

U.S. Presidential Leadership and Crisis Rhetoric

The Honors Program

Senior Capstone Project

Student Name: Robert McCabe

Faculty Sponsor: Richard Holtzman

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Abstract

My capstone project seeks to determine what are U.S. presidents attempting to accomplish in (or with) their speeches? This matters because presidential responses to crises can reflect how a president's leadership abilities are perceived by the people he serves. This perception plays a large role in determining how much political strength the president has to accomplish his agenda. I address this research question by analyzing four different speeches: President Kennedy's Address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors on the Bay of Pigs, President Kennedy's Address on the Cuban Missile Crisis, President Bush's National Cathedral Speech after the September 11th attacks and President Bush's speech in Jackson Square after Hurricane Katrina. I seek to determine whether or not these speeches are considered either "successes" or "failures" based off of public approval ratings and polls provided by sources such as *Gallup*. I analyzed factors such as the tone and political context of the speeches to explore why the presidents are using specific rhetorical strategies. My argument is that, although approval ratings matters in determining public approval, other factors, such as political context and the location of the speeches, also play a role in determining how people view the success of the president's address and overall handling of the crisis. In addition, I also would like to acknowledge that the speeches will not directly cause a "solution" to the crisis. The purpose of my study is to examine whether the president was able to accomplish his goals in his speeches given during the crisis. I believe that the political context in particular will play a large role in explaining the president's goals and a specific agenda for their given speeches. While there are various ways in which success and failure can be measured, this project does so by looking at public approval ratings after the speeches.

Introduction

This project focuses on the ways in which U.S. presidents use leadership to address crises. More specifically, I evaluated four case studies of historical crises and the rhetoric that was used by presidents to respond to these crises. The four crises I have selected are the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban Missile Crisis during the Kennedy Administration and the September 11th attacks and Hurricane Katrina response from the Bush Administration. My central research question for this project is: What are Presidents Kennedy and Bush trying to accomplish in these

speeches and how do they attempt to do it? In addition, subtopics that I focus on include the role that the particular political contexts of the speeches play in the overall situation? In addition, I consider whether what the president says in either a speech or an address says as anything definitively about a president's leadership skills and abilities. I acknowledge that are other potential areas that I could expand my research to as well, however, my focus is solely on explaining presidential rhetoric. The two major purposes of my study include analyzing the four speeches and determining whether they are "successes" or "failures" based off of approval ratings. I seek to analyze the political context of the situation in order to explore the background of the event. Primarily, I form my own definition of either the success or failure of a particular presidential response based off public opinion polls from *Gallup*, *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. Each of these different sources provides a credible and historically strong background for the measure of public opinion.

The role of presidential leadership focuses on how presidents try to lead during their speeches. Success or failure from the public's perspective is crucial not just when an individual is running for President of the United States, but also for political leadership as well. In 1960, Richard Neustadt published a book titled *Presidential Power and Leadership* that has been updated in new editions. In his book, he examined a number of different factors that ultimately play a role in how a president accumulates different forms of power. However, the most crucial insight that he offered was that the power of the presidency included the power to persuade others to comply with the president's agenda. This power to persuade can be viewed as a bargain considering how a president can lose these bargaining privileges if he makes any major mistakes. The greatest ineffectiveness that a president can experience comes in the form of his own incapacity or even failure to consider other options.

When the handling of a crisis is labeled as either a success or failure, it is largely based off of other important factors such as the public's opinion on the handling of the given situation or if the mission or goal was carried out as it was intended. A president may view each different crisis as a political opportunity to help improve their image or promote their own agenda, but the sole function of the president during a crisis should be to put partisan behaviors aside and ultimately do what is good for the country. The rhetoric that is used should offer Americans a sense of security and stability given the unpredictable nature of a crisis. They should be instilled

with a sense of optimism and hope that the crisis will be addressed and solved without anything detrimental occurring to our country. Presidential administrations will have their share of successes and failures, but how they rhetorically respond to their crisis shows that they are willing to face adversity and in the end triumph over any of the challenges they may have faced.

Context matters in the case study methodology because it can allow individuals to understand the circumstances behind the events being studied. A major benefit of using case studies is that you can use it for explaining a case or event (Johnson and Joslyn, 1986, 112). Political context matters in a situation because it can provide an illustration of the political environment at the time of the crisis. By illustrating the political environment, it allows people to understand a variety of different factors including why a president decided to make a particular decision during a crisis and why the response to this crisis will have political implications. There is a reason for every decision that a president makes during a crisis. Being an optimist, I would like to assume that is for the good of the country. However, in some cases presidents may have other agendas when they decide to take a particular stance. This adds an extra layer of pressure to the president because if they fail to properly respond to a crisis, there may be political repercussions. For example, the power of persuasion can only do so much, so if a president has lower approval ratings other political leaders may feel less inclined to want to be seen or work with a president. This example was evident in the 2008 Presidential Election where Republican Nominee John McCain appeared to distance himself from President Bush during that time period because of Bush's low approval ratings (Cooper and Bumiller 2008). These low ratings were due to a variety of factors such as the 2008 financial crisis (Cooper and Bumiller 2008). Therefore, a president's response in a speech including a crisis will to a degree always have political implications. As I explain later in this paper, if you respond to a crisis poorly liked President Bush did in his slow, federal government response to Hurricane Katrina it can have a negative impact on the public's view of their particular presidency.

The location of the speech plays an important role in helping illustrate the setting of the speech and what it is about. President Bush decided to announce U.S. airstrikes against Afghanistan in the Treaty Room as opposed to the Oval Office because he wanted to signal that prior presidents "have worked for peace" (Beschloss 2014). When President Kennedy gave his Cuban Missile Crisis Address to the Nation, he gave it from the Oval Office which shows the

seriousness and the severity of that situation. Michael Beschloss from *The New York Times* argued that locations of presidential addresses on television can give signals as to the types of actions presidents may decide to take (Beschloss 2014). Whereas if the president gave the speech at a press conference, this would have been analyzed on a lot less of a scale. In addition, the location of a speech may also be based off of political contexts. When President Bush addressed the nation directly from New Orleans, he was trying to demonstrate leadership by speaking live from one of the main areas impacted by the storm. He also might have decided to speak from the middle of the devastated area for other reasons such as his desire to comfort his fellow Americans or politically it would look like he was actively involved and interested in trying to help his fellow citizens in the aftermath of this crisis. Therefore, outside factors such as approval ratings, the location of the speech and political context can all play a role in describing the particular environment the president is giving his speech in.

Case Study Introduction

Bay of Pigs

By 1961, a Gallup Survey revealed that Americans were more than willing to risk an all-out nuclear war with the Soviets (Farris 2013, 240). The Bay of Pigs provided the Kennedy Administration their first major international test. Shortly after his inauguration, President Kennedy was presented with a plan by the CIA that had been approved by the Eisenhower Administration that would train Cuban exiles to attempt to overthrow Cuban dictator Fidel Castro (JFK Library n.d.). President Kennedy even approved of Operation Mongoose which had a plan considering the assassination of Castro (“Bay of Pigs Invasion” n.d.). According to professor Michael Dunne in his article “Perfect Failure: the USA, Cuba and the Bay of Pigs 1961,” our relations with Cuba started with the Platt Amendment (Dunne 2011, 448). The Amendment, which was passed in 1901 after the Spanish-American War, served as a piece of legislation that allowed the U.S. to intervene military in Cuba (Dunne 2011, 448). The U.S. and the Cubans had very differing views of one another as the Cubans were very suspicious of their “greedy” so called imperialist friends from the North, while the Americans viewed the Cubans as uncivilized in a very racial tone (Dunne 2011, 450). Kennedy felt the need to go on with the plan

as it was already prepared because doing so otherwise would portray him as someone who was soft on communism (Matthews 2011, 331).

