reader exhibiting unity of thought. This method of first focusing the

thought of the listener on a subject chosen by the author dates back to classical rhetoricians such as the Sophists, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. However, it is also reflected in the contemporary writings of such authors as Burke, who would see the argumentational directioning as utilizing a ‘terministic screen,’ as mentioned above, with which to limit the argument and unify the thought of the audience. Jefferson has established the shared norms and rights of the colonists as well as focused the audience for the second and third sections of the Declaration; he can now move forward with clear purpose and focus.

The second stage of the argument of the Declaration is the establishment of the ethos of Jefferson and the appeal to the pathos of the reader or listener. In this section, Jefferson states the offenses of the King against the colonies in different increasing stages. This forces the reader to acknowledge that Jefferson has authority and knowledge on the matter and is well acquainted with the offenses (ethos). The appeal to the reader or listener’s pathos comes through Jefferson’s use of language. He begins by speaking of the King of England subtly and with a distant voice. “He has refused to pass Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people...He has obstructed the Administration of Justice” (Levy, 1988, 82). Most of this first section deals with infractions of the King on matters of government and issues that are at a distance from the people themselves.

This emotional distance and lack of volatile language is then narrowed for stronger expressions of opposition. “He has obstructed the administration of justice...He has made judges dependant on his will alone...He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance” (Levy, 1988, 82). The language used here is stronger than in the primary

indictments and begins to take a more personal tone. Instead of simply discussing the state of government and the improprieties that are associated with that relationship with the King, words such as ‘obstruct,’ ‘harass,’ and ‘eat out the substance’ are used to present a stronger point and get a stronger reaction.

In the final section of offenses, however, Jefferson completely closes the distance between the offenses of the King and the lives of the people by the use of identification rhetoric. “For cutting off *our* trade...For imposing Taxes on *us*...For depriving *us* in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury...For transporting *us* beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences...He has plundered *our* seas, ravaged *our* Coasts, burnt *our* towns, and destroyed the lives of *our* people...[he allocates] works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages ” (emphasis added) (Levy, 1988, 82). This use of passionate and pictorially descriptive language attempts to fill the listener or reader with emotion. Gone are Jefferson’s descriptions of a government that is taken advantage of by a king. The impropriety of the King is now shown through crimes against mankind in an almost medieval sense as villages are burned and property is pillaged. The King is suddenly a hated figure who is working to personally attack every member of the colonies. There is little doubt within the audience that they are victims, whether they realize this fact or not, of a tyrannous King inflicting severe and inhumane damage upon them. This appeal to pathos quickens the heartbeat of the audience and prepares them for the next part of the argument which functions as Jefferson’s movement toward action.

After stating the common values of the colonies, explaining the offenses against them dealt by the Crown, and stirring up the emotional fervor of the audience, the final

part of the argument is a call to arms and action; it employs several manipulations of rhetorical language. Jefferson uses identification rhetoric and gives examples where he and all colonists have tried to cope with the situation and are not rushing into unwarranted problems. “*We* have warned them...*We* have reminded them...*We* have appealed to their native justice...*We* have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations” (emphasis added) (Levy, 1988, 83). Jefferson uses the phrase “*We* have” over and over to reinforce to the audience that the patience of the colonies has been tried. His use of repetition reiterates to the audience that this is neither rash action by the colonies nor unfounded in its origins.

The conclusion of the Declaration switches voices suddenly, to become that of the representatives of the United States and authority figures to the people. “*We*, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world...declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States” (Levy, 1988, 83). The ethos of the Representatives appeals to the pathos of the audience to join with them, under God, in order to move away from the evil of the crown. The declaration of the rights of the colonies, described by the representatives of those colonies, completes the argument that Jefferson constructs. He has declared the rights that are valuable and sacred to all men. He has given examples of how those rights have been trampled on by the King across the sea. He has indicted the King for both offenses against government and the very people themselves. And finally, he has established, as a member of the representative body of the nation, that the single alternative to the infractions is united rebellion and a Declaration of Independence for the colonies.

Jefferson ends the Declaration with a final appeal to the audience and a pledge to uphold the rights of all of the men in the colony who are equal in the rebellion. “We mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor” (Levy, 1988, 83). Jefferson’s final line pleads for the common man to join them in pursuance of freedom and uses language that defines the pure and noble traits accepted by all men.

Though the document is efficient and states the factual information for appealing to the audience and identifying with it, it is Jefferson’s style that makes the Declaration of Independence the forceful, rhetorical tool used by the colonies to declare their freedom. First of all, Jefferson has mastered Kairos, as employed by Plato, Socrates, the Sophists, and indeed anyone who wishes to practice successful rhetoric. It is defined as “the immediate social situation in which solutions to philosophical problems must be proposed” (Bizzell and Herzberg, 1990, 56). This, in effect, is the ability to analyze the audience and present appropriately.

Jefferson exhibits his knowledge of Kairos throughout the Declaration. In the beginning, when stating the common laws and the offenses of the King, Jefferson uses identification rhetoric to include himself in the “we” that is used. “We” are the people of the colonies who have been wronged by the King. “We” are those who desire freedom from oppression. The beginning and the middle of the Declaration is an appeal to all men, whether farmer, lawyer, or servant. Jefferson understands that an authoritative tone from the beginning would parallel the forces that the colonies are attempting to reject. The people fear a central government and beginning with “We the Representatives” would seem to only shift the tyranny from overseas to within the colonies.

However, Jefferson is only able to take the authoritative tone in the latter part of the Declaration because he has already established that he is equal to the common man and that the King has wronged him also. Only then does he assert his standing as a representative of the people. Here, the authority is important because Jefferson switches the focus from what has been done to all men to what must be done by the leaders of the people. The Representatives have already decided that tyranny must be overthrown; this is the opportunity for the people to voice their agreement. Jefferson appropriately analyzes his audience and he has discovered the appropriate Kairos that is conveyed in the Declaration.

An authoritative document that leads people towards revolution must be extremely delicate and at the same time powerful enough to cause revolt. Through pathos, ethos, logos, and other classical rhetorical tools, the Declaration of Independence establishes itself as an exemplum in presidential popular address rhetoric. Jefferson has mixed emotion, passion, strength, and authority in a document that moved great numbers to throw off the tyranny of the time and find freedom. The Declaration is an argument for the rights of the people and the decisions of their representatives. It accomplishes its goals through style and language that are craftily combined to appeal to the common man and the wealthy citizen.

It is, in fact, this early precedent—illustrated above—which allows for the president and politicians to speak as one of the people or directly on their behalf, gives gravity and weight to arguments that the president presents to Congress as well as to the people. As examined in Samuel Kernell's *Going Public* (1997), the contemporary presidency uses the ability to speak to the Congress in front of, and on behalf of, the

people to both inform the electorate of his plans and policies, and to pressure members of Congress into adopting a favorable disposition towards his policies. Congress grants political levity to the president in fear that he does indeed have the voice of the people and to oppose him would be to ensure the representatives own ousting at the next election. However, the data above raises questions as to the origins of identification rhetoric and insists that we look to the whole of presidential history to more fully examine its evolution and origination.

### Identification Rhetoric

We begin to examine the data by looking at the evidences of identification rhetoric, illustrated as imperatively valuable even in the forming of the Declaration of Independence above, in its frequency throughout the history of the State of the Union Address.

Figure 11:

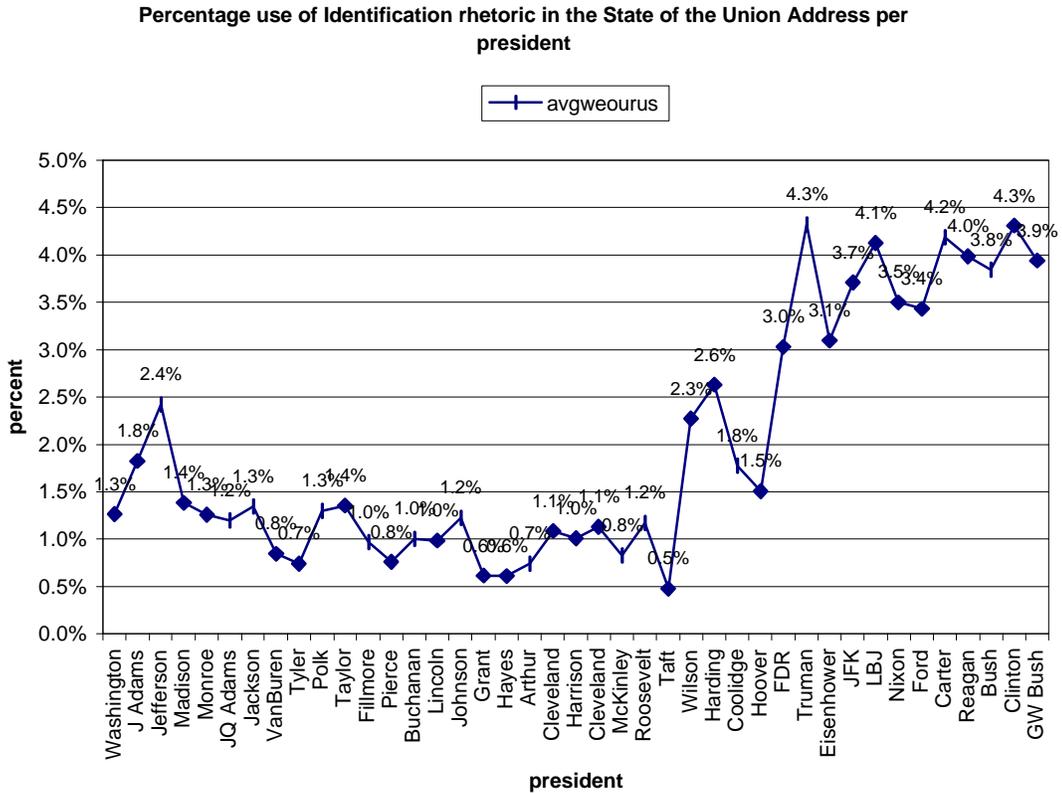


Figure 11 is an examination of the average percentage of identification rhetoric used in the average State of the Union Address per president. As discussed above, presidents use these three rhetorical terms (“we,” “our,” and “us”) in order to identify themselves with the listeners (Congress) or the people of the United States. From Figure 11 above, we see that the rhetorical usage of the terms “we,” “our,” and “us” from Washington until Monroe averaged over 1.5% per president. Identification rhetoric then averaged at or just below 1.5% from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed the high level of identification rhetoric used by Jefferson is not seen again until Wilson’s presidency in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

If we consider that the average length of the State of the Union Address from the founding to the present is around 11,000 words, the percentages above suggest that in a address of that length, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson would use the words “we,” “our,” and “us” almost 275 times. Presidents of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries would use identification rhetoric 110 times in that 11,000-word State of the Union Address, and presidents of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries would use an estimated 473 identification rhetoric words in a State of the Union Address that averaged 11,000 words. Although the length selected is for illustration purposes (as no orally delivered state of the union address has ever reached that length) the comparison shows that contemporary and founding presidents use “we,” “our,” and “us” 3 to 5 times more in their State of the Union Address than do their counterparts in the 1800s.

When examined more closely, the high level of incorporation of identification rhetoric in the State of the Union Addresses of the founders becomes more obvious. In the State of the Union Address of 1793, Washington explains that “If *we* desire to avoid insult, *we* must be able to repel it; if *we* desire to secure peace, one of the most powerful instruments of *our* rising prosperity, it must be known that *we* are at all times ready for war” (my emphasis is added for all of the following rhetorical analyses of the State of the Union). The “we” here is the people of the United States, the Congress and the President who are all seemingly behind his proposal for increased defensive measures. In 1798, John Adams also uses this identification rhetoric relating to the defense of the country, “*We* ought without loss of time to lay the foundation for an increase of *our* Navy to a size sufficient to guard *our* coast and protect *our* trade” as well as trade and interaction with France, “Hitherto, therefore, nothing is discoverable in the conduct of France which

ought to change or relax *our* measures of defense. On the contrary, to extend and invigorate them is *our* true policy. *We* have no reason to regret that these measures have been thus far adopted and pursued, and in proportion as *we* enlarge *our* view of the portentous and incalculable situation of Europe *we* shall discover new and cogent motives for the full development of *our* energies and resources.” The “we” and the “our” are again the Congress, the people and the President of the United States all identifying with the necessary courses of action for the nation.

The possible explanations for this high level of identification rhetoric could be twofold. One explanation may be that Jefferson returned the State of the Union Address from the orally delivered format to the written format, as detailed in previous chapters. This written delivery to Congress may have contributed to a less frequent incorporation of the identification rhetoric that was used in the State of the Union Address as presidents realized that they were no longer on the public platform speaking to a live audience. As seen above, from the point when Jefferson altered the delivery of the State of the Union Address from oral to written, presidents from Madison to Taft included decreasing amounts of identification rhetoric within their addresses. In fact, although Taft delivered the longest average State of the Union Addresses in presidential history (he averaged 22,700 words per address), he included less identification rhetoric in his State of the Union Address than any other president in the history of the United States (0.5%). This would have been only an average of 110 identification rhetoric words per State of the Union Address; this total would almost exactly half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century averages for identification rhetoric in an Address averaging 11,000 words, as examined above. However, this assumption that written State of the Union Addresses need be less

focused on identification rhetoric because of their direct delivery to Congress and bypass of public delivery, cannot be reached with certainty, because as examined earlier, the methods by which the address was carried to the public prior to the return to oral delivery (newspapers, political mailings, pamphlets) were a significant source by which the message of the president was widely disseminated to the public at large.

A better explanation for the frequent use of identification rhetoric during the founding may lie in the fact, as also observed in the previous chapter, that the founders were not only attempting to construct the foundations of the new country, they were also the ones who had designed its rules and governing regulations. Those presidents, through Monroe, were actively involved in the formation of the country and its government. As a result, the increased percentages of identification rhetoric may be present due to the fact that they *actually* identified with the new lawmakers and citizens of the country as opposed to a simple attempt at rhetorical manipulation for policy or support purposes.