Then on January 1st, 1959 Fidel Castro, a young revolutionary led a guerrilla army that toppled President Batista, who had the support of the United States (“Bay of Pigs Invasion” n.d.). However, some American media sources such as Life Magazine viewed Castro as a “determined soldier” who had one of the main objectives of reducing poverty in Cuba (Hanes, Hanes and Baker, 2004). During the early 1960s many Americans thought that the Soviets had to be involved with Cuba because no leader would “voluntarily” decide to become a Communist (Hanes, Hanes and Baker, 2004). Despite these revelations, Kennedy and the CIA still tried to remove Castro from power through a series of different strikes (“Bay of Pigs Invasion” n.d.). Kennedy was advised to invade Cuba, but Castro was well aware of a potential invasion that he could authorize at a southern beach in Cuba that was known as the Bay of Pigs. However, the attempt to remove Castro from power failed and in less than a 24-hour time span, Castro was able to defeat the Cuban exiles. Castro ordered over 20,000 troops to advance on to the beach as the Cuban Air Force pounded the exiles and by the end of the invasion 1,200 members of the brigade surrendered with more than 100 individuals killed (JFK Library n.d.).

Before going into this crisis, President Kennedy had a high approval rating of 78% according to *Gallup* (Saad 2016). Two important pieces of political context to consider for this situation include that this crisis occurs during the Cold War and President Kennedy is less than a year into his presidency. The Cold War helps explain why President Kennedy and more importantly the United States was so vehemently opposed to Castro taking over Cuba and why they tried to invade the country as a result. Intelligence officials and Kennedy both knew that Castro was communist and considering that the capitalist ideology of the United States was directly the opposite of the communist Soviet Union. Kennedy’s time in office up to this point is important because it might explain why the approval rating is so high. In my view, the more time that a leader spends in office, the more likely it is that a president will make mistakes in office.

[Cuban Missile Crisis](#)

Throughout, the 1950s which was largely considered the first Cold War decade, there had been multiple discussions in regards to the Soviet’s missile capabilities and whether or not the Soviets would have the capability to hit the U.S. within that decade. Smaller nations such as

Cuba were suddenly now falling into the Communist sphere and were being heavily influenced by the Soviet Union. The Kennedy Administration dealt with a humiliating situation in Cuba just over year prior in the Bay of Pigs mishap and the president seemed determined not to repeat the same mistakes he made again. Little did he know that in October of the following year, 1962, he would have to deal with Cuba again, but this time Russia would be the primary adversary and the fate of the world would be in his mortal hands for thirteen uneasy days. For 13 days the world was on hold as the Americans and Soviets faced off in a nuclear arms standoff which would ultimately determine the fate of the world if it could not be solved diplomatically. Throughout this crisis, President Kennedy from a historical perspective showed a sense of calmness and temperance as the fate of the world was at stake. The lives of his citizens were in his hands and through his rhetoric he was able to help prevent a catastrophe and resolve the matter without a single weapon being fired.

On October of 1962, an American U-2 plane caught sight of nuclear missile sites that were beginning to be developed on the island of Cuba (JFK Library n.d.). Kennedy immediately convened with some of his closest advisors and even formed a special committee in order to start trying to solve the problem. During one of the meetings of the EXCOMM (Executive Committee of the National Security Council) President Kennedy was informed by the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) that Cuban missiles could be fully operational within two weeks and could also be fired with little notice or warning. In a matter of minutes potentially 80 million Americans could die from a single nuclear strike (Hansen 2013). The pressure was suddenly now fully thrust upon this young president and his administration.

According to Secretary of State Dean Rusk, there were two options that President Kennedy had at his disposal in order to peacefully resolve the crisis. The first option was for the President to launch a quick air strike against Castro or he could try and achieve a diplomatic solution (JFK Library n.d.). Secretary of State Robert McNamara was in favor of the blockade options as opposed to any other air strike options (JFK Library n.d.). In the end, the main two options Kennedy was left with were the options of attacking or not attacking Cuba over the presence of the missiles (Allison 2012). In the end, President Kennedy decided to launch a “quarantine” which in effect would ultimately prevent the Soviets from bringing more missiles to the island of Cuba. Ted Sorensen, who was President Kennedy’s speechwriter and one of his top

aides explained that President Kennedy's rationale behind his decision making was largely based off of the other choices proving too difficult to effectively carry out and it at the same time allowed Khrushchev an opportunity to opt out of escalating the conflict even further (JFK Library n.d.). Kennedy often worked with his aides on public statements that more often than not involved using ominous language (Noonan 2017). The speech analyzed was given on October 22nd 1962 as President Kennedy spoke to the nation about the crisis in a televised address (JFK Library n.d.).

Before President Kennedy's decision to launch the blockade, President Kennedy's approval ratings were at 63% according to *Gallup* (Saad 2002). This shows that President Kennedy's performance as president up to that particular point was positively thought of. An important historical incident that continues to play a role in both of the Kennedy's crises is the role of the Cold War. At this point, the United States was still in the early to middle stages of the Cold War and the Americans and Soviets relations were very strained. They viewed each other as adversaries and neither of them were willing to give the other side an upper hand during this particular conflict.

September 11th Attacks

September 11th 2001 was one of the darkest days in the history of our nation. In just the span of a few hours on that September morning, our nation was transformed and changed forever. Airplanes had been taken over by radical Islamic terrorists and were flown into the Twin Towers in New York City, the Pentagon in Washington and a failed attempt to hit the White House, but it landed in a rural field in Pennsylvania. When President Bush was delivered the news of the attack, he was sitting in a classroom surrounded by young students in Sarasota, Florida (Schweizer and Schweizer 2004, 513). President Bush viewed the 9/11 attacks also as a sign of a religious war against his Christian way of life (Schweizer and Schweizer 2004, 517). This has shown throughout his rhetoric as he would continue to view terrorists and nations that strongly served against the best interests of the United States were a part of a certain axis of evil (Dietrich 2005, 46). This rhetoric may or may not have intended to start any sort of religious war, but it certainly made it sound like it was a religious crusade for Bush (Dietrich 2005, 41). He might have tried to instill fear in this new battle against the terrorists, but this theme of fear did not really come up in in this speech that I analyzed. Fear was more prevalent a theme in his Joint

Address to Congress given on September 20, 2001. In this memorial speech, he was trying to focus on the individual lives that were affected by these different attacks. The main focus for the rest of his presidency would largely rest upon him going after the terrorists and ultimately “mak{ing} no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them” (Dietrich 2005, 38). When President Bush was campaigning in 2000, he ran as someone who could unite the country (Schweizer 2004, 516). He campaigned on trying to change the American culture, but now the country had changed as a whole and a result of these attacks (Schweizer 2004, 517). His speeches after the attacks largely began to shift and focus on the world as a place that was both black and white (Schweizer 2004, 517).

We went from a time period of relative peace and stability to a nation shocked by the horrific violence that occurred early that September morning. The president had approval rating of 51% and a 39% disapproval rating a week before the September 11th attacks (“Presidential Approval Ratings-George W. Bush” n.d.). How President Bush would respond in the aftermath of this unforeseen crisis would shape how effective his young presidency would be in leading his country into a new era.

Hurricane Katrina

In his memoir written after he left the Oval Office, *Decision Points*, President Bush admits that there were several key mistakes made by his Administration in the aftermath of the devastating Hurricane Katrina, which struck the Cities of New Orleans and Baton Rouge on August 9th 2005 (“Hurricane Katrina” n.d.). The city of New Orleans had been flooded 5 times before Katrina struck in 2005. Katrina was classified as a Category 3 rating hurricane with winds that brought along winds that were as powerful as 100-140 miles per hour (“Hurricane Katrina” n.d.). The day before the storm hit, New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin ordered a mandatory evacuation of the city (Bush 2010, 315.). The poorest neighborhoods in New Orleans that were directly impacted by the storm happened to be located below sea level (“Hurricane Katrina” n.d.). However, traveling to the site of where a natural disaster just occurred has not always been the natural response for presidents because communicating and having the ability physically visit natural disaster sites was not always feasible for the president (Korte 2016). Especially considering the dangerous terrains and environments where these disasters occurred. Expecting to a send our president right into the thick of the chaos would be a disaster and would also pose a

huge national security threat to our leader. The first president to really take the extra step to visit natural disaster sites was President Johnson who visited Louisiana after Hurricane Betsy struck the state and parts of Southern Florida in 1965 (Korte 2016). When Hurricane Andrew hit the coast of Florida in 1992 many viewed the response from then-President George H.W. Bush as slow and many had negative perceptions of him afterwards (Bush 2010, 311).

President Bush's approval ratings before the landing of Hurricane Katrina was according to *Gallup* at a 45% approval and 51% disapproval rating from the dates of August 5th-August 7th 2005 ("Presidential Approval Ratings- George W. Bush" n.d.). It is important to note that from a political context, President Bush was largely blamed for the slow federal response that occurred after the crisis. Even though the direct responsibility may have been delegated to federal agencies such as FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Administration) or even to the local and state governments that were involved; President Bush is symbolically and quite literally the head of our federal government. When mistakes are made at that level, almost everyone wants to blame the top person in charge whether or not they had any direct involvement in the issue or dilemma that they are trying to solve. That is why President Bush apologizing for the slow response from the federal government is one of the main messages that he is trying to discuss.

Research Methodology

Polls from *Gallup* offer a solid means to determine how presidents can impact public opinion. *Gallup* has a long and successful history of tracking poll numbers for presidential elections. The company was started in 1932 by George Gallup who called his new company the American Institute of Public Opinion (Rothman 2016). His goal was to use polls to measure different outcomes and predictions within the political sphere (Rothman 2016). For example, in 1936, *Gallup* picked President Roosevelt to win over Alfred Landon unlike other polls conducted by magazines such as the *Literary Digest* (Rothman 2016). *Gallup* is one of the most trusted polling organizations in American politics has been tracking presidential job approval ratings for over 60 years (Newport 2001).

In addition, I also believe that *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times* are credible and reputable sources for my polling data as well. *The New York Times* polling system has been around for almost 40 years dating back to the first national exit poll in 1972 with CBS

News (Connelly 2014). This collaboration was the first time that a newspaper company and a television company came together to work on polling (Connelly 2014). *The Wall Street Journal* collaborated with the news channel NBC in order to conduct their own individual version of polling. This particular poll “began in 1989 and today includes at least 10 national surveys with between 10,000 and 13,000 interviews a year” (Public Opinion Strategies n.d.). Some even view this particular polling system as the “golden” standard of public polling on a variety of issues including political and economic ones (Public Opinion Strategies n.d.). I initially thought about including poll numbers from *The Times* and *Wall Street Journal* in regards to President Kennedy’s approval ratings after the Cuban Missile Crisis, however because both sets of polls were not started until after the crises occurred, I will not be able to do so.

With these polls, I seek to measure the public approval level of these presidents in order to help exhibit whether or not they were successful in their political endeavors. Public opinion polls provide a view of public confidence in the president’s ability to govern and lead the nation. This is unlike other comparative systems of government such as the parliamentary system in the United Kingdom where there is a vote of confidence to determine whether or not their leaders can effectively govern their nation (Newport 2001). In my view, it is a way of almost “grading” their performance, so they can get a realistic view of how the general public feels the president is doing. As I previously mentioned, the presidency is a very unique position in the world and only the people that have held the office can truly know what it is like to be president. To put this in a broader perspective, only 45 men in the 242 years our nation has existed, knows what it is like to be the president.

One of the main objectives of political science is to study human beings and the different behaviors that they exhibit. (Johnson and Joslyn 1986, 22). Some political scientists attempt to view a lot of these behaviors as ones that are more often than not predictable and they try to locate data to try and explain different human behaviors that more often than not can be rather difficult to find (Johnson and Joslyn 1986, 23). Often times, political scientists will focus on either studying normative issues or empirical issues (Grigsby 2011, 3). Normative issues tend to focus more on issues related to judgement or values, while empirical values tend to focus on factual and observable evidence (Grigsby 2011, 3). Ultimately, there are many different research methods that are used by political scientists, but one method that is often used is qualitative

research. This type of research method focuses on the “qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally measured or examined” (Labaree 2009). This allows the researcher to focus more on the processes or different meanings without the heavy focus of both numbers and statistical variables (Labaree 2009).

Using qualitative research allowed me to have several different accomplishments such as really allowing me to study the case from the perspective of individuals actually involved within the case (Gillham 2010, 11). Another interesting perspective is that unlike experiments, I have more freedom to fully investigate the case as opposed to some limits that are posed by experiments (Gillham 2010, 11). However, I also look at the approval rating numbers after these crises took place, so I use quantitative research methods as well. Having these approval rating numbers helped me measure the success that these presidents have in using rhetoric that improved their public image.

Qualitative research tends to focus on processes or meanings that are not determined based on statistics or different figures and numbers (Labaree 2009). This type of research typically applies to projects like mine where I am exploring different words and ideas as opposed to looking primarily at statistical data. Political methodology provides political scientists with a variety of different tools, there tends to be the normative question of often what it is considered either good or bad (Box-Steffensmeier, Brady and Collier 2008).

Qualitative research is generally very focused on description or it is based off of different subjects that can be experimented (Labaree 2009). That is why based a lot of my studies off of different case studies that are ultimately described as such. The data for quantitative data and analysis often tends to be used to gather a variety of structural research instruments and those results are largely based on a much larger size than a lot of the representative sizes of the population (Labaree 2009). I will not be looking at a large population size for my research project, rather I will be analyzing a very narrow set of data and information in the time periods that are established by the president. Political methodology provides political scientists with a variety of different tools and there tends to be the normative question of often what it is considered either good or bad (Box-Steffensmeier, Brady and Collier 2008).