Presidents in the 19<sup>th</sup> century did however use this identification rhetoric within their addresses, although not to the lengths of the founding presidencies. Polk began his second State of the Union Address in 1846 by commenting on the policy of trade in the country and suggesting “In adhering to this wise policy, a preliminary and paramount duty obviously consists in the protection of *our* national interests from encroachment or sacrifice and *our* national honor from reproach. These must be maintained at any hazard. They admit of no compromise or neglect, and must be scrupulously and constantly guarded. From a policy so sacred to humanity and so salutary in its effects upon *our* political system we should never be induced voluntarily to depart.” He also uses identification rhetoric in the discussion of Indians—“*Our* laws regulating trade and

intercourse with the Indian tribes east of the Rocky Mountains should be extended to the Pacific Ocean; and for the purpose of executing them and preserving friendly relations with the Indian tribes within *our* limits, an additional number of Indian agencies will be required, and should be authorized by law.” The use of “we” and “our,” is again to detail a universal problem or approach and gain widespread consensus through identification of the listener with the speaker.

As Figure 11 shows, however, identification rhetoric tapered off in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century until the Wilson Administration. Identification rhetoric then experienced a surge in his address in 1914 in which almost 5% of the State of the Union Address consisted of the words “we,” “our,” or “us.” Wilson reached heights of identification rhetoric unrealized by his predecessors. His average State of the Union Address was just over 4,000 words; this meant that he averaged almost 200 identification rhetoric words per Address. This amount was double the average of his predecessor Taft, and, as seen above, he included double the number in a address that was 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the length. Wilson used the rhetoric when speaking of the European War, proposing that the countries of Europe, “At any rate, they will need *our* help and *our* manifold services as they have never needed them before; and *we* should be ready, more fit and ready than *we* have ever been. Here are markets which *we* must supply, and *we* must find the means of action.” He used the rhetoric when speaking of foreign relations with the Philippines, saying, “How better, in this time of anxious questioning and perplexed policy, could *we* show *our* confidence in the principles of liberty, as the source as well as the expression of life, how better could *we* demonstrate *our* own self-possession and steadfastness in the courses of justice and disinterestedness than by thus going calmly forward to fulfill *our*

promises to a dependent people, who will now look more anxiously than ever to see whether *we* have indeed the liberality, the unselfishness, the courage, the faith *we* have boasted and professed.”

Wilson used identification rhetoric in discussions of domestic policy as well, concerning exploration and mapping: “*We* have not provided adequate vessels or adequate machinery for the survey and charting. *We* have used old vessels that were not big enough or strong enough and which were so nearly unseaworthy that our inspectors would not have allowed private owners to send them to sea. This is a matter which, as I have said, seems small, but is in reality very great. Its importance has only to be looked into to be appreciated,” money appropriations, “And, like good stewards, *we* should so account for every dollar of *our* appropriations as to make it perfectly evident what it was spent for and in what way it was spent,” and military affairs, “Let *us* remind ourselves, therefore, of the only thing *we* can do or will do. *We* must depend in every time of national peril, in the future as in the past, not upon a standing army, nor yet upon a reserve army, but upon a citizenry trained and accustomed to arms. It will be right enough, right American policy, based upon *our* accustomed principles and practices, to provide a system by which every citizen who will volunteer for the training may be made familiar with the use of modern arms, the rudiments of drill and maneuver, and the maintenance and sanitation of camps. *We* should encourage such training and make it a means of discipline which *our* young men will learn to value. It is right that *we* should provide it not only, but that *we* should make it as attractive as possible, and so induce *our* young men to undergo it at such times as they can command a little freedom and can seek the physical development they need, for mere health’s sake, if for nothing more.”

After Wilson, the percentage of identification rhetoric in the State of the Union Address never dropped below an average of 1.5% per State of the Union Address per president. Instead, the use of “we,” “our,” and “us” has shown a steady and permanent increase in its incorporation into the State of the Union Address. As seen in the figures above, presidents today average and surpass almost 4% identification rhetoric per State of the Union Address. Although, as seen in the last chapter, the address lengths in the 20<sup>th</sup> century are generally only about 5,000 words, rhetoric in which the president wishes to identify himself as one of his listeners is dramatically increasing.

Figure 12:

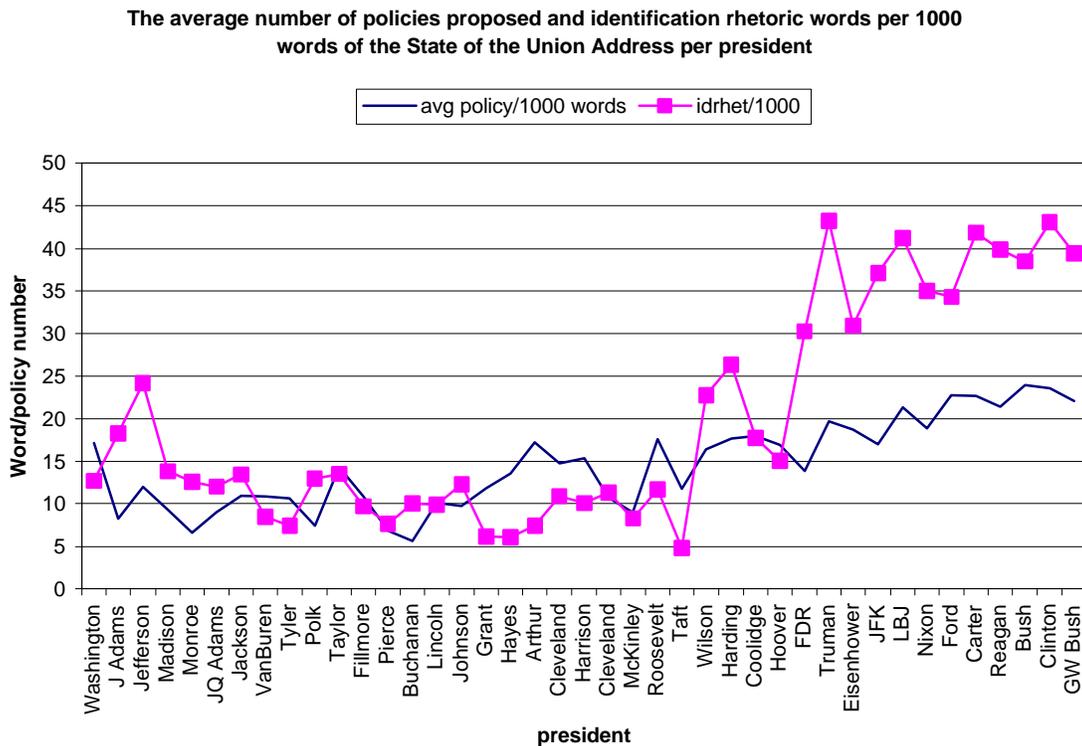


Figure 12 is a comparison of the number of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address compared with the number of identification rhetoric words used per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address per president. In examining the State of the Union Addresses given since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, we see that an increase in the number of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address is often accompanied by an increase in the number of identification rhetoric words used per 1,000 words of the Address. In addition, just as the number of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address sees a steady and consistent increase that culminates in the present-day president, so too do the figures show a similar and coincident increase in the amount of identification rhetoric that is used by those same presidents in those same State of the Union Addresses.

As the amount of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address rises from 16 policies with Washington to 22 policies with George W. Bush, so does the number of identification rhetoric words employed rise from 13 identification rhetoric words per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address with Washington to almost 39 with George W. Bush. Although the difference between the number of policies (from 16-22) and increase in identification rhetoric (from 13-40) might seem slight, in an address of 5,000 words (the average address length of orally delivered State of the Union Addresses), Bush would have proposed 30 more policies and used 140 more identification rhetoric words than would Washington in a State of the Union Address of the same length. Additionally, the increase in the number of policies proposed and the number of identification rhetoric words in an Address is even more dramatic if we consider that in a State of the Union Address given during the period of written delivery

(the average word length was 11,000 words), an address by G.W. Bush would contain 66 more policies and almost 300 more identification rhetoric words than would the address of Washington. These data illustrate that there have indeed been significant increases not only in policy proposal, but the use of identification rhetoric in the State of the Union Address since the founding.

The 2003 State of the Union Address from George W. Bush at the outset of this chapter gives several examples of his inclusion of identification rhetoric within that address. However, Clinton and Reagan also used large amounts of identification rhetoric their State of the Union Addresses. In speaking on the economic recession in 1983, Reagan stated: “*We* must all do everything in *our* power to bring their ordeal to an end. It has fallen to *us*, in *our* time, to undo damage that was a long time in the making, and to begin the hard but necessary task of building a better future for *ourselves* and *our* children.” He addressed Congressional cooperation in the same manner, proposing “So, let *us*, in these next 2 years—men and women of both parties, every political shade—concentrate on the long-range, bipartisan responsibilities of government, not the short-range or short-term temptations of partisan politics.” Reagan also used the identification rhetoric speaking of the budget, “The Federal budget is both a symptom and a cause of *our* economic problems. Unless *we* reduce the dangerous growth rate in government spending, *we* could face the prospect of sluggish economic growth into the indefinite future,” trade, “*We* must strengthen the organization of *our* trade agencies and make changes in *our* domestic laws and international trade policy to promote free trade and the increased flow of American goods, services, and investments,” and education, “*We* must keep that edge, and to do so *we* need to begin renewing the basics—starting with *our*

educational system. *We* must join together—parents, teachers, grass roots groups, organized labor, and the business community—to revitalize American education by setting a standard of excellence,” to name a few areas of policy.

Clinton frequently presented himself as one of his audience as well. He began his first State of the Union Address in 1993, framing his policy initiatives as common concern from the very first page. “When Presidents speak to Congress and the Nation from this podium, typically they comment on the full range and challenges and opportunities that face the United States. But this is not an ordinary time, and for all the many tasks that require *our* attention, I believe tonight one calls on *us* to focus, to unite, and to act. And that is *our* economy.” As Reagan did in 1983, Clinton also uses identification rhetoric to stress the importance of Congressional Cooperation to achieve his goals. “*We* must now break the habits of both political parties and say there can be no more something for nothing and admit frankly that *we* are all in this together. If *we* have the vision, the will, and the heart to make the changes *we* must, *we* can still enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century with possibilities *our* parents could not even have imagined and enter it having secured the American dream for *ourselves* and for future generations.” In his address, we are almost inundated with the number of policies proposed with identification rhetoric. He speaks of the economy saying “*Our* immediate priority must be to create jobs, create jobs now,” and even proposes his own initiatives under the guise that they were policies and proposals of Congress, the president, and even the people themselves, saying “*We* propose a permanent investment tax credit for the smallest firms in this country, with revenues of under \$5 million. And *we* propose new rewards for entrepreneurs who take new risks. *We* propose to give small business access to all the new technologies of our

time. And *we* propose to attack this credit crunch which has denied small business the credit they need to flourish and prosper.” The “we” in question is very unclear as well as seemingly fluid, representing the Congress, the citizenry or the party at various points.

Figures 11 and 12 illustrate corresponding increases in policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address and the percentage of identification rhetoric used in the address. We find that the correlation between the number of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address and the percentage of identification rhetoric is fairly high (0.362). This suggests that just as each new president is attempting to propose more policy within the State of the Union Address, he is attempting to more closely identify with his audience. The case could be made that this is a spurious relationship and the occurrence of the popular address rhetoric really has no impact on the proposal of policy. However, if we look at George W. Bush’s 2003 State of the Union Address yet again, we find that out of the 86 policies he proposed, he used identification rhetoric (usually multiple times) in 38 of those policy propositions. Although it does not reach the level of correlation above, it does suggest that presidents are in fact using identification rhetoric in conjunction with policy proposal. This is consistent with the Kernell’s evaluation of presidents who go public (1997). It does appear that presidents are trying to speak to their listeners more as one of the audience who has a plan for his fellow man than as a president using his authority to propose policy and command action.

In addition to identification rhetoric having a strong relationship with policy proposal, we can see that the use of this kind of rhetoric is affected by other variables as well.

Table 5:

Regression Analysis of the Percentage of Identification Rhetoric Used in the State of the Union Address

	Per President	Per Year
policy per 1,000 words	0.001312***	0.0005389***
18th/19 <sup>th</sup> (0) versus 20th/21st (1)century	0.007558**	0.012932***
divided (0) versus unified (1) government	0.003757	-0.001763
Economic index (bad0 good1)	-0.001934	-0.000086
the presence of war (no war 0, war 1)	0.007137**	0.007872***
year in office (separated by term, 1-4)		-0.001132
year in office (total, 1-12)		0.000662*
Intercept	-0.005377	0.006878
N	41	216
r-squared	0.743206	0.550824

\*\*\* = significant at the p < .001 level

\*\* = significant at the p < .05 level

\* = significant at the p < .10 level

Table 5 is a regression analysis on the use of identification rhetoric on different environmental variables that surround the State of the Union Address. The first noteworthy finding in Table 5 is the confirmation that there is a very significant relationship between the rise in policy proposals per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address and the amount of identification rhetoric employed in that address. We see that for every policy per 1,000 words that is proposed, the percentage of identification rhetoric responds with increases on the average about .1% per president and about .05% per year. This, in effect, suggests that for every new policy proposed, there is an increase of 1.3 identification rhetoric words used. Therefore, a president that proposed 10 more

policies per 1,000 words than his predecessor would also use 13 more identification rhetoric words per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, we see, as the Figures earlier in the chapter indicate, that the increase in the percentage of identification rhetoric is very much a function of the presidents of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Presidents in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century are increasing the amount of identification rhetoric by .7% over the previous president and by almost 1.2% from the prior State of the Union Address. The contemporary president attempts to be in touch with the electorate in ways that no president of the distant past, and very few of the recent past, have imagined. From the internet to e-mail, from 24 hour cable news networks to the permanent campaign, today's president is seemingly always addressing those to whom he can propose initiative, as well as citizens who may be possible voters for his next term in office.