Case Study Methodology

The most compatible methodological approach for this research subject is the case study method. A case study research method as defined by John Gerring in the *American Political Science Review* in his article “What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?” is the “intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units” (Gerring 2004, 342). Other authors such as Alexander George and Andrew Bennett in their book *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* define a case study as “the detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events” (Bennett and George 2005, 5). Another possible definition that could be applicable to case studies is how it is the “study of the particularity and the complexity of a single case, coming to understand it’s activities within important circumstances” (Stake 1995, xi). In addition, the purpose of this particular case study is to try and understand something that exists other than the particular teacher that exists with “instrumental inquiry” (Stake 1995,3).

In this project, I analyze each speech during each individual crisis to understand what the president’s main accomplishment in their given speech was. In addition, I also would like to state that I am studying the presidency in a broader political context. This broader political context includes fully investigating the political environment at the time of the crisis and a historical background to the given crisis. The public opinion polls largely serve as just one particular variable of my study. They are not meant to solve the crisis or directly correlate with any level or notion of presidential “success,” but for the sake of this project, they are my way of measuring if a president was able to accomplish their goals.

I seek to provide better context to my focus in the form of my empirical investigation and inquiry into this topic area (Soy 1996). One of the first steps in my research case study strategy was to establish a focus for the purpose of my study, which I already did by establishing my case studies and focus on rhetorical leadership (Soy 1996) My second step was to select the case and the techniques that I used to gather my data for this topic area (Soy 1996). In gathering my data, I specifically focus, as previously mentioned, on the specific speeches that I outlined already that were used in the immediate aftermath of the crisis or epidemic. My third step consists of analyzing the cases by looking for buzz words or for the specific purpose of passages

of the speech I am looking at before examining the message of the speech as a whole (Soy 1996). The data specifically refers to similarities and differences in the rhetoric used in both different sets of crises. As previously mentioned, I look at how the rhetoric was used during the different sets of crises. More specifically I look more in-depth into past failures and successes when it comes to these different actions. Analyzing the different case studies provides me a better sense of the different leadership styles that president's use when they are in the midst of crises and the different rhetoric that they use. Case studies also tend to be more useful for forming "descriptive interferences when all other things tend to be considered equal" (Gerring 2004, 346). I look for better descriptions of events that are taking place within these individual case studies.

Throughout my research, I discovered that there are many advantages and disadvantages to the case study methodology for research projects. One such difficulty of a case study review is noted by John Gerring, who views case studies as sometimes a source of ambiguity (Gerring 2004, 341). I note that case studies will not always be able to examine every possible area of a topic other than the one that I am specifically focused on. Case studies can only focus on one particular set of events. For example, I am only looking at the rhetoric President Kennedy used in his Cuban Missile Crisis speech given on October 22nd 1962. I do focus on any of the rhetoric that he used in any other situation such as any of the meetings he had with the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the crisis.

Some have also claimed that this methodology at times has hints of bias (Gerring 2004). This hint of bias is commonly referred to as "selection bias" and it can occur when cases or subjects are often self-selected (Johnson and Joslyn 113, 1986). The cases that are used in this research proposal were selected by me and I will try not to subjectively pick out areas of the president's rhetoric that I view as stronger than others, but I will certainly try to remain as impartial as I can in regards to the data that I have selected. However, it should be noted that the potential for bias in the evidence is not simply limited to just the case studies alone. Through careful documentation using a variety of different types of sources, this claim can ultimately be countered as well (Johnson and Joslyn 1986, 113). Some have also viewed the fact that case study methodologies focuses on one set of data points from a certain time period as a negative because these methods typically do not offer a lot of information on the data after that time period (Grigsby 2011, 23). I understand that the case study does not provide a lot of information

on any data other than the specific subject or time period being focused on in the case. However, at the same time I think one of the benefits of a case study is that really provides a lot of valuable information on the case being studied. If you want to do outside research on other information not provided in the case, I think that it is up to the discretion of the reader or better yet another researcher. I cannot fully analyze every single aspect of the Bay of Pigs because I would not be putting as much emphasis on rhetorical leadership, which is the point of my research.

As previously mentioned, one of the benefits of the case study methodology is that there cannot be any arguments that a case did not happen or is not entirely factual because case studies are real life situations, not mere hypotheses (Gillham 2010, 101). For example, the speech President Kennedy gave on the Bay of Pigs was not made up by me or based on any theory, the speech was really given by President Kennedy on October 22nd, 1962.

Case studies have tended to be further built upon and culminated through the development of social sciences (Bennett and George 2005, 30). They have also been known to have powerful advantages in respect to their study of deviant or other outlier cases. One of the first steps in case study research methods is to establish a firm focus on research topics, formed by different questions or situations (Bennett and George 2005). In my case, I am focusing on the research topic of presidential rhetoric during a crisis. These situations tend to be connected to a wide variety of issues related to political, social and historical topics (Bennett and George 2005).

In recent decades, the scholars' understanding of case studies has been distorted by the critiques based on the assumption of different models (Bennett and George 2005, 4). According to Janet Johnson and Richard Joslyn, the case study is non-experimental because the reader often has little control over the events that occur under different investigations (Johnson and Joslyn 1986, 112). As a result, these case study designs tend to have more variations (Johnson and Joslyn 1986, 112). Single case studies for the matter can be used for explanatory purposes as well as for exploratory or descriptive purposes (Johnson and Joslyn 1986, 112). The study later showed that there were actually no barriers that impacted these levels of innovation, so the case study then determined that this innovation theory needed to be focused less on barriers (Johnson and Joslyn 1986, 112). In the case of multiple case studies or comparative it will more likely show "explanatory power" and they allow the researcher to test one theory multiple times (Johnson and Joslyn 1986, 113).

Case studies can also focus on observing a single unit ultimately through time. They tend to be stronger at identifying the different conditions of theories and assessing necessary arguments about causal necessity or often generalized causal effects across a wide variety of different cases (Gerring 2004, 23). Others have suggested that case studies serve as qualitative methods tend to focus more on overturning prior hypotheses (Freedman, 2008). If this is true, then most of the research that I have conducted may or may not support my original hypothesis, that I discussed earlier in the paper. In some occasions, the goal of a case study is to confirm or disconfirm a statistical model (Seawright and Gerring 2008). For this particular project, I am trying to use the approval ratings to show that the public either viewed the rhetoric of the president as either a success or as a failure. Different researchers tend to employ different kinds of study analysis in order to achieve different sets of goals (Herron and Quinn 2010). However, for this analysis, as I have previously stated, the only goal that I seek to measure is either the success or failure of measuring presidential rhetoric.

Case studies also have been defined as separate historical episodes that someone investigates for further analysis rather than simply looking at the historical event itself (Bennett and George 2005, 18). In one interesting historical case, political scientists looked at how different presidents would behave during their press conferences such as President Reagan, who would for example, have easy press questions provided to him from both the front of his podium and to the right side of it (Grigsby 2011, 24).

Literature Review Overview

Introduction

This current topic is relevant and important to study because evaluating the success and failures of past presidents will not only help the public understand the presidency better, but it will also help provide us better insight into why politics is the way that it is today. As previously stated, the presidency is one of the most unique offices in the world, but it also at the same time is one of the most misunderstood. Former presidential speechwriter, George Stephanopoulos understood the uniqueness of the office by noting that “Few people live as precarious a life as an American president. ...But along with the vulnerability comes awesome power: the ability to move global markets with a single statement, to obliterate an entire country by ordering the turn

of two keys, to avenge an attack on his predecessor by firing cruise missiles under his command” (Stephanopoulos 1999, 162). Looking back historically provides more of a context and insight into the current state of affairs in the world today. Analyzing the rhetoric that was used during times of crisis, will help our current and future presidents better understand the potential obstacles and hurdles that they may face in the future.

Rhetoric and public speaking can be viewed as an art form. Not every president is a gifted public speaker, but to be considered a successful rhetorical leader and an effective communicator, the president should try to master some of these skills. The philosopher Cicero even acknowledged that rhetoric can be viewed as art form because when giving different addresses the leader had to be not just a great speaker, but also a performer and actor that gave great presentations (Genovese 2007, 103). There are some presidents who have used their rhetorical abilities to their advantage such as President Franklin Roosevelt in the midst of the Great Depression with his uplifting Fireside Chats. Meanwhile, some rhetorical remarks have ultimately led to the downfall of president such as President Jimmy Carter and his “Crisis of Confidence” in the midst of multiple conflicts that would soon come including the energy and Iran Crisis.

The important aspect of my research topic to consider is that not all presidents have handled crises well. There have been successes and failures. For future presidents, it is especially crucial that they are given the proper guidelines and advice to prepare for any sort of crisis that they might encounter. After all, in order to be an effective leader, you also need to be able to effectively communicate the message you are trying to convey to others. The problem ultimately with a crisis is that as a president you can never really fully prepare or expect to know when a crisis is going to strike. That is the natural surprise effect of a crisis, given how during it and after nobody really knows how to handle it. You can try to compare your crisis to another one to hopefully use some of the similar techniques, but every crisis in of itself is very unique.

As also previously mentioned, every crisis is unique in of itself, so this study would be advantageous for our future president to understand the thought process and language used to successfully handle a crisis. Another factor that differentiates these individuals is how their terms in office either were viewed as successes or failures based on different individual perspectives. If a president did not fulfill a majority of their campaign promises or if their agendas never passed

through Congress, that president could potentially be viewed as a failure. However, someone else could view the president as a failure based on a lack of effective rhetoric and inaction at the onset of a crisis. As previously stated, nobody can really understand the full magnitude of the office unless you have actually been the president, but studying more about it can provide us better insight into the unknown aspects of it. Whether or not a president has been deemed a success or failure is mainly determined by how the public responds to the president's actions during a crisis. There are many different methods for determining whether or not public opinion views the president favorably. One of the more common ways is through approval ratings and polls that are taken immediately after the crisis.

Evaluating the different crisis rhetorical strategies that are used by presidents throughout these different crises will help show the decision-making process that these different men have used prior to making their own decisions on issues. Studying presidential rhetoric really offers an in-depth analysis not just the objective of a president during a different crisis, but also the image that the president wants to convey to the world. The image of the office is largely shaped by the words and agenda of the president occupying that office, so it is important that the president create a positive image to help lead their country. Part of the power of the presidency develops from the power to persuade others, and, in the case of rhetoric, the president really has to put an in-depth focus on reaching out to the public and trying to persuade them of their agenda. People will look towards their president to be the Commander in Chief and expect him to lead them during different crises. Looking at his rhetoric in particular will offer people the opportunity to see the type of outcome the president wants and his choice of language going into these crises.

[Background/History](#)

As noted by Jeffery Tulis, the modern rhetorical presidency has been more of a development than a transformation (Tulis 1988, 7). This development dates back to the early days of our nation and the development of our U.S. Constitution. In political science, studying presidential rhetoric focuses on evaluating the basic doctrines within our government (Tulis 1988,14). The study of the presidency has seemed to have diminished in importance and has garnered less of an interest in the last quarter of roughly the twentieth-century based on “comparative studies of democratic executives” (Bowles 1999, 3). This has limited the amount of potential studies that could have been conducted in this given topic area and therefore has

provided less research that could have proven to be valuable for related studies. However, this trend has not seemed to stop political scholars, such as Nigel Bowles, Lyn Ragsdale, Theodore Otto Windt Jr., from categorizing their own methods and important terminology for how to study presidential rhetoric.

Bowles states there have been five branches of study when it has come to analyzing the presidency: constitutional history, political science, institutional history, political analysis and the psychological makeup of the presidency (Bowles 1999, 7). Other political scientists such as Lyn Ragsdale have focused looking at two different aspects of the presidency and features such as imagery and institution when analyzing important aspects of their overall rhetoric. Imagery seeks to focus on press coverage, speeches and public opinions of the president (Ragsdale 1984,7). The institutional factor focuses on generalizations such as the hierarchy of the president's staff system (Bowles 1999, 11). Theodore Otto Windt Jr. has his own four categories for how contemporary research has been divided up on the topic of presidential rhetoric: criticism of single speeches, rhetorical movements, developments of genres of presidential speeches and other articles that have been on topics dealing with presidential rhetoric. The focus on single speeches is important for my analysis and research into this given topic area. In studying single speeches, these speeches have been divided up into both inaugural addresses and crisis speeches (Windt 1986, 104). During crisis speeches, which is what I am mainly focusing on, Windt suggests looking at both the style of the speech and the impact with which it was delivered (Windt 1986, 104).

The study of presidential leadership is important and connected to this notion of rhetorical leadership. A focus on rhetorical leadership is not limited to just the speeches given in the midst of different crises, but it also incorporates the public actions that the president took during these periods. The presidency can be viewed as an evolving organism as it always growing and is at times often greatly misunderstood (Genovese 2007, 3). In addition, the presidency can be viewed as a paradox: what works for one, might not work for another (Genovese 2007, 6). This idea is especially important and considering that not every president will use the same rhetoric style. Each unique crisis will present its different opportunities for leadership and times for learning how to better handle situations. The presidency greatly depends

on the individual man who occupies the office as opposed to looking at their previous predecessors.

One of the major key pioneers in the study of presidential leadership was political scientist Richard Neustadt. In 1960, he published a book titled *Presidential Power and Leadership* which has been updated in new editions. In this book, he examined a number of different factors that ultimately play a role in how a president accumulates different forms of power. However, the most crucial insight that he offered was that the power of the presidency included the power to persuade others to comply with the president's agenda. This power to persuade can also be viewed as a bargain relationship considering how a president can lose these bargaining privileges if he makes any major mistakes. The greatest ineffectiveness that a president can experience comes in the form of his own incapacity or even failure to consider other options.