And although the permanent campaign may paint a bleak picture for governing, we see that there is a significant relationship between the president's use of identification rhetoric and his tenure in office. As seen in Table 5, the president uses more identification rhetoric (although slight) in the latter stages of his tenure as president. The increase may be due to the ability to better know the audience or the comfort level that may come from closing his second term as president.

The Table also shows that although there is no significant relationship between the use of identification rhetoric and the state of the economy, nor identification rhetoric and the type of government that the president faces (divided v. unified). However, the

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<sup>11</sup> The finding of number of identification words that would be used per 1000 words of the State of the Union Address is simply seen by multiplying the regression coefficient by 1000. This provides the actual number of words as opposed to the percentage. The same information is obtained in the remaining rhetorical analyses in like manner.

presence of war does have a meaningful impact on the amount of identification rhetoric that will be used in the State of the Union Address. Presidents who govern during a period of war are likely to have almost 1% more of their address consist of identification rhetoric. That percentage equates to almost 7 more identification rhetoric words per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address in times of war than in times of peace. Therefore, a State of the Union Address delivered orally (average address length 5,000 words) during a time of war (WWI, WW II, Korea, Vietnam, Gulf War) would have 35 more identification rhetoric words used than the same address given in a time of peace. Given that the average number of identification rhetoric words in the orally delivered period was 34, this increase of 35 words would almost double the number of times “we,” “our,” and “us” are used when a president uses to portray himself as one of the people in the State of the Union Address in time of war.

The difference becomes even more significant if we examine the difference in identification rhetoric in the State of the Union Address given during times of war (War of 1812, French and Indian War, Civil War) during the period when the State of the Union Address was given in written format (average address length 11,000 words). We see that the simple 1% increase illustrated in the regressions above suggests that Madison, Polk, Buchanan, and Lincoln would use 77 more identification rhetoric words than their contemporaries not facing war. As the average number of identification rhetoric words during the written period of the State of the Union Address was just over 11, this means that presidents governing during war would use 7 times the number of identification rhetoric words used by their peacetime colleagues. This finding, however, should come as no surprise, as wartime presidents from Lincoln to Franklin Roosevelt

have attempted to calm the people and comfort them, as a fellow grieving citizen who has had loved ones lost in battle, but stands for a cause that is just.

The data above appear to confirm the hypothesis posited at the outset of the chapter suggesting that presidents who wish to propose larger amounts of policy might also incorporate larger quantities of identification rhetoric. In order to achieve his goals, the president must have the support of the people as well as have congenial relations with the members of Congress. In addition, the second hypothesis that the use of identification rhetoric might be found at lower levels during the period of written delivery of the State of the Union Address can also be seen clearly from Figures 11 and 12. The presidents who gave State of the Union Addresses in oral format, whether the founding presidents before Jefferson or those presidents following Taft, all include much larger and increasing levels of identification rhetoric within their addresses.

On the other hand, we can see that those presidents who delivered the State of the Union Address in written form consistently decrease the amount of identification rhetoric used, reaching their nadir with the last president to deliver a written address, Taft. We can say with confidence that contemporary presidents use identification rhetoric in amounts never before seen in the State of the Union Address. The president has a larger audience than ever before, and increasingly attempts to portray himself as one of them in order to garner support and further his policy goals. However, if the president is speaking more as one of the people, we might wonder how often he is choosing to speak as the president. Has an increase in identification rhetoric necessitated a decrease in authority rhetoric? Or, has presidential rhetoric evolved such that the president is able to

speak not only as one of the people, but also with the authority of his station behind him concurrently?

### Authority Rhetoric

In today's political world, when the economy of the country is good, the president most often attempts to take the credit. When it is bad, the voters of America are not shy in attributing to him all of the blame. In times of profit, the president will speak of "my" tax cuts or the plans "I" sent to Congress. But how often does the president actually use this same kind of national authority in the State of the Union Address, or, more importantly, to propose policy therein? Authority rhetoric may be seen as words in the State of the Union Address with which the president attempts to explain his own logic or reasoning on the matter as the basis for policy adoption from the Congress or policy advocacy from the people. In addition, authority rhetoric indicates times when the president attempts to be "The President" and speaks with all of the authority and respect of the office he holds. This can be seen in the frequency of "I," "me," and "my" in the State of the Union Address. This section will examine the frequency of authority rhetoric within the State of the Union Address and across presidents.

Figure 13:

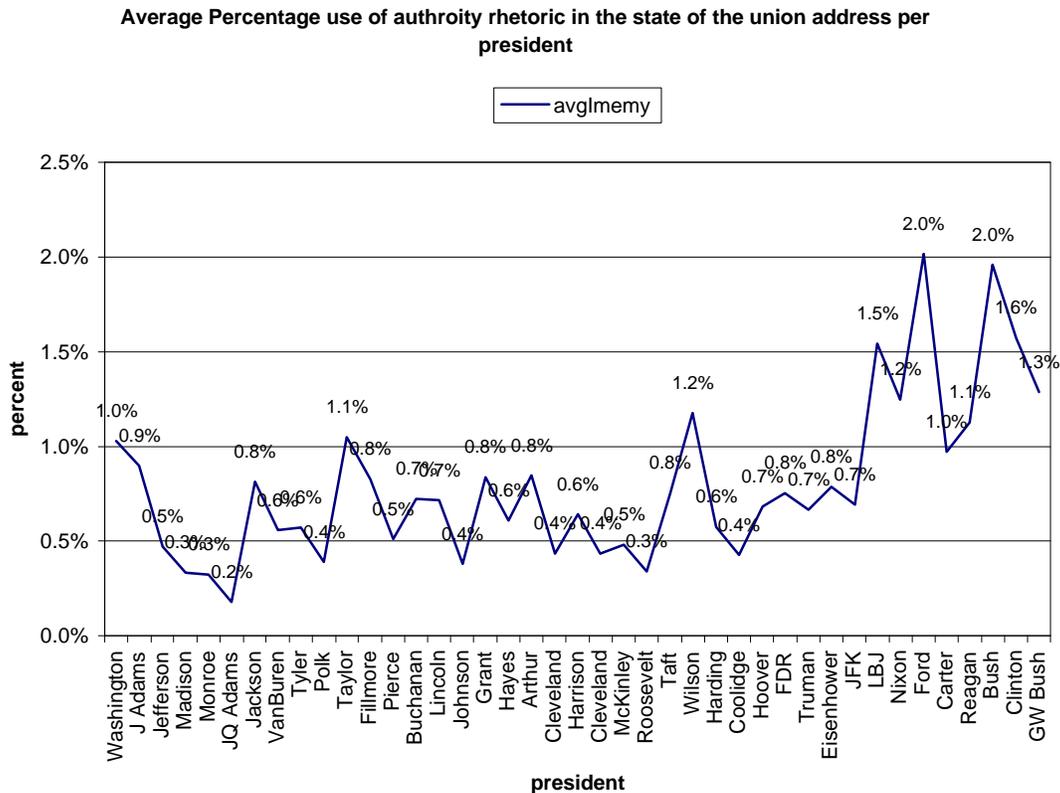


Figure 13 shows the average percent use of authority rhetoric in the State of the Union Address per president. From this figure we can see that authority rhetoric is utilized on a smaller scale in State of the Union Addresses than identification rhetoric. As Figure 13 shows, the average percentage of authority rhetoric generally stayed below 1% of the words in the State of the Union Address from the founding until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The most significant and permanent change in the use of authority rhetoric can be seen with the presidency of LBJ, where the amount of authority rhetoric almost doubles from the average of JFK to that of LBJ. In fact, in 1969, LBJ's State of the Union Address consists of almost 3% (121 out of 4100 words) authority rhetoric, almost

equaling the amount of identification rhetoric he used in the same address (see Figure 11, 3.1%)

However, even though authority rhetoric saw a rapid increase with LBJ, it was by no means absent from founding or 19<sup>th</sup> century State of the Union Addresses. In 1799, almost 1.3% of John Adams' State of the Union Address consisted of authority rhetoric. This level nearly equals the average level for the entire presidency of LBJ. Adams used much of it to explain policies that he had initiated as well as policies he wanted initiated during his tenure. As seen in Adams' State of the Union Address in 1798, authority rhetoric appears at the very outset of the address in the initial policy recommendation. "*I think it my duty to invite the Legislature of the Union to examine the expediency of establishing suitable regulations in aid of the health laws of the respective States.*" He asserted himself again dealing with trade, "*I deem it a duty deliberately and solemnly to declare my opinion that whether we negotiate with her or not, vigorous preparations for war will be alike indispensable. These alone will give to us an equal treaty and insure its observance,*" the budget, "*I have directed an estimate of the appropriations which will be necessary for the service of the ensuing year to be laid before you, accompanied with a view of the public receipts and expenditures to a recent period,*" and even in closing the address, "*I trust that by the temper and wisdom of your proceedings and by a harmony of measures we shall secure to our country that weight and respect to which it is so justly entitled.*" However, although "I," "me," and "my" can be seen here as utilized in the proposal of policy, high levels of authority rhetoric usage during the founding were not the norm and more often the State of the Union consisted of less than ½% as opposed to a significant makeup of the rhetoric employed.

Beginning with LBJ, however, we can see from Figure 13 that there is a significant increase (more than a doubling at times) from previous levels of authority rhetoric in the State of the Union Address. In fact, Lyndon Johnson's State of the Union Address in 1969 can be seen as a benchmark address that utilized a larger percentage of authority rhetoric (2.8%) than any other State of the Union Address before him and only surpassed by George H.W. Bush in 1992 (2.9%). Indicative of modern-day presidents, although he proposed a relatively small number of policies in 1969 (44), those that were presented were frequently imbued with authority rhetoric. From social security, "The time has come, *I think*, to make it more adequate. *I believe* we should increase social security benefits, and *I am so recommending tonight. I am suggesting* that there should be an overall increase in benefits of at least 13 percent. Those who receive only the minimum of \$55 should get \$80 a month," to discussion of women and children, "*I think* we should assure decent medical care for every expectant mother and for their children during the first year of their life in the United States of America. *I think* we should protect our children and their families from the costs of catastrophic illness," Johnson felt free to introduce policies with little more rhetorical justification than that he believed the changes necessary.

Johnson further used authority rhetoric to remind Congress to act on previously proposed policies that would stretch far beyond even the next presidency. "This year *I am proposing* that the Congress provide the full \$300 million that the Congress last year authorized to do just that...*I hope* the Congress will put the money where the authorization is...*I believe* this is an essential contribution to justice and to public order in the United States. *I hope* these grants can be made to the States and they can be used

effectively to reduce the crime rate in this country...Frankly, as *I* leave the Office of the Presidency, one of my greatest disappointments is our failure to secure passage of a licensing and registration act for firearms...*I* think if we had passed that act, it would have reduced the incidence of crime. *I* believe that the Congress should adopt such a law, and *I* hope that it will at a not too distant date. *I* will suggest that Congress appropriate a very small additional allowance for official expenses, so that Members will not be required to use their salary increase for essential official business...In 1967 *I* recommended to the Congress a fair and impartial random selection system for the draft. *I* submit it again tonight for your most respectful consideration.” Although the policy suggestions of a disgruntled outgoing president may account for some of the authority rhetoric (although it was extremely rare to use so much authority rhetoric even for other outgoing presidents), the rhetorical technique of accompanying increasing levels of policy proposition with authority rhetoric is representative of contemporary State of the Union Addresses.

Figure 14:

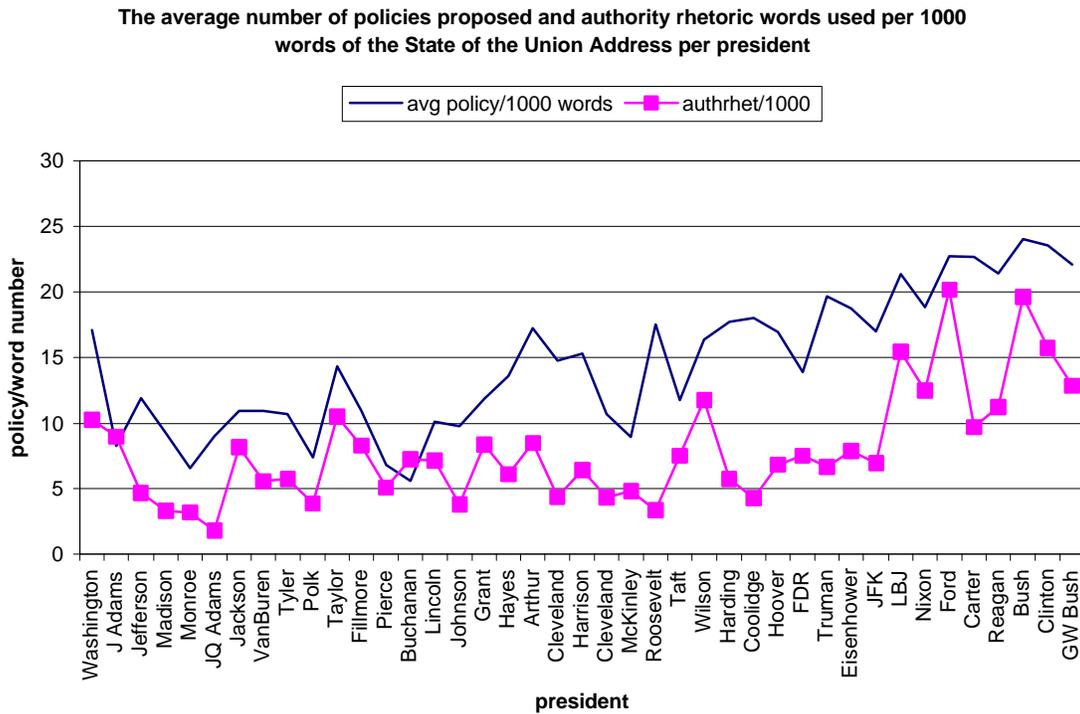


Figure 14 is a comparison of the average number of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address as well as the average number of authority rhetoric words used in the address per president. The increase in the number of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address from the founding to the present day is seemingly accompanied by a like increase in the amount of authority rhetoric used in the address very similar to that of policy proposition. There is a positive correlation (0.316) between the numbers of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address with the amount of authority rhetoric that is used in those addresses. As the president of today increases the number of policies that he proposes in the address, so does he infuse his rhetoric more often with the authority of his station.