Meanwhile, in the 1980s, important models were developed by political scientists such as Jeffery Tulis and Samuel Kernell that focused on their own models of "going public". Tulis, focused more on the transition that occurs during a presidency when the focus shifts from the president solely addressing Congress to a president when he tries to convey policy ideas and issues straight to the public. Another famous study that was conducted in 1986 by Samuel Kernell established the "going public" mode of presidential leadership. This model focused more on the president skipping over the legislative branch almost entirely when bringing up particular issues and instead focusing on communicating these issues directly to the public, for support. Karolyn Heldman noted that this process of "going public" started with President Kennedy and presidents have been using this model since then, by focusing on different techniques such as spinning stories. (Heldman and Carter 2004, 5). As a result, the model has been viewed as sort of an endless campaign as viewed by journalist Sidney Blumenthal (Hecllo 2000, 172). This idea of an endless campaign puts an extra heightened importance on rhetorical leadership. However, the model of "going public" according to David Zarefsky, stems back to the days of George Washington (Medhurst 2007, 7). Martin Medhurst in his book *Before the Rhetorical Presidency*, further notes and agrees that this notion of a rhetorical presidency has been around long before more prominent historical inquiries such as during the presidencies of Andrew Jackson and Theodore Roosevelt (Medhurst 2007, 7). These historical models show the development of

presidential rhetoric and how the study of this leadership has changed and improved over time. Even popular historians such as Doris Kearns Goodwin in her book *The Bully Pulpit* have studied different rhetorical strategies that have historically been used by former leaders, such as President Theodore Roosevelt to promote their different agendas through different medias. For example, President Theodore Roosevelt had a close relationship with the press, notably *McClure's Magazine*, which in turn promoted his progressive agenda (Goodwin 2013, 2003). However, the idea of the "Bully Pulpit" and the use of presidential rhetoric in almost all of these different scenarios does come at a different cost.

Rhetoric that is used today matters for the modern presidency. The authority of the presidency derives from the effective use of executive power and this source of power comes from the president's ability, or lack thereof, to persuade others to his agenda (Genovese 2007, 6). When it comes to the presidency the power to persuade the public is very crucial because the president needs the public to enact the very agenda that he seeks to accomplish. In dealing with crisis management, Michael Genovese in his book *Memo to a New President: The Art and Science of Presidential Leadership*, notes that the president can ultimately gain the power and ability to control and truly change society (Genovese 2007, 189). There have been some scholars such as political scientist Richard M. Pious in 1979 that have investigated the need to expand certain presidential powers in the wake of emergencies and more importantly crises (Genovese 2007, 190). Genovese brings up some further interesting notions by referring to how strategically a president has to think when they are integrating a situation (Genovese 2007, 101). The idea of having a presidential voice is that your job does not have to interfere with your agenda (Genovese 2007, 102). Some presidents have based their rhetoric and their power on asking people and the public to ultimately sacrifice something (Genovese 2007, 102). This idea of sacrificing something is especially prevalent during a crisis when differences have to be put aside for the sake of national unity.

Over the course of my literature review I discuss various readings that I have conducted throughout my research process. These steps include the power and leadership of the presidency, the importance of the power of persuasion, the presidential rhetorical strategies of "going public" and the "endless campaign" and lastly the relationship between both the president and the media.

Each of these different topics helps provide a review of presidential leadership and persuasion and it will also help explain why the presidential message matters.

Literature Review

Power and Leadership of the Presidency

Presidential leadership during a crisis is essential as the eyes of the world turn to America as a global leader in just about any given crisis. Former CBS News anchor John Dickerson acknowledges that “When disaster does strike—whether the work of an enemy or an act of God—the theatrical role presidents play is amplified. It’s not enough to monitor or even manage the federal government’s response. He has to dash to the scene” (Dickerson 2018). The expectations facing the presidency tend to increase and more leadership tends to be required. Fred Greenstein, political scholar and author of the book, *Leadership in the Modern Presidency*, argues that American president in their leadership roles have two different impacts on society. One of these functions that they strongly have a significant influence on public policy, while the other impact focuses on the personal leadership qualities that the president ultimately brings to the Oval Office (Greenstein 1988, 1). Both of the qualities and functions are important to the overall success and growth in development of the president. Components within the presidency have changed over time and some of these focus on solely avoiding different perils (Greenstein 1988, 3). Greenstein views the presidency as a double-edged sword between being both the head of a political party and as the head of state (Greenstein 1988, 3). This balance between leading the country and being viewed symbolically as the head of a political party can make presidential rhetoric even more significant. Richard Neustadt further adds that the greatest danger to presidential power can be the incapacity or failure to make effective decisions (Neustadt 1960, 61). When a president is elected, there are great expectations of him to do everything. For example, if the economy is not doing well, people may blame the president for a situation that might be out of his control. When the nation faces a crisis, there are even heavier expectations on the president, not to just to lead by example, but to have complete command over the situation (Genovese 2007, 187). Hence, that is why he is sometimes formally referred to as the Commander in Chief according to our constitution. However, David Zarefsky argues that presidential power is also the power to define reality (Genovese 2007, 104). This reality matters

in a crisis because the president needs to view and define the problem in order to solve it. Reality also matters in defining what it truly means to be an effective leader because it shows that a president knows the concerns of the public.

However, George Edwards has his own model for Presidential Public Leadership that involves a messenger, the president's message, and ultimately the public response to that message (Edwards 2003, 22). He argues that we cannot associate any of the problems the president and Congress may be having on any lack of leadership skills or rhetorical ability, but rather the willingness to seek change and find different opportunities from the political forces that are ultimately presented to him (Edwards 2003, 23). In addition, Edwards feels that Congress weighs public opinion just as significantly as the president does in order to hopefully gain public approval to pass certain forms of legislation (Edwards 2003, 8). I feel that even though some of the criticism of presidential leadership can be viewed as unfair, such as the president being blamed for a poor economy, the president is different than most leaders. The presidency has more power and higher expectations than just any job in the public-sector, but also in the private-sector as well. To paraphrase President Truman's famous phrase, the buck stops with the president.

George Edwards further acknowledges that are three fundamental distinctions that are often made regarding presidential leadership. He argues that leadership is an important political resource, that involves actively engaging their case with the American people, and that the president can always mobilize the public when the president is always involved in an endless campaign (Edwards 2003, 4&5). This idea is intended to persuade others to see your agenda, however in the course of a campaign these elected officials are merely deliberating amongst one another and they are not bargaining as they do once they actually get elected (Hecl 2000, 173).

Thomas Preston in his book on the *President's Inner Circle* noted how in looking for specific qualities to define presidential leadership, personal characteristics also matter (Preston 2000, 5). In his work, he focused more on the president's leadership skills in relation to the president's ability to make important foreign policy decisions (Preston 2000, 114). For example, Preston characterized leaders in a number of different rankings, such as Director or Administrator (Preston 2000, 114). A director as defined by Thomas Preston is a leader that often has both a high need for power and policy experience (Preston 2000, 114). Meanwhile, an

administrator is similar in their policy experience; however, they differ in their individual needs for power (Preston 2000, 114). Preston also discussed the importance of “interpersonal skills” in ultimately persuading others to succumb to a president’s agenda (Preston 2000, 105).

In some of my preliminary research, I looked into certain crises such as the Cuban Missile Crisis where President Kennedy had many strengths in how he carried out his leadership throughout the crisis and also the rhetoric that he used to convey some of his messages to the public. For example, President Kennedy in his meetings with his top military advisors and staff tried to obtain extremely detailed information on policy issues, but he also wanted to be fully aware of the obstacles he was bound to face in the midst of some of these crises. In particular, Kennedy was especially interested in gathering as much information as possible about foreign-policy events (Preston 2000, 114).