Table 6:

Regression Analysis of the Percentage of Authority Rhetoric Used in the State of the Union Address

	Per President	Per Year
policy per 1,000 words	0.000640***	0.000198***
18th/19th (0) versus 20th/21st (1) century	-0.0016	0.0021
divided (0) versus unified (1) government	-0.0011	-0.001748**
economic index (bad0 good1)	0.0004	-0.0006
the presence of war (no war 0, war 1)	0.001967*	0.0003
year in office (separated by term, 1-4)		-0.0001
year in office (total, 1-12)		0.00002
Intercept	-0.0011	0.0057
N	41	216
r-squared	0.5597	0.2632

\*\*\* = significant at the  $p < .001$  level

\*\* = significant at the  $p < .05$  level

\* = significant at the  $p < .10$  level

Table 6 is a regression of the percentage of authority rhetoric on different environmental variables compiled by both year and by president. As we see above, the positive correlation that was seen in Figure 14 is visible again in the significant relationship between policy proposal and authority rhetoric. The regression illustrates that there is an increase in the percent of authority rhetoric used in the State of the Union Address for every increase of policies per 1,000 words both per year and per president. This suggests that for every increase of 2 policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address, we will also see an increase of 1 authority rhetoric word as well. This finding is confirmed by Figure 14, illustrating the fact that none of the eight

presidents since JFK, who all propose increasing amounts of policy, have returned to the lower levels of authority rhetoric seen in his State of the Union Addresses (7 inclusions of “I,” “me” or “my” per 1000 words of the State of the Union Address).

Table 6 also shows that the president may be more prone to infuse his State of the Union Address with increasing amounts of authority rhetoric if he faces a divided government or if he governs in a time of war. In fact, the president uses almost one more authority rhetoric word (or a .1% increase) per 1,000 words of his State of the Union Address when facing a divided government and twice that number in times of war. The former assertion may follow from the assumption that a president who faces a hostile Congress might invoke his station as reasoning for his arguments or policy proposals more often than a president whose congressional affiliates may be able to push policy through on his behalf. He may do this in the hopes that the “President” will be seen as less partisan and therefore present more viable policies than oppositional party members. The latter finding coupled with the data in the previous chapter illustrating that presidents propose less policy during a time of war, suggests that citizens may be more willing to look to the president for leadership during times of crisis, and that the president accepts that role by foregoing detailed policy propositions until the conflict is ended.

At the beginning of this chapter, I suggested that the amount of authority rhetoric might be found in higher frequency in State of the Union Addresses that were delivered during the written period as opposed to the orally delivered period. However, the data suggest that just as presidents during the 19<sup>th</sup> century used less identification rhetoric than the founders or the 20<sup>th</sup> century presidents, they used lower percentages of authority rhetoric as well. Instead of using the written address and the absence of a face-to-face

interaction to include more authority rhetoric, presidents of the 19<sup>th</sup> century used decreasing amounts of authority rhetoric. In addition, the data above suggest that contemporary presidents are embracing the use of authority rhetoric in ever-increasing amounts.

This finding is similar to that above regarding identification rhetoric and suggests that instead of a complete absence of the use of these types of rhetoric in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as proposed by the “traditional/modern” paradigm, presidents from the founding *have* used authority and identification rhetoric. In addition, contemporary presidents use higher levels of identification and authority rhetoric in conjunction with higher policy proposal numbers. Indeed each new president today seems to seek new heights of identification and authority rhetoric use within his State of the Union Address. Just as we have seen an increase in the president’s willingness to speak as one of the people and use the executive authority of the office for policy proposal, we must wonder whether a rhetorical rise can also be seen in the president’s use of commands in the State of the Union Address. Is the president today more willing to tell the people and the Congress what they need to do, or, in light of his willingness to become one of them, does he shy away from this kind of direct address?

#### Directive Rhetoric

In much the same way that the president uses “I,” “me,” and “my” to exercise his presidential authority, he uses his station to give commands or place the need for performance on his audience. This type of rhetorical instruction will be called directive rhetoric, and consists of the frequency of the words “you,” “your,” and “yours” which

place the need for action on someone other than the president himself. These words were included in George W. Bush's State of the Union Address above when the president was directing a policy proposal to a specific audience for action, or reminding the people or the Congress of their duty and responsibilities.

Figure 15:

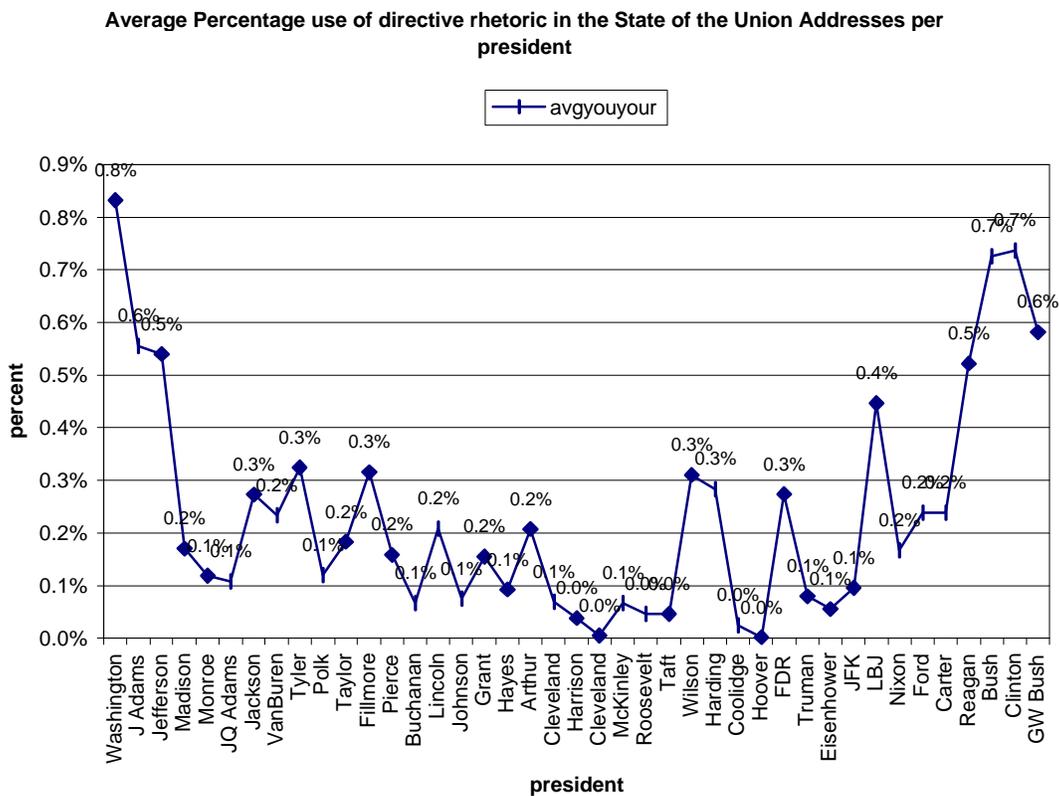


Figure 15 illustrates the average percentage of directive rhetoric per president in the State of the Union Address. These graphs show us several things. First of all, the data show that directive rhetoric is used in smaller amounts than either authority rhetoric or identification rhetoric. In fact, presidents are almost five times as likely to use rhetoric that proposes that they are one of the citizenry (identification) and even twice as likely to

attempt to use the authority of their position in their addresses (authority), as they are to directly address the audience at hand. However, these lower levels do not negate the importance of determining the presence of directive rhetoric in the 19<sup>th</sup> century or of a .6% shift seen from the founding to the contemporary presidency. If we consider that the average length of the State of the Union Address from the founding to the present is 8,000 words, the findings above illustrate that an address given by Jefferson or Lincoln that contained .2% directive rhetoric would have only 16 occurrences of “you,” “your,” or “yours.” However, the seemingly slight .6% shift suggests that an address given by George H.W. Bush, or Bill Clinton would have 56 directive rhetoric words in the same address length. This indicates a 300% increase in the use of directive rhetoric’s “you,” “your,” and “yours” in their State of the Union Address. Therefore, although directive rhetoric does exist at lower levels in the State of the Union Address than identification or authority rhetoric, its longtime incorporation and recent rise in Addresses are key to an understanding of presidential rhetoric.

An important graphic illustrated in the figure above is the propensity of the founders and contemporary presidents to use directive rhetoric with much more frequency than those presidents from Monroe to JFK. Indeed, presidents of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century like LBJ (0.4%), Ronald Reagan (0.5%), George H.W. Bush (0.7%), Bill Clinton (0.7%), and George W. Bush (0.6%) have seemingly returned to the levels of directive rhetoric practiced by George Washington (0.8%), John Adams (0.6%), and Thomas Jefferson (0.5%).

The founding period was a rhetorical time in which the initial presidents spoke with high levels of directive rhetoric to the people and the Congress. George

Washington's second State of the Union Address gives a good example of the use of directive rhetoric in the founding. Washington used the words "you," "your," and "yours" frequently in the proposal of policy during his address due largely to the closeness that he may have felt to those who were members of the Congress who had helped to shape the Constitution and the other original institutions of the country. More than a command, it was often a reference to what Congressional attention should be focused upon. Subjects such as state entrance to the colonies, "The liberality and harmony with which it has been conducted will be found to do great honor to both the parties, and the sentiments of warm attachment to the Union and its present Government expressed by our fellow citizens of Kentucky can not fail to add an affectionate concern for their particular welfare to the great national impressions under which *you* will decide on the case submitted to *you*," commerce, "*Your* attention seems to be not less due to that particular branch of our trade which belongs to the Mediterranean," the judicial system, "The laws *you* have already passed for the establishment of a judiciary system have opened the doors of justice to all descriptions of persons. *You* will consider in your wisdom whether improvements in that system may yet be made," and rapidly proposed varying topics, "the establishment of the militia, of a mint, of standards of weights and measures, of the post office and post roads are subjects which I presume *you* will resume of course, and which are abundantly urged by their own importance," were all proposals utilizing directive rhetoric.

Shortly after Washington, however, the use of the words "you," "your," and "yours" began to decline even past the return to oral delivery of the State of the Union Address with Wilson. (Although he does provide a spike as seen in Figure 15, it is not

significantly different from the use of directive rhetoric by presidents such as Tyler and Fillmore during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, or his contemporary Harding.) After Wilson, there is no permanent rise in the use of directive rhetoric and presidents, more often than not, seem to have avoided the use of directive rhetoric almost altogether. Recently, however, beginning especially with Reagan, but as early as LBJ, we can see that the percentage of directive rhetoric has steadily increased. Presidents during the 80's, 90's, and today have begun to approach the levels of use of "you," "your," and "yours" that were seen during the founding period.

Figure 16:

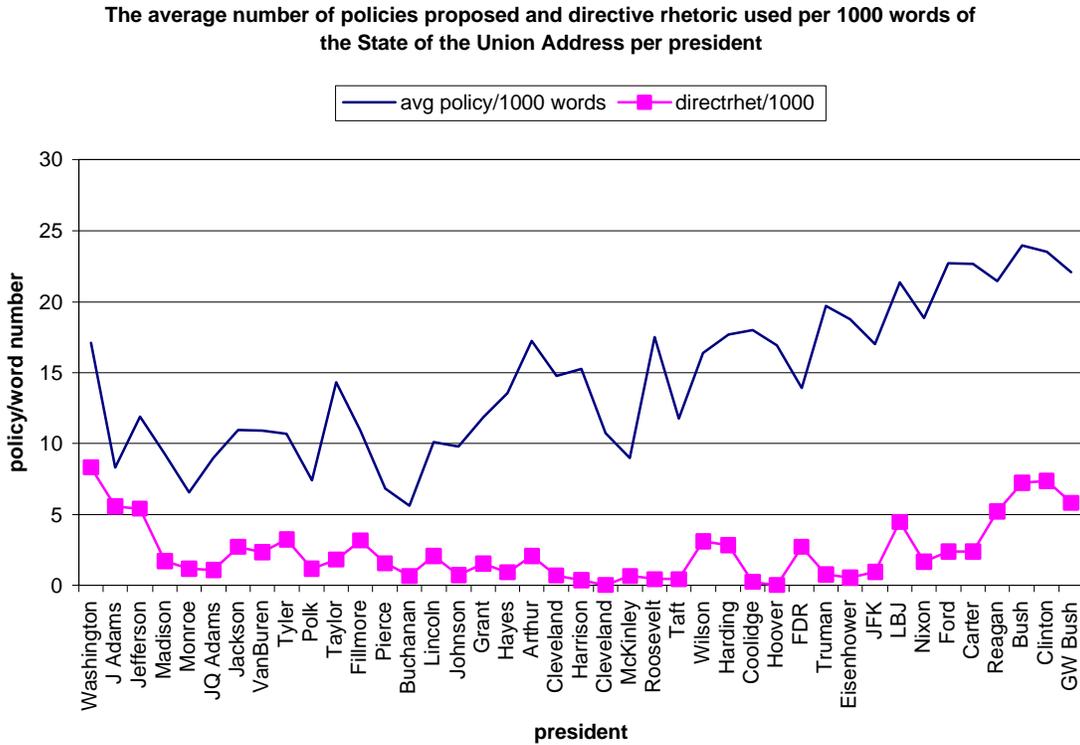


Figure 16 is a comparison graph of the average number of policies proposed in the State of the Union Address per president with the average number of directive rhetoric words used per 1,000 words of the address. Figure 16 provides a very interesting statement on directive rhetoric and policy proposal. In addition to increasing the number of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address, presidents of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century have accompanied that increase with an increase in directive rhetoric. And although the correlation between policy proposal and the use of directive rhetoric over the history of the State of the Union Address is 0.376, the correlation between policies proposed per 1000 words of the State of the Union Address and directive rhetoric used since the presidency of JFK is .641, reinforcing the data illustration above that the

use of “you,” “yours,” and “your,” are currently at all time highs in presidential State of the Union Address history. The significant finding then, is that at presidents of the founding and 19<sup>th</sup> century did use directive rhetoric, and that presidents of late 20<sup>th</sup> century are utilizing increasing percentages of directive rhetoric and proposing increasing amounts of policy concurrently.