[The Importance of Power of Persuasion and Imagery](#)

One of the most important trends that I have found so far in my research is the direct correlation between power and persuasion in forming presidential leadership. According to Richard Neustadt, the power of the presidency derives from the power to persuade others. This power can determine how effective a leader the president can ultimately be. The president’s rhetorical strategy will determine how persuasive a president can ultimately be. Some political scholars have agreed with Neustadt on the power of persuasion, such as George Edwards as he even adds that persuasion can help increase the level of public support a president ultimately receives (Edwards 2003, 8). This increase in public support matters because if a president can increase his level of public support, then this increase in turn will help increase the amount of power that a president has. This power can then allow the president to be more of an effective leader. Even though the president may be ineffective at times in his efforts to change people his rhetoric and level of persuasion can allow him to be effective potentially in the future (Edwards 2003, 6). According to George Edwards, it is up to the president to obtain, persuade and mobilize public support for his cause (Edwards 2003, 7). This leaves the power to persuade others solely in the hands of the president.

In a similar way, Jeffery Tulis also argues against this power of persuasion by noting how some of Neustadt’s suggestions have indeed made it tougher for president to accomplish their goals (Tulis 1988,10). In light of more partisan politics and gridlock, persuasion is not the only

effective tool that a president can use in trying to accomplish his objectives. As I will later detail, in this essay, other tools such as bargaining can also prove to be just as effective for the president. In addition, Tulis also argues that rhetoric used by presidents should be viewed more as a political development with promise that comes with different costs (Tulis 1988, 12). In a crisis, the president may not be trying to fulfill any promises for any political development, but hopefully for the sole purpose of guiding his country. However, Tulis is right in noting that different promises come with different costs because if the president fails to deliver on promises that were made the president might begin to lose public support, which will in turn provide him less leverage. Political rhetoric should help really emphasize and show the relation and establishment between the basic doctrines that our government is composed of and the other constitutional perspectives of those doctrines (Tulis 1988, 14). This is a really important point to emphasize because rhetoric during a crisis should not be used for any political gain, but rather it should be used as a moral compass in guiding our country in the right direction.

Even informal events, such as making jokes at the White House Correspondent's Dinner, can often help or hurt a president in the midst of a crisis. President Bill Clinton noted how even spending as much as 20 minutes on the Tonight Show made all the difference in the world as compared to speaking at more important venues such as the Democratic National Convention (Waisanen 2015). In an interesting article by Don Waisanen titled "Comedian-in-Chief: Presidential Jokes as Enthymematic Crisis Rhetoric", he discussed how presidents would even use humor as a tool for many different occasions such as engaging in diplomacy or sending out legitimate actions as a part of their communicative strategy (Waisanen 2015). When individuals typically think of crisis situations, they might assume that effective speeches have to be constructed in more of a serious tone, but this is not always the case.

Even though the power of persuasion is an enormous gift that is offered to the president, during time of crisis, another source of presidential power derives from the president's ability to take direct action. If there are clauses within the Constitution that allows acts such as President Lincoln declaring martial law during the Civil War that allow the president to take certain actions, that others might perceive as unconstitutional, then there are sources of presidential power that are already provided to the president even before they take the oath of office. Taking

direct action shows that the rhetoric a president uses will not be forgotten or not taken seriously, direct action gives these words meaning.

There are certain techniques that have been used rhetorically, that can help further your political agenda. Machiavelli noted the importance of framing issues through metaphors and shorts stories and defining as well as developing a crafted narrative (Genovese 2007, 104). Telling a story or invoking humor (if in the appropriate setting) can not only help promote a political agenda, but it can also help people better understand a crisis. Today, through different media avenues, the president has even more of an opportunity to develop and maintain a positive image (Genovese 2007, 169). The very image a president presents through the media, can make all the difference in how much public support the president will ultimately receive and how favorably the public will view him (Mayer 2004, 621). Thus, the president's staff puts a lot of emphasis into crafting a positive image that would help increase public support. An increase in public support matters to the development of political rhetoric because it shows that the president is being viewed credibly as a leader.

However, as mentioned previously the "image" a president gives off in relation to not just the media, but to the public as a whole, will play a role in how much public support the president will ultimately receive (Mayer 2004, 621). Jeremy Mayer also discussed how the president needs to be aware of what others might perceive as small details, but are largely critical, such as how relatable he is to the average American and also how political opponents view him (Mayer 2004, 621). President Bush for example tried to appear more relatable to the average American by talking about baseball, even though his life has been far more polished than just a regular person (Mayer 2004, 621). Lyn Ragsdale agrees with this notion of imagery of not just the individuals in the office, but the institution of the office itself (Ragsdale 1984, 2). The image of the presidency symbolizes the most powerful position within both the government and ultimately in the nation (Ragsdale 1984, 3). The president can seek to improve their image making through public opinion polls, press coverages and through the different speeches that they deliver (Ragsdale 1984, 7). The type of image that a president portrays matters during a crisis because the world always looks at the United States as one of the major global leaders.

Presidential Rhetorical Strategies: Going Public & the Endless Campaign

The philosopher Cicero once argued that with the rhetoric that a president uses with the public, the public ultimately has to sacrifice something in the midst of a crisis. Not every president is a gifted communicator like Ronald Reagan, but as previously mentioned every president has the potential opportunity to become effective public speakers. At the same time, I also feel this notion of sacrifice is certainly a prevalent and noteworthy idea. However, I would like to add that this sacrifice might be perceived with a negative connotation. When the president uses their rhetoric they should instead focus on making sure that their sacrifices are ultimately for the greater good. Their rhetoric should be meant to inspire and lead individuals, not to make them feel like they have everything to lose or something they have to give up. Granted there are situations which are serious and will not always have messages that are positive or uplifting.

Despite the power that president might accumulate the office itself is largely a paradox according to Michael Genovese and what may work for one president doesn't necessarily mean that it will also work for another president. This can especially apply to the effectiveness of rhetoric because one strategy might have worked for one president, but also could not work for one president in another situation. I agree with Genovese that the presidency is unique in the sense that although the duties and powers within the Office remain the same, the individuals change. The powers of the presidency are strictly inherited and passed down from one president to the next because of our Constitution and the other fundamental principles that define our government. This gives our president in particular certain powers during crisis that will allow them to either be viewed as successes or failures. However, there are some aspects of the presidency that will work for every president as the Constitution affords and provides the president certain rights that will work for just about any president. The power of the executive order for example could prevent continuing the Keystone Pipeline for President Obama, despite Republican objections, while that same power allowed President Trump to remove President Obama's order and continue the Pipeline. Even though both men had different objectives, the presidency allowed these men power to accomplish his objectives

Certain patterns that I have focused on more or less thus far has focused on the importance of the president communicating directly to the public to try and persuade them. Ultimately there have been researchers such as Samuel Kernell, who argue that the president

should directly share his agenda straight to the public without really deliberating or discussing it with Congress (Kernell 1988). The model of “going public” essentially says to skip over the legislative branch almost entirely when bringing up particular issues and instead focusing on communicating this issues directly to the public, for support. This matters during a crisis because Congress has designated powers that gives them the ability to impact the president’s agenda such as the power of the veto. However, Jeffery Tulis feels that “going public” can ultimately violate the power of bargaining in a number of different ways. For, example it never includes the necessary exchanges and it forces politicians to have to deal with the public to accept or go along with a president’s preferences and it ultimately goes against forms of public posture (Tulis 1988, 2,3,4).