For example, in 1992, George H.W. Bush’s State of the Union Address consisted of over 1.2% directive rhetoric, a level matched only by Washington to this day. However, Washington’s address, discussed above, was largely comprised of suggestions for the new duties of a new Congress. Alternately, Bush used directive rhetoric to directly propose policy recommendations given to Congress as well as specific commands that he issued as to policy passage. He used the rhetoric in address of the economy, saying, “*You* must, *you* must pass the other elements of my plan to meet our economic needs. *You* must cut the capital gains tax on the people of this country. And so I’m asking *you* to cut the capital gains tax to a maximum of 15.4%. This then is my short-term plan. *Your* part, members of Congress, requires enactment of these common-sense proposals...And I submit my plan tomorrow. And I am asking *you* to pass it by March 20.” And he also used directive rhetoric throughout his other proposals concerning such issues as nuclear arms, “I remind *you* this evening that I have asked for *your* support in funding a program to protect our country from limited nuclear missile attack,” human services, “I ask *you* tonight to fund our HOPE housing proposal and to pass my enterprise-zone legislation, which will get businesses into the inner city,” pork barrel politics, “I call on Congress to adopt a measure that will help put an end to the annual ritual of filling the budget with pork-barrel appropriations. We all know how these things

get into the budget, and maybe *you* need someone to help *you* say no. I know how to say it. And *you* know what I need to make it stick. Give me the same thing 43 governors have—the line-item veto—and let me help *you* control spending,” and families and education, “I ask *you* tonight to raise the personal exemption by \$500 per child for every family. It’s time to allow families to deduct the interest they pay on student loans. And I’m asking *you* to do just that...And, I’m asking *you* to allow people to use money from their IRAs to pay medical and educational expenses, all without penalties.”

Bush’s combination of directive and authority rhetoric is characteristic of most presidents since LBJ who seem comfortable in proposing policy and giving specific instructions and recommendations to specific audiences in the State of the Union Address. Clinton followed up Bush’s example by utilizing more directive rhetoric (0.73%) on the average than his predecessor (0.72%). This reinforces the findings of Figure 16 that shows the increase in the amount of directive rhetoric in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century that has accompanied the increase in the number of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address.

Table 7:

## Regression Analysis of the Percentage of Directive Rhetoric Used in the State of the Union Address

	Per President	Per Year
18th/19 <sup>th</sup> (0) versus 20th/21st (1)century	-0.002187*	-0.001010*
policy per 1,000 words	0.000338**	0.000170***
divided (0) versus unified (1) government	0.001053	0.000464
Economic index (bad0 good1)	-0.000293	-0.000082
the presence of war (no war 0, war 1)	0.000281	-0.000324
year in office (separated by term, 1-4)		-0.000034
year in office (total, 1-12)		0.000034
Intercept	-0.001919	0.000286
N	41	216
r-squared	0.287078	0.115561

\*\*\* = significant at the  $p < .001$  level

\*\* = significant at the  $p < .05$  level

\* = significant at the  $p < .10$  level

Table 7 is a regression of directive rhetoric on several environmental variables for the State of the Union Address. There are several important findings of the regressions above. First, we see that the number of policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address is a useful predictor of the use of directive rhetoric within that address. For every increase of 3 policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address, 1 additional directive rhetoric word is used as well. In addition, Table 7 indicates that presidents are more likely to use directive rhetoric in times of unified government as well as times when the economy may be suffering. The reason for the former is possibly that the president is able to speak more directly of the duties and responsibilities that he expects to a Congress of which his party has control. Addressing

the latter issue, presidents during time of crisis are often given carte blanche of a kind wherein their commands may be viewed by the Congress as necessary for defense, security or protection (i.e. George W. Bush's request for funds Afghanistan).

Although the regression suggests that presidents in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century are less likely than those of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century to use directive rhetoric, this results from a skewed average. The presidents of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as the founding, used consistent levels of directive rhetoric, even if those levels were slight. By contrast, many of those of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century used very little directive rhetoric; even though presidents since LBJ are using unprecedented averages of directive rhetoric, this is a relatively recent innovation on the whole and causes the 20<sup>th</sup> century average to be lower than the use of directive rhetoric in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### Referential Rhetoric

The above types of popular rhetoric utilize personal pronouns that speak directly to a specific audience. The president includes himself in the citizenry addressed (we), he speaks as the leader of the free world (I), or he indicates policies and programs that he wishes to be fulfilled by either the people or the Congress (you). However, another form of rhetoric must also be included in this discussion of policy proposal and presidential activity. Referential rhetoric are those words which refer to a distant audience using the words "they," "them," and "their." The president uses these words in the State of the Union Address not only to propose policy, most often on behalf of the people, claiming to know what "they" want, but also as evidence towards other goals or actions that he might request. Such statements as "The people have spoken...We must listen to

them...They want their taxes cut... Only Congressional action can heed their call,” are all examples of ways in which the State of the Union Address might employ directive rhetoric in order to advocate particular policies or issue positions.

Figure 17:

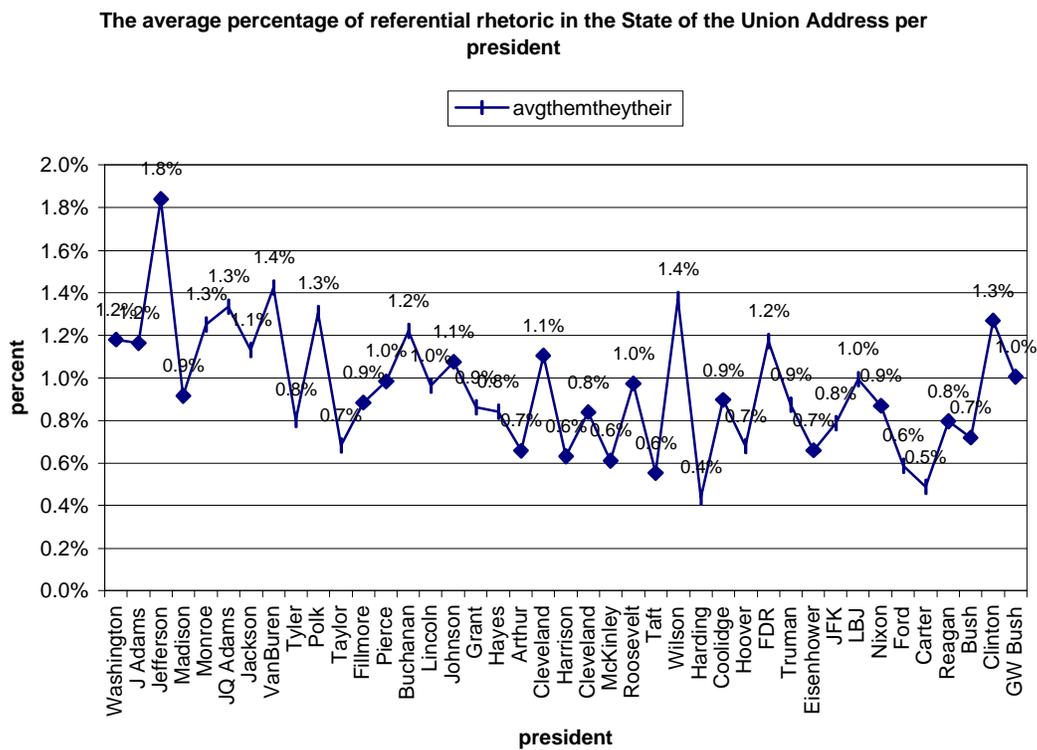


Figure 17 is an illustration of the average percentage use of referential rhetoric in the State of the Union Address per president. As opposed to the other forms of popular address rhetoric examined above which have all seen a significant rise in the recent past, referential rhetoric appears to exhibit the opposite tendency. Figure 17 does show a gradual decline in the amount of referential rhetoric that is employed in the State of the Union Address.

This can possibly be attributed to the fact discussed above—that the president not only speaks to an ever-increasing audience, but that he is also no longer solely reliant upon the inclinations of Congress to have policy enacted. The president’s address has the potential to reach the ears of the general citizenry more today than at any time in the past. In turn, this larger audience presents many individuals willing to take action on behalf of the policies and goals of the president than in the past. As a result, there is no longer the necessity to address the Congress on behalf of the people or explain their desires to the legislative body. Instead, as seen above, the president of the 21<sup>st</sup> century speaks as one of the masses or directly to the people, instructing them as to actions that they or their Congressmen need to take in order for his policies to succeed.

It is significant in this respect that Jefferson, who felt speaking to the people was similar to a king addressing his subjects, uses the largest amount of referential rhetoric on the average in his State of the Union Addresses than any other president in history. No other president has even come within 0.3% of Jefferson in the amount of referential rhetoric used in his addresses. In fact, in 1804, almost 2.4% of Jefferson’s State of the Union Address consisted of referential rhetoric. In speaking of the Indians in the colonies, Jefferson proposed numerous policies with referential rhetoric, saying “1) with these dispositions on *their* part, we have in our own hands means which can not fail us for preserving *their* peace and friendship, 2) by pursuing a uniform course of justice towards *them*, 3) by aiding *them* in all the improvements which may better *their* condition, 4) and especially by establishing a commerce on terms which shall be advantageous to *them* and only not losing to us.” This single statement represents 4

policy propositions as well as 6 referential rhetoric words. This use of referential rhetoric continues in Jefferson’s discussion of the Navy, security, and laws for the people.

Figure 18:

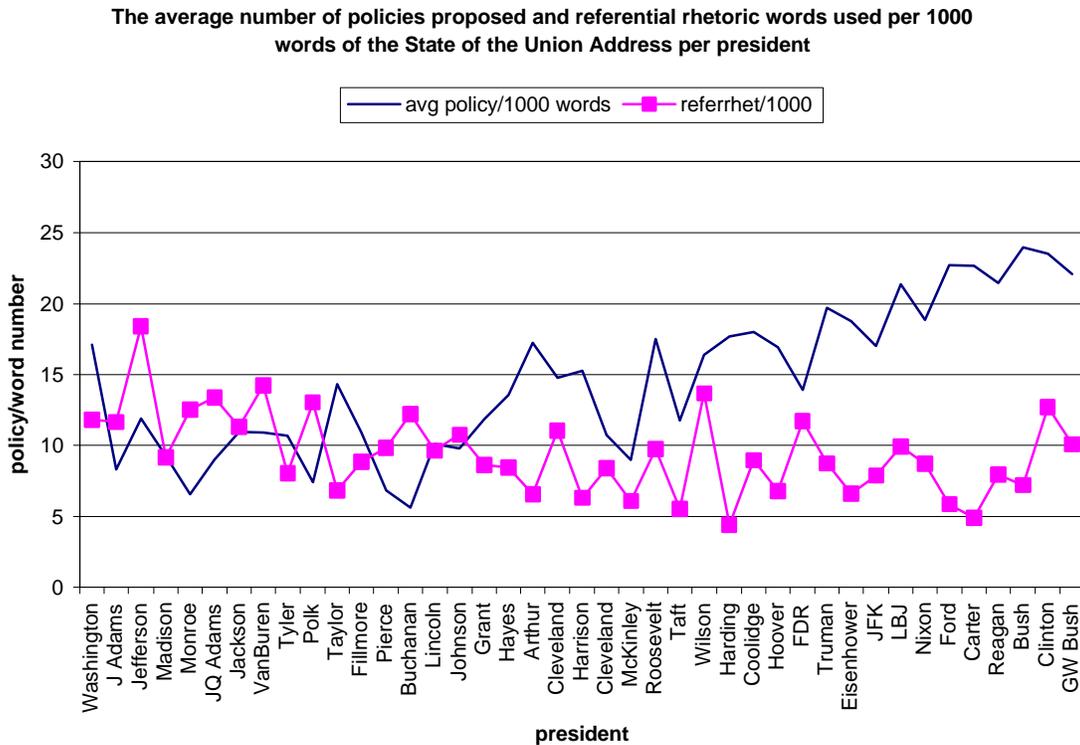


Figure 18 shows the difference between the average number of policies proposed and the average number of referential rhetoric words per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address per president. Even though there is a decreasing amount of referential rhetoric in the State of the Union Address, this accompanies an increase in the average policies proposed per 1,000 words of the State of the Union Address. However, the correlation between the number of policies proposed 1000 words of the State of the Union Address and the percent use of referential rhetoric (-0.04) suggest that this the use

of referential rhetoric is not explicitly related to policy proposal. The findings above suggest that presidents during the 19<sup>th</sup> century did use referential rhetoric in their State of the Union Address. It also proposes simply that presidents are using less and less referential rhetoric in their State of the Union Address regardless, for the most part, of the number of policies that they propose. Additionally, if they do propose policy, the Figure above suggests that they will do so with less amounts of referential rhetoric than in the past.

Table 8:

Regression Analysis of the Percentage of Referential Rhetoric Used in the State of the Union Address

	Per President	Per Year
18th/19th (0) versus 20th/21st (1) century	-0.001028	-0.001124*
policy per 1,000 words	-0.000135	-0.000096**
divided (0) versus unified (1) government	0.000932	0.001178**
economic index (bad0 good1)	0.000417	0.000523
the presence of war (no war 0, war 1)	0.000621	0.000316
year in office (separated by term, 1-4)		-0.000393
year in office (total, 1-12)		0.000289**
intercept	0.011125	0.010641
n	41	216
r-squared	0.178091	0.139690

\*\*\* = significant at the  $p < .001$  level

\*\* = significant at the  $p < .05$  level

\* = significant at the  $p < .10$  level

The regression in Table 8 confirms the negative correlation existing between presidential policy proposal and the use of referential rhetoric as well as its weak

significance. We also see confirmed the same negative relationship between the use of referential rhetoric and the presidents of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. In fact, this finding is even more significant than policy proposition in that each State of the Union Address will have one less referential rhetoric word than did the address the year before. Presidents from the founding are, on the whole, choosing other ways in which to propose policy and speak in the State of the Union Address than the use of referential rhetoric.

The regression also shows that more referential rhetoric is used when addressing unified government as well as later into a president's term of office. The former finding could be explained in that a president who has been elected into a government that is controlled by his own party might see this election as a mandate from the people, enabling him to speak of them when creating policy and taking issue stances. The same mandate from the people might as well explain the increasing amounts of referential rhetoric that are used in State of the Union Addresses later in a president's term. As we see above, when we examine the first four years of a president's term of office, he tends to use decreasing amounts of referential rhetoric. However, once the second term (or third, fourth, or fifth in extenuating circumstance) has begun, it appears as though the president feels more comfortable referring to the people when delivering his State of the Union Address. Although Jefferson may have wanted to distance the State of the Union Address from the people, this chapter suggests that although presidents since that time have used referential rhetoric, more and more executives refrain from speaking *of* the people and to directly speak *to* them instead.

Referential rhetoric, as opposed to the three other forms of popular address examined above, exhibits the opposite trend toward incorporation into the State of the

Union Address. As was hypothesized in the beginning of the chapter, referential rhetoric has seen a continuous decline since the founding, when the people and the government were literally distanced from each other. As presidents have slowly fit themselves into the office of the executive, however, we see less and less referral to the people and more and more direct address of them.

### Popular Rhetoric and Presidential Address

Popular rhetorical address is a technique that presidents today use to make the public aware of an issue or to pressure the Congress to action through a direct appeal to the constituents of those congressional members. However, this chapter suggests that different forms of “popular address” were present in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and that 20<sup>th</sup> century presidents use more popular address rhetoric than any other presidents in the past.

During the founding period, presidents utilized large amounts of popular rhetoric in their State of the Union Address. Identification rhetoric, authority rhetoric, directive rhetoric, and referential rhetoric were all used with high frequency in the addresses of the time. The founding fathers not only attempted to speak as “one of the people,” (or at least one of the governed), they used directive rhetoric, not to place commands for the Congress to fulfill, but seemingly to aid Congress in becoming the legislative body that it needed to be by recommending areas in which the Congress should focus their efforts. Referential rhetoric was also used to address those in the colonies who may or may not have taken any interest in the government, but who were still to be represented. In addition, the presidents of the founding period used the position that they held as

reasoning for the few policies that they did recommend. Using “I,” “me,” or “my,” was neither unexpected nor perceived to be a sign of conceit on behalf of the revered speaker.

The “modern” rhetorical president, according to Tulis and others, is a president who uses popular rhetoric and speaks to the people in ways that have *never* been used before. It is true that late 20<sup>th</sup> century presidents have begun to use greater levels of popular address rhetoric than in the past. However, it is not true that popular rhetoric was completely absent in presidential rhetoric prior to this time period. As opposed to an innovation of a singular president (Wilson, FDR), the presence of popular address rhetoric since the founding and the increase in the use of popular rhetoric in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century appear as more of a revitalization of popular rhetorical style and genre by presidents since JFK and LBJ as opposed to turn of the century executives.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PRESIDENTIAL RHETORICAL TRADITION

“The [modern] rhetorical presidency is not just a fact of institutional change, like the growth of the White House staff, or the changing career patterns of Congressmen. It is a profound development in American politics.”

--Jeffrey Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency*

Although the “traditional” and the “modern” presidential distinctions may seek to provide scholars with “new terms with which to assess the character and development of the constitutional order and the president’s place within it,” (Tulis, 1987, 4), my study suggests that this paradigm is overly simplistic. Greenstein proposes the “major changes that, beginning in 1933, produced the modern presidency—increased unilateral policy-making capacity, centrality in national agenda setting...remain central elements of the presidency and of presidential leadership in the final decades of the century” (Greenstein, 1988, 347). These elements are indeed important attributes to the modern-day president. However, I contend that the assumption that they were not present before a certain demarcation (FDR for Greenstein, Wilson for Tulis) may be misleading to the study of presidential policy proposal and rhetoric.

The importance of my examination of the State of the Union Addresses from Washington to G.W. Bush lies in the observation that my findings do not illustrate a “single” presidency from which we can trace the origins of popular address rhetoric, nor an individual president responsible for beginning policy advocacy. Instead, presidents as far back as the founding period proposed policy and used popular address rhetoric with a

frequency rivaling some modern-day presidents. In addition to finding a general increase in policy proposal, I find that the use of popular address rhetoric has seen a significant increase in the State of the Union Addresses of late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century presidents. This suggests a view of presidential history as an evolution rather than a “transformation” during a single presidency advocated by “traditional/modern” scholars.

In the 215 years since the first presidential election, the United States has seen an exponential increase in its citizenry as well as the territory over which it governs. It has risen from the status of rebellious British colony to the paramount world power in 21<sup>st</sup> century international affairs. Wars have been fought against other nations on foreign soil as well as within America’s own borders and between its own people. In addition, the constitution has been amended nearly 20 times to insure that the imperfect system of government created by the founders is as responsive as possible to the changing times and needs of the people.

These changes in society and government were not overnight developments; the growth from colony to superpower was a gradual adjustment to context, wherein the government effectively “grew into its skin” by altering social policy, expanding borders, and accepting more and more responsibility on the national and international stages. Correspondingly, the president has evolved from Washington’s reluctant leadership that sought to make a stable place for the emerging country on the world stage, to George W. Bush’s multitasking presidency where attention is divided between international interactions, domestic concerns, positions on social issues, preparedness for unexpected threats, the and ever-present scrutiny of the rival party in today’s “permanent campaign.” This evolution did not occur with a single president event or individual either, but was the

result of the changing contexts (war, terrorism, economic collapse), changing powers (budgetary powers, war powers, legislative involvement), and different personalities of each of the men who held the executive office. Therefore, presidential history can be seen as the history of different men with different perspectives facing different times and inheriting and enacting different powers. Just as the United States is a realization of evolution in the face of new and unforeseen challenges, so also the contemporary presidency is an amalgamation of all of the powers, innovations, and personalities of all the men who have held the office.

#### The Traditional/Modern Presidential Tenets Reconsidered

By categorizing presidents into two distinct periods, characterized by certain behavior, certain policy activity, and certain ways of speaking, the “traditional/modern” demarcation suggests that we are able to easily separate presidents. According to Greenstein, the best way to trace the origins of the modern-day president’s rhetoric and political involvement is to begin with examination of early 20<sup>th</sup> century presidents when “the presidency began to change in at least four major ways. These added up to so thorough a transformation that a modifier such as ‘modern’ is needed to characterize the...manifestations of the institution that has evolved from the far more circumscribed traditional presidency” (Greenstein, 1988, 3). Dahl likewise proposes that presidents of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are important to differentiate from past presidents, saying that “particularly in recent decades, the task of shaping presidential address to influence and manipulate public opinion, has become a central element in the art and science of presidential conduct...Thus the presidency has developed into an office that is the very

embodiment of the kind of executive the Framers, so far as we can discern their intentions, strove to avoid” (Dahl, 1990, 369).

As seen from the quote at the outset of the chapter, Tulis also suggests a difference in presidential rhetoric between the presidents of today and those of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, he views the change as much more of an intervention than a simple evolution. “Students of the presidency have nearly all regarded the rhetorical presidency as a logical and benign growth of the institution rather than a fundamental transformation of it. That basic postulate is wrong. The rhetorical presidency signals and constitutes a fundamental transformation of American politics that began at the outset of the twentieth century” (Tulis, 1987, 175). Greenstein echoes this sentiment, saying, “With Franklin Roosevelt’s administration...the presidency began to undergo not a shift but rather a metamorphosis” (Greenstein, 1978, 45).

In his writings, Tulis “tried to show that nearly all of the presidents in the 19<sup>th</sup> century spoke and wrote differently than nearly all the presidents in our [20<sup>th</sup>] century” (Tulis, 1996, 4). Thus, he suggests that there was once a “non-rhetorical” presidency where all of the “modern” elements (policy proposal and popular address) were absent, and that the rhetorical and the non-rhetorical can be easily discriminated (Medhurst, 1996, xiii). Indeed Tulis proposes that “the more policy-oriented a speech, the less likely it was to be given in the 19<sup>th</sup> century...I have suggested that most of the presidents in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were constrained by the settled practices and doctrine behind them” (Tulis, 1987, 67; 79). He continues, stating that there “was nothing in these speeches [“traditional” State of the Union Addresses] to suggest that the president had a program for the nation, that he was interested in bills before Congress, or even that he wanted

popular support for foreign policy” (Tulis, 1987, 72). According to Tulis, it is only with Wilson, and not before, that the president *began* to actively initiate policy as well as speak to the people. “The Wilsonian view has replaced the founders’ as the basic underpinning of presidential self-understanding and public legitimacy” (Tulis, 1987, 174).

Yet, my data show that this inclination toward policy proposal and popular address rhetoric employment is not only *present* in the State of the Union Addresses in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is sometimes found in *larger* frequency in founding presidential Addresses than their 21<sup>st</sup> century successors. Although the data in Chapter 2 did not control for the significantly varying State of the Union Address length, they illustrate increasing word totals as well as the numerable total policy proposals by presidents from the 1800s to the early 1900s (Theodore Roosevelt and Taft proposed two to three times as many total policies on the average than their late 1900s and early 2000s counterparts). This finding suggested that the passive 19<sup>th</sup> century behavior proposed by the “traditional/modern” paradigm might be less generalizable than suggested by Tulis and others.

Chapter 3 attempted a more systematic examination of policy proposal within the State of the Union Address by controlling for the length of the Address. By measuring the average number of policies proposed per 1000 words of the State of the Union Address, I showed that presidents such as Washington, Taylor, and Arthur proposed as much policy per 1000 words of their State of the Union Address as 20<sup>th</sup> century presidents like Wilson, Hoover, FDR, and JFK. In addition, two other significant findings emerged from the data. First, my data illustrate that there is a general increase in

the average number of policies proposed per 1000 words of the State of the Union Address from the founding to the present; this occurred regardless of whether or not these addresses were given in the written or the orally delivered periods of the State of the Union Address. Secondly, the steady increase in the number of policies per 1000 words of the State of the Union Address illustrate that there may be no clear origination point with which policy proposal in the Address begins. Surveying the policy initiatives and popular address rhetoric usage from Lincoln to LBJ, the regression data illustrated that presidents have incrementally increased or decreased the number of policies that they propose, but that there is no individual president who indicates a significant demarcation in policy proposal.

Chapter 4 examined the frequency of different popular address rhetoric words within the State of the Union Address. It revealed, in contrast to the assertions of Tulis, Greenstein, and others, that founding presidents were not only aware of popular address rhetoric, but that they employed it within their State of the Union Addresses in order to propose policy. In fact, the data demonstrate that presidents such as John Adams and Thomas Jefferson used similar or higher percentages of popular address rhetoric than did “modern” presidents such as Wilson, Coolidge, and Hoover. Additionally, my findings suggest that the inclusion of popular address rhetoric has seen a significant increase in the State of the Union Addresses of the presidents of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Thusly, my findings suggest that presidents from the founding have used the constitutional provision of the State of the Union Address to promote their own policy initiatives, use popular address rhetoric, make statements on the beliefs of the American people, as well as give general visionary advice as to the course that the country should

follow. For example, Washington used his last State of the Union Address in 1796, made comment on the future relations of the people of the country, their education, and their relations with each other, stating that, “True it is that our country, much to its honor, contains many seminaries of learning highly reputable and useful; but the funds upon which they rest are too narrow to command the ablest professors in the different departments of liberal knowledge for the institution contemplated, though they would be excellent auxiliaries...The more homogenous our citizens can be made in these particulars the greater will be our prospect of permanent union; and a primary object of such a national institution should be the education of our youth in the science of government.” Washington, our very first president, used the platform of his final constitutionally mandated address not only to propose policies to benefit mankind, but also to deliver social commentary on the future of the people of the country and their contributions to the stability of that same nation.

In his inaugural State of the Union Address in 1801, Jefferson too made assertions that were larger and more abstract than simple policy propositions, but which still proposed a map with which the country be guided. Jefferson referenced the newly acquired census results stating that, “We contemplate this rapid growth and the prospect it holds up to us, not with a view to the injuries it may enable us to do others in some future day, but to the settlement of the extensive country still remaining vacant within our limits to the multiplication of men susceptible of happiness, educated in the love of order, habituated to self-government, and valuing its blessings above all price.”

In 1882, Chester A. Arthur expounded as well on the future of the people of America and the place of education in the nation’s advancement. “No survey of our

material condition can fail to suggest inquiries as to the moral and intellectual progress of the people. It is a momentous question for the decision of Congress whether immediate and substantial aid should not be extended by the General Government for supplementing the efforts of private beneficence and of State and Territorial legislation in behalf of education.”

Education and the future of the American people are but two of the incredibly varied subjects upon which presidents since the founding have waxed abstractly, made prophetic statements, and enumerated their policy propositions. This study illustrates that although the men themselves, their styles, and their focuses, have varied even as there have been changes in the State of the Union Address delivery, its length, and the technological medium with which it has been delivered, presidents on the whole have used the rhetorical tools of the time to build on the policy activity of prior presidents.

#### A New Look at the Presidential Study: Past, Present, and Future

In order to understand the development of the power of the contemporary presidency, the innovations and interpretations made by 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century presidents, however slight, must be examined for their impact on the office itself—an institution framed and begun without a clear identity. Indeed, from the very origins of the executive position, there has existed an ambiguity in the formal and informal duties of the president that has forced each individual president to re-interpret his position and its meaning from the Constitution. Greenstein suggests that one of the legacies of the founders is “a vagueness, and therefore openness to specification by the president and his politically significant others, of the description of the presidency in the Constitution,” and that “the

lack of detailed specification of presidential powers and the Delphic references to ‘the executive power’ and to the power to make treaties, appoint ambassadors and ‘other offices,’ and be commander in chief have provided license for extensive independent presidential action since the early days of the republic” (Greenstein, 1988, 346). Indeed, there is little clarity provided by the Constitution in the position, expectations, or the duties of the president besides executing the law passed by the legislature. “On a continuum from ambiguity to structured constraint, the presidency is as close to the former as repetitive assembly line work is to the latter. And the more ambiguous the definition of the role, the more it will of necessity be shaped by the personal makeup of the individual who fills it” (Greenstein, 1988, 5).

This vagueness of responsibility and function was not unintentional, however, as the Framers purposely intended the executive to grow and evolve. They felt that the office must change and adapt to new issues, confrontations, or desires of the people. Jefferson explained, “Institutions must advance also, and keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy” (Quoted in Berman, 1987, 339). The president, as figurative head and literal leader of the country, was expected to watch over the people as well as initiate domestic and foreign policies for their well being; the founders attempted to reconcile this fact by forming an institution with the power to grow.

“The presidency is a dynamic, elastic office. Its shape and powers change over time...[the framers] invented an office just ambiguous enough, just flexible enough to adapt, yet not so loose and undefined that it could easily overwhelm the delicate balance of the separation of powers...the constitutional design of the office was left vague enough to give presidents an opportunity to shape and mold the office to conform, in part to the needs of the time, the level of political opportunity, and the skills of each incumbent” (Genovese, 2001, 190).

Although reaching the conclusion not confirmed in this study that the “modern” presidency had an origin with FDR or Wilson, Greenstein and Tulis do include important recognition of these differences found between presidents of the past. “Periodically, the presidency has changed, either temporarily or for good. One kind of change has been simple variation from president to president in will and skill to make effective use of the persisting components of the presidential role and to avoid their perils” (Greenstein, 1988, 3). Greenstein further remarks, “A review of the experiences of the modern presidencies makes it clear that presidents and their associates have varied in their capacities to respond to and shape the political environments in which they operate” (Greenstein, 1988, 352). In addition, he finds that “the impact of the president is almost invariably a function of the personal leadership qualities he brings to and displays in office, as well as of the political context of his presidency” (Greenstein, 1988, 1). It is this “variation from president to president” that Greenstein views as important only *after* the rise of FDR. However, this study reveals that it is this “variation” of personality and context that enables the evolution of rhetoric and policy proposal from the *founding* to the modern-day president.

The recognition of the individual contribution of each president to the concept and powers of the “Chief Executive” is of utmost importance in the research of the presidency. “The presidency is less an outgrowth of the constitutional design and more a reflection of ambitious men, demanding times, exploited opportunities, and changing international circumstances...The presidency has been shaped by the varied individuals, operating within a dynamic system under changing circumstances.” (Genovese, 2001, 14; 16) Indeed, in his State of the Union Address, a president must deal not only with

precedent set by prior executives and the evolution of society since his last address, he must view these changes through the lens of his own ambition and capabilities, as well as his own goals. “A rhetorical context is a unique array of forces—rhetorical, historical, sociological, psychological, strategic, economic, and personal—that exists at any given moment in time and that impacts the speaker’s selection and presentation of topics” (Medhurst, 1996, xviii).

In the end, the State of the Union Address, and indeed any presidential address given by a president is a personally determined dialogue with the institution’s past, present and future, built on the powers, precedents, and rhetoric of the 42 men who have held the office in the past. Each executive looks at the political landscape before him and has the ability to choose what rhetorical position he will attempt to play in the overall picture. It is no surprise that those who seek the nation’s highest office often attempt to expand or build on the existent powers and precedents of the office. We can “look at the presidency as an institution in which rhetoric plays a major role, asking what can be discovered if we assume that the character of presidential rhetoric has been created, sustained, and altered through time by the nature of the presidency as an institution”(Campbell and Jamieson, 1990, 3). Indeed, “The presidency over time has become larger and more complex than any one of its players, having acquired a portion of identity from each who has won the part. No one person ever fully fills the role; the office includes all its occupants in its encompassing nature” (Fields, 1996, 12). A president’s “reflection about the past yields consideration of the principles that should govern the present decision-making about the future,” and “in these addresses, one

observes presidents justifying initiatives on the basis of a changing view of what the constitution permits” (Campbell and Jamieson, 1990, 63; 57).

This study illustrates that a modification or re-examination of the “traditional/modern” paradigm may be necessary. I find that the number of policies proposed in the State of the Union Address as well as the use of popular address rhetoric within those addresses, is indeed, more an “evolution” of presidential activity that Tulis decries at the outset of the chapter; the data exhibit gradual movements and trends as opposed to immediate and permanent increases or decreases in policy proposal or popular address rhetoric. By adopting the perspective that the presidency has undergone an early 20<sup>th</sup> century “transformation” as Greenstein and Tulis do, consideration of the development of the modern-day president is limited to 20<sup>th</sup> century presidents who exhibit like behavior and tendencies. Although it is clear that the examination of such presidents as FDR, Wilson, and Theodore Roosevelt provide important insights into presidential behavior in differing contexts as well as contributions made to the contemporary presidency, it is just as important to examine presidents like Tyler, Taylor, Hayes, and Harrison to see how they themselves approached presidential policymaking and the precedents of those before them, as well as the differing contexts and individual contributions that they made to the presidency as we now know it. In addition, given the significant rise in the incorporation of popular address rhetoric in the State of the Union Address in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is equally important to re-examine the presidencies of JFK, LBJ, Carter, and Reagan to discover the reasons for their rhetorical proclivities. By examining the challenges faced by a president as well as the personal motivations and the reasoning of presidents who might be viewed as less important under the

“traditional/modern” delineation—in fact, in his study Tulis dismisses examination of Hayes, Grant, and Arthur because he views them as adding little to understanding of the modern rhetorical presidency (1987, 84)—we are provided with a richer picture of how the president today behaves as well as similarities between this behavior and that of presidents of the past. By applying a general partitioning of presidential behavior, the “traditional/modern” paradigm tends to overlook rhetorical and behavioral nuances, as well as personal motivations of individual presidents in favor of an easier classification.

#### Directions for Further Study and Understanding

The presidential rhetorical tradition may not be as simple as a division between certain dates in our history and proposed tenets of behavior to characterize those periods. Instead, the rhetorical presidency must be viewed as each president’s response not only to the format of delivery with which he is faced, but his personal response to context as well as the precedents of policy proposal and popular address rhetoric that have been used before him. Buchanan faced the threat of a Civil War within America’s borders, yet he proposed fewer policies per 1000 words of the State of the Union Address than any other president in address lengths rivaling presidential history’s longest (over 16,000 words). Taft was looking at a presidency on the heels of Roosevelt that was largely devoid of conflict or trauma, yet he proposed the largest total numbers of policy in the State of the Union Address ever. Franklin Roosevelt faced an unprecedented national depression as well as a conflict of global proportions that threatened to destroy freedom around the world in World War II. Yet, as a president faced with so many degrees of difficulty, his average number of policy proposals in State of the Union Addresses was one of the

lowest of the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is important that the “traditional” presidents be examined along side “modern” presidents as “innovators” in their own right, for the standards that they may have set, the constraints they might have faced, as well as the incremental changes that they made to the ways that the president speaks to, interacts with, and proposes policy for the people.

Although this study takes the advantageous step of examining a consistent form of presidential address from the founding period until the present day, this is only the first of many necessary steps that must be taken in order to gain a richer understanding of the Presidency of the United States. In addition to examining other forms of presidential address that may appear consistently throughout the past, scholars must break away from the tendency to begin study of the presidency in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as the data here have shown that much exists beyond the recent past. In addition, we must look at varied forms of presidential behavior and the history and backgrounds of the individual men and their actions in and out of office to give ourselves a fuller picture of what each president did in office and the motivations that they might have had.

Although given scant attention in the constitution, the presidency has grown to the most powerful executive position in the world. As scholars of presidential study, it is important to realize that like roll-call votes and other seemingly simple and collectable data from our governmental institutions, there are personal motivations, considerations, and decisions that go into every stage of the political and policy making process. It is imperative that we apply the same rigor of examination to the areas of the presidency that might have been viewed as unprofitable or yielding few new findings in the past (such as the study of 19<sup>th</sup> century presidencies and their officeholders), and seek the same

groundbreaking and enlightening findings that move our discipline and our understanding toward a more complete picture of our political world.

## Appendix A: Varying Words/Phrases from each President Considered As Policy Proposal/Advocacy

The following excerpts from the State of the Union Addresses of each president represent different ways in which policies were proposed in that address. The cases below illustrate that some presidents of the 20<sup>th</sup> century proposed policy in ways very similar to those propositions of the founding and 19<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, these samples represent the guidelines that were followed with regard to counting policy proposals in the State of the Union Address. These guidelines are outlined in Chapter 1. If a president directly made a “recommendation” of any kind, it would be counted as a policy proposal. This includes statements such as “I recommend,” or “it is recommended.” Suggestions by the presidents were also counted as policy propositions. Statements such as “I suggest that,” or “it is strongly suggested” were seen as very clear policy proposals originating from the Address. In addition, statements such as “it is important that,” “you must,” “we ought to,” “it is desirable that,” “I feel that,” “it is necessary,” “we cannot neglect,” “it is essential that,” “you need to,” “you can,” “the Congress should,” or any use of the words must, will, should, could, would, have to, or shall were good indicators of places where policy proposal might be found.

After observing terminology that might suggest policy proposal, it was important to determine whether or not an actual policy was being proposed. If the statement contained recommendations to actions upon which Congress would specifically have to act or make legislative decisions, this was counted as a policy recommendation. Those items in the State of the Union that the president said he did as the result of the powers of his office (sending emissaries to foreign countries, head of state functions) were not treated as policy because they were things that the president, regardless of the desires of Congress, could enact by himself. In addition, abstract statements made by the president about the good of the people or the future of the nation such as “we must never give up,” “we must always keep these things in mind,” “we must continue our work for the people,” were not counted because no specific policy was proposed.

Specific policies that were counted could be explicit requests or commands for Congressional action as well as abstract suggestions for Congressional legislation that would largely leave the details up to the Congress. Specifics such as “taxes should be lowered,” or “the postal roads must be improved,” were counted as single explicit policy proposals. Following the guidelines that a policy was defined as any proposal that would necessitate or require legislative action, sentences were sometimes made of more than one policy proposal. Indeed if a president, speaking of the economy, said that “we must lower taxes, raise the minimum wage, and provide a stable currency,” this was counted as three separate policy proposals because each recommendation would necessitate separate changes of existent law, or separate considerations and hearings detailing specifics of each issue.

Abstract policies that pertained to specific subject matter were also counted as policy proposals. Statements such as “we must improve education,” or “it is essential that our military remain strong,” are counted as policy proposals. These statements speak directly to action that the president views as necessary to either alter or maintain existent law. In addition, these abstract recommendations are still policy proposals because they are the president’s suggestion of policy that Congress has the duty to act upon and

determine the changes regarding. Although, he “places the ball in Congress’ court,” in abstract proposals, the president is still bringing an issue to their attention upon which he would like to see action; it therefore must be considered a policy proposal.

Examples of policy proposal in the State of the Union Address from Washington to G.W. Bush (emphasis added for highlight of policy proposal indicators):

“I should fail in my duty in not *recommending to your serious attention* the importance of giving to our militia, the great bulwark of our security and resource of our power, an organization best adapted to eventual situations for which the United States ought to be prepared.” (Madison, 1809)

“The exigencies of the public service and its unavoidable deficiencies, as now in exercise, have added yearly cumulative weight to the considerations presented by him as persuasive to the measure, and *in recommending it to your deliberations* I am happy to have the influence of this high authority in aid of the undoubting convictions of my own experience.” (John Quincy Adams, 1825)

“The subject *is earnestly recommended to the consideration of Congress* in the hope that the combined wisdom of the representatives of the people *will devise* such means of effecting that salutary object as may remove those burthens which shall be found to fall unequally upon any and as may promote all the great interests of the community.” (Jackson, 1832)

“Under this view of our affairs, I should hold myself guilty of a neglect of duty if I forbore *to recommend that we should make* every exertion to protect our commerce and to place our country in a suitable posture of defense as the only sure means of preserving both.” (Adams, 1797)

“It is my duty *to recommend to your serious consideration* those objects which by the Constitution are placed particularly within your sphere - the national debts and taxes.” (Adams, 1797)

“But I can not refrain from again *pressing upon your deliberations* the plan which *I recommended* at the last session for the improvement of harmony with all the Indians within our limits by the fixing and conducting of trading houses upon the principles then expressed.” (Washington, 1794)

“In this review *you will doubtless allow due weight to the considerations* that the questions between us and certain foreign powers are not yet finally adjusted, that the war in Europe is not yet terminated, and that our Western posts, when recovered, *will demand* provision for garrisoning and securing them. A statement of our present military force will be laid before you by the Department of War.” (Washington, 1795)

“To accomplish this important object, a prudent foresight requires that systematic *measures be adopted* for procuring at all times the requisite timber and other supplies. In what manner this shall be done *I leave to your consideration.*” (Adams, 1798)

“In either event *it is your duty* to heed the lesson and *to provide* by wise and well-considered legislation, as far as it lies in your power, against its recurrence, and to take advantage of all benefits that may have accrued.” (Grant, 1873)

“Among the interests which *merit the consideration of Congress* after the payment of the public debt, one of the most important, in my view, is that of the public lands.” (Jackson, 1832)

“*The Legislature will doubtless consider* whether, by authorizing measures of offense also, they will place our force on an equal footing with that of its adversaries.” (Jefferson, 1801)

“We can not, indeed, but all feel an anxious solicitude for the difficulties under which our carrying trade will soon be placed. How far it can be relieved, otherwise than by time, *is a subject of important consideration.*” (Jefferson, 1801)

“I have thought it more consistent with the spirit of our institutions *to refer to the subject again to the paramount authority of the Legislature to decide* what measure the emergency may require than abruptly by proclamation to carry into effect the minatory provisions of the act of 1824.” (John Quincy Adams, 1826)

“A just and sensible revision of our tariff laws *should be made* for the relief of those of our countrymen who suffer under present conditions.” (Cleveland, 1888)

“To be ready to meet with cordiality satisfactory proofs of such a change, and to proceed in the mean time in adapting our measures to the views which have been disclosed through that minister *will best consult our whole duty.*” (Madison, 1811)

“The fortification of the coasts and the gradual increase and improvement of the Navy are parts of a great system of national defense which has been upward of 10 years in progress, and which for a series of years to come *will continue to claim the constant and persevering protection and superintendence of the legislative authority.*” (John Quincy Adams, 1827)

“The considerations which led me *to call the attention of Congress* to that convention and induced the Senate to adopt the resolution referred to still continue in full force.” (Pierce, 1855)

“The reasons which *induced me to recommend the measure* at that time still exist, and I again *submit the subject for your consideration* and *suggest the importance of early action upon it.*” (Polk, 1846)

“In the meantime the existing laws have been and will continue to be faithfully executed, and every effort will be made to carry them out in their full extent. Whether they are sufficient or not to meet the actual state of things on the Canadian frontier *it is for Congress to decide.*” (Van Buren, 1838)

“The reasons are *imperative for* the adoption of fixed rules for the regulation of appointments.” (Hayes, 1880)

“An improvement in the organization and discipline of the militia is one of the great objects which *claims the unremitting attention of Congress.*” (Monroe, 1817)

“The time seems now to have arrived when this subject *may be deemed worthy the attention of Congress* on a scale adequate to national purposes.” (Monroe, 1817)

“Your *attention is again invited* to the question of reciprocal trade between the United States and Canada and other British possessions near our frontier.” (Fillmore, 1851)

“The report of the Secretary of the Navy, herewith submitted, exhibits in full the naval operations of the past year, together with the present condition of the service, and it makes suggestions of further legislation, *to which your attention is invited.*” (Pierce, 1855)

“Judged, however, in candor by a general standard of positive merit, the Army Register will, it is believed, do honor to the establishment, while the case of those officers whose names are not included in *it devolves with the strongest interest upon the legislative authority* for such provisions as shall be deemed the best calculated to give support and solace to the veteran and the invalid, to display the beneficence as well as the justice of the Government, and to inspire a martial zeal for the public service upon every future emergency.” (Madison, 1815)

“No American ship *can be* allowed to be visited or searched for the purpose of ascertaining the character of individuals on board.” (Fillmore, 1851)

“Its members have shown their public spirit by accepting their trust without pledge of compensation, but *I trust that Congress* will see in the national and international bearings of the matter a sufficient motive for providing at least for reimbursement of such expenses as they may necessarily incur.” (Arthur, 1883)

“Our laws *should* also follow them, so modified as the circumstances of the case may seem to require.” (Tyler, 1843)

“In completion of this work, the regulations agreed upon *require congressional legislation* to make them effective and for their enforcement in fulfillment of the treaty stipulations.” (Taft, 1910)

“From a policy so sacred to humanity and so salutary in its effects upon our political system *we should* never be induced voluntarily to depart.” (Polk, 1846)

“Nearly three-fourths of our citizens live in urban areas, which occupy only 2 percent of our land—and if local transit is to survive and relieve the congestion of these cities, it *needs* Federal stimulation and assistance.” (JFK, 1963)

“You and I serve our country in a time of great consequence. During this session of Congress, *we have the duty* to reform domestic programs vital to our country.” (GW Bush, 2003)

“To supplement these proposals, *I ask that Congress* enact changes in Federal tax laws that will speed up plant expansion.” (Ford, 1976)

“*It may be proper to provide* for the security of these important conquests *by making* an adequate appropriation for the purpose of erecting fortifications.” (Polk, 1846)

“Establish the rule, and all will look forward to it and govern themselves accordingly. But justice to the people of the several States *requires that this rule should be established by Congress.*” (Buchanan, 1858)

“Our minimum wages *are* far too low.” (Truman, 1949)

“I have come tonight *to propose that we establish* a new department—a Department of Business and Labor.” (LBJ, 1967)

“*I am strongly convinced that we need* in this Government just such an office, and that it can be secured by making the Tariff Board already appointed a permanent tariff commission.” (Taft, 1910)

“And *I’m asking the Congress* specifically to reaffirm this agreement.” (Carter, 1980)

“In the near future, I will take actions to reform and strengthen our intelligence community. *I ask for your positive cooperation.*” (Ford, 1976)

“*My conviction of the necessity of further legislative provisions* for the safe-keeping and disbursement of the public moneys and my opinion in regard to the measures best adapted to the accomplishment of those objects have been already submitted to you.” (Van Buren, 1838)

“I entertain no doubt that indemnity is fairly due to these claimants under our treaty with Spain of October 27, 1795; and whilst demanding justice we ought to do justice. *An appropriation promptly made for this purpose could not fail* to exert a favorable influence on our negotiations with Spain.” (Buchanan, 1858)

“Moreover, *we need—and we must have without further delay*—a system of prepaid medical insurance which will enable every American to afford good medical care.” (Truman, 1949)

“*Should* a revision of the tariff with a view to revenue become necessary in the estimation of Congress, *I doubt not you will approach the subject with a just and enlightened regard to the interests of the whole Union.*” (Tyler, 1843)

“The precise relocation of our boundary line *is needful.*” (Cleveland, 1888)

“*It is vital* that the authorities contained in the trade bill I submitted to the Congress *be enacted* so that the United States can negotiate flexibly and vigorously on behalf of American interests.” (Nixon, 1974)

“And to help us support them *we need* a tough crime control legislation, and *we need* it now.” (GHW Bush, 1991)

“The act passed at the last session for the encouragement of immigration has so far as was possible been put into operation. *It seems to need amendment* which will enable the officers of the Government to prevent the practice of frauds against the immigrants while on their way and on their arrival in the ports, so as to secure them here a free choice of avocations and places of settlement.” (Lincoln, 1864)

“With this view *I suggest whether it might not be both competent and expedient for Congress to provide* that a limited amount of some future issue of public securities might be held by any bona fide purchaser exempt from taxation and from seizure for debt.” (Lincoln, 1864)

“*I also ask this Congress to support* our efforts to enlist colleges and universities to reach out to disadvantaged children starting in the sixth grade so that they can get the guidance and hope they need so they can know that they, too, will be able to go on to college.” (Clinton 1998)

“*I will ask that you raise* the minimum payments by 59 percent—from \$44 to \$70 a month.” (LBJ, 1967)

“*I believe that* the abandonment of the mentally ill and the mentally retarded to the grim mercy of custodial institutions too often inflicts on them and on their families a needless cruelty which this Nation should not endure.” (JFK, 1963)

“*In my judgment the most important legislative act now needed* as regards the regulation of corporations is this act to confer on the Interstate Commerce Commission the power to revise rates and regulations.” (Theodore Roosevelt, 1904)

“For this reason, *I have determined that* the Selective Service System must now be revitalized.” (Carter, 1980)

“I also want to thank Congress for restoring some of the benefits to immigrants who are here legally and working hard. *And I hope you will finish that job this year.*” (Clinton, 1998)

“*It needs no argument* to show that legislation which has produced such baneful consequences should be abrogated.” (Johnson, 1868)

“*Join me* in this important innovation *to make* our air significantly cleaner, and our country much less dependent on foreign sources of energy.” (GW Bush, 2003)

“These startling facts clearly *illustrate the necessity* of retrenchment in all branches of the public service.” (Johnson, 1868)

“Proper protection *necessitates*, as the Secretary points out, the expenditure of a good deal more money in the development of roads and trails in the forests.” (Taft, 1910)

“*It is desirable* to have these claims also examined and disposed of.” (Grant, 1873)

“*I again urge* that national banks be authorized to organize with a capital of \$25,000.” (McKinley, 1899)

“*I trust the House of Representatives and the Senate*, which have the right to judge of the elections, returns, and qualifications of their own members, *will see to it* that every case of violation of the letter or spirit of the fifteenth amendment is thoroughly investigated.” (Hayes, 1880)

“But whether the issue is tax cuts or spending, *I ask all of you* to meet this test: approve only those priorities that can actually be accomplished without adding a dime to the deficit.” (Clinton, 1998)

“The convention for the resurvey of the boundary from the Rio Grande to the Pacific having been ratified and exchanged, the preliminary reconnaissance therein stipulated has been effected. *It now rests with Congress to make* provision for completing the survey.” (Arthur, 1883)

“But it is particularly important to our planning that *we make* a candid estimate of the effect of long-range ballistic missiles on the present deterrent power I have described.” (Eisenhower, 1958)

“*Let us pursue* an S.D.I. program that can deal with any future threat to the United States, to our forces overseas and to our friends and allies.” (GHW Bush, 1991)

“*We could focus* on some of the less contentious spending cuts that are still pending before the Congress.” (Reagan, 1984)

“While some increase in Government funds will be required, *it remains our objective* to encourage shifting to the use of private capital sources as rapidly as possible.” (Eisenhower, 1958)

“Whatever power the Congress possesses over this most important subject *should be promptly ascertained and asserted.*” (McKinley, 1899)

“*I will continue to* press for tuition tax credits to expand opportunities for families and to soften the double payment for those paying public school taxes and private school tuition.” (Reagan, 1984)

“*I invite Congress now* to mark out and define when and how expatriation can be accomplished.” (Grant, 1873)

“So tonight *I am asking the Congressional leaders* and the Federal Reserve to cooperate with us in a study, led by Chairman Alan Greenspan, to sort out our technical differences so that we can avoid a return to unproductive partisan bickering.” (GHW Bush, 1991)

“The enlargement of scope of the functions of the National Government required by our development as a nation involves, of course, increase of expense; and the period of prosperity through which the country is passing *justifies expenditures* for permanent improvements far greater than would be wise in hard times.” (Theodore Roosevelt, 1904)

“*Let us* remove the only remaining cause by conferring the full and necessary power on the Secretary of the Treasury.” (McKinley, 1899)

“To raise the purchasing power of the farmer is, however, not enough. It will not stay raised *if we do not also* raise the purchasing power of that third of the Nation which receives its income from industrial employment.” (FDR, 1938)

“*We will establish* a new system that makes high-quality health care available to every American in a dignified manner and at a price he can afford.” (Nixon, 1974)

“In regard to the relationship of government to certain processes of business, to which I have referred, it seems clear to me that existing laws *undoubtedly require* reconstruction.” (FDR, 1938)

“But the Congress *can make* available to the farmer the financial facilities which have been built up under Government aid.” (Harding, 1922)

“The ever-increasing casualty list upon our railroads is a matter of grave public concern, and *urgently calls for action by the Congress.*” (Teddy Roosevelt, 1904)

“To meet these responsibilities *we need* a very substantial sea armament.” (Coolidge, 1927)

“*We ought to* lend our encouragement in any way we can for more good roads to all the principal points in this hemisphere south of the Rio Grande.” (Coolidge, 1927)

“*Legislation is desirable* for the construction of a dam at Boulder Canyon on the Colorado River, primarily as a method of flood control and irrigation.” (Coolidge, 1927)

“The policy is well established that the Government *should* open public highways on land and on water, but for use of the public in their private capacity.” (Coolidge, 1927)

“*Special provision must be made* for live-stock production credits.” (Harding, 1922)

“Let us pass for the moment the menace in the possible paralysis of such service as we have and *note the failure*, for whatever reason, *to expand* our transportation to meet the Nation’s needs.” (Harding, 1922)

“*I take it for granted* that the Congress will carry out the naval programme which was undertaken before we entered the war.” (Wilson, 1918)

“On only one point do most of them have a suggestion. They think that relief for the unemployed by the giving of work is wasteful, and when I pin them down I discover that at heart they are actually in favor of substituting a dole in place of useful work. *To that neither I nor, I am confident, the Senators and Representatives in the Congress will ever consent.*” (FDR, 1938)

“For the steadying, and facilitation of our own domestic business readjustments *nothing is more important* than the immediate determination of the taxes that are to be levied for 1918, 1919, and 1920.” (Wilson, 1918)

“*It is my view* that the amount of taxation *should be* fixed so as to balance the Budget for 1933 except for the statutory debt retirement.” (Hoover, 1931)

“Particular attention *should be given* to the industries rounded upon natural resources.” (Hoover, 1931)

## Appendix B: Specific Words Counted/Variables Tested in Simple Word Search

“we”

“our”

“you/r”

“us”

“America/n/s”

“American People”

“fellow”

“everyone”

“citizens”

“public”

“people”

“person”

“Community”

“senior/s”

“elderly”

“child/ren”

“parent/s”

“troop/s”

“soldier/s”

“taxpayer/s”

“tax/es”

“welfare”

“family”

“must”

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