As Kernell, mentioned going public with policy issues or agendas can ultimately help a president spread their influence, but it can come at a cost if you are just following the public’s wants and needs at every step of the way (Kernell 1986). As more than just the President of the United States, but as a human being it is impossible to please everybody. During times of crises, the president should lead and not just follow what the public wants. It is important for them to listen to their perspectives, but ultimately the president must use his best judgement in order to make the most practical decision he can make.

Instead of allowing multiple perspectives on agenda and thoughtful debates over important issues, going public would only promote and focus on the agenda of the president. Even though this grants the president more power in situations such as a crisis, not having Congress input could hurt the president. Firstly, the president cannot continually sign executive orders during a crisis, they need the approval of the legislative branch in order to perform certain functions of their agenda such as funding a different program or increasing the presence of our military. Secondly, the president could benefit from hearing the perspective of others during a crisis due to the fact that as previously mentioned, it should not be based off of any gaining any leverage politically. The president’s agenda that he will later use in his rhetoric should be used only for the purpose of helping his country.

George Edwards also disagrees with the impact of “going public” because he believes that recent studies have only really focused on the types of responses that presidents were receiving in calls to be more persuasive (Edwards 2003, 6). Even though the president’s effort to

use rhetoric to impact public opinion on a given topic may or may not have any sudden impact the president always has the potential to do so (Edwards 2003, 6). As mentioned, Edwards argues in his own vision of the power of presidential leadership, that going public is not the only effective government strategy, as other factors also play large roles like the leadership of a party or the mobilization of interest groups (Edwards 2003, 8). The president can always have the opportunity to change public opinion simply because of the role and image the office of the presidency has.

This notion of an endless campaign is especially important during a crisis because the president can always promote his own agenda when he decides to go public. The key to the president's success in going public is the hope that the public will tend to listen more to when the president gives a speech as opposed to other elected officials. This is due to the power that the office brings and the simple notion that the voice of the president symbolically should represent the voice of the American people. No other position in our government allows one person to be the voice of not just a district or a state, but the voice of an entire nation.

“Going public” in the midst of a crisis has its fair share of both benefits and drawbacks. The public's faith in the president's ability may ultimately improve as a result of his actions, but his rhetoric needs to assure members of the government as well. Congress has several special functions designated to itself under the Constitution to declare war so if there was a crisis that might need to potentially involve a war, then the president would have to deliberate with Congress to get them to see or pursue his agenda. However, the president has historically been given more constitutional authority during times of national crises such as President Lincoln during the Civil War.

[Relationship between the President and the Media](#)

The media today plays a significant role in the presidential leadership techniques that take place today as evident through different coverage influences such as focusing on the issues that the public considers important, increasing public familiarity and public knowledge about a particular subject and evaluating presidents past performance and the public's perception about a president's job performance (Eshbaugh-Soha 2011, 61). The president also targets local media and politicians to engage in different and often extensive news coverage (Eshbaugh-Soha 2011, 62). However, the Press Office within the White House symbolizes almost a central role in

presidential communication efforts (Eshbaugh-Soha 2011, 60). The press office is designed to reflect the agenda of the president, and during a crisis they play a large role in the shaping and development of the president's voice. Most communications efforts are now more geared towards using scarce political resources, while at the same time they are focused on satisfying the different expectations of voters (Jacobs 2013, 18). However, currently the White House is still trying to get the public to their own theories and separate agendas (Jacobs 2013, 18). Some of their efforts may be successful in trying to rally in the public, but when it comes to persuading Congress during the midst of a crisis, the president will have to use more political and partisan tools to accomplish his goals (Jacobs 2013, 27). However, Congress needs to be persuaded to accomplish some specific aspects of the president's agenda. Jacobs also mentions that legislative accomplishments and public opinion will not always go hand in hand (Jacobs 2013, 26). Whatever the legislature wants may not always reflect what the public wants. This notion may differ in rhetoric used in a crisis because ideas that may be introduced could be solely focused on the public wants and needs.

The relationship between the president and the media is more of a significant relationship than people realize. Both the president and the media have the power to influence public opinion which is significant in all areas of rhetoric. According to Karolyn Heldman and Erinn Carter, different political scientists have found three different ways to impact public opinion: framing, agenda setting and priming (Heldman and Carter 2004, 7). Framing focuses on how a presidential response will focus on solving different elements of a problem and ultimately how it should be perceived (Heldman and Carter 2004, 8). Agenda setting involves focusing on particular topics based off of how important these topics are to the public (Heldman and Carter 2004, 8). Priming involves putting more or less emphasis on a set of issues or attributes based on a specific policy or a politician (Heldman and Carter 2004,8). However, like any relationships there can be positive and negative aspects that can affect the future outcome of the relationship.

One of the major issues that was brought up by Michael Genovese focused on how given the presidential power and relationship to media, the president can become too close to the public. Some presidents such as John F. Kennedy and Franklin Roosevelt have had positive and strong relationships with the media. President Kennedy for example called the editor of *The Washington Post* to request cooperation during the Cuban Missile Crisis (Noonan 2017). Even

President Obama had an interesting relationship with the media because he used different social media tools in order to help control his own image (Marshall 2014). However, as former president Bush's press secretary Ari Fleischer notes the media will always want to know as much as possible about what the president is doing, so much so that he jokingly mentions the prospect of a built in-camera in the Oval Office (PBS 2011). Other presidents such as Richard Nixon have not had such a pleasant relationship with the media, as he and his political aides thought that the media was "an unrepresentative, irresponsible interest group that patriotic Americans need to defend themselves against" (Marshall 2014). President Nixon even wiretapped reporter's phones of journalists he didn't like (Marshall 2014).

As a result of events such as the Watergate Scandal and the Vietnam War, the relationship between the media has grown more skeptical over reports from the president (PBS 2011). I think that this is fairly well-crafted point because even though the presidency is intended to be representative of the public, the president cannot always please or accommodate to the needs of everyone in the public. In fact, it is practically impossible because the president there are roughly 327 million different interests has to represent (Dickerson 2018). There are going to be tough decisions that the public might disagree with, but the president might feel that there are certain leadership techniques that require him to use reason and follow his intuition.

In some cases, the relationship between the president and the press is so influential and impactful that the media will begin to use some of the president's own language, as evident in Karolyn Heldman's article on how the Bush Administration was able to frame and sell the issue of weapons of mass destruction to the American public. Heldman argues that the relationship between the presidency and the press is almost a very "cozy" relationship (Heldman and Carter 2004, 6). Yet, at the same time a co-dependent relationship exists because the president needs the press in order to help his image, while the press needs access to the president in order to do their jobs successfully (Heldman and Carter 2004, 6).

The relationship between the president and the media is very important in helping determine the overall effectiveness of a president's rhetoric. This research focuses more on the relationship between the president and the public as opposed to his relationship with the press; however, to understand the relationship, it is important to understand the media environment. The press can often times be one of the only direct links that the president has to the public. As a

result, the press has a powerful role in that they can either promote the president's agenda which will help the president or they can offer criticism which could hurt a president's agenda. That is why preparing for the media is more important for the president than it was in the past because of the number of different media platforms that exist today, such as the 24-hour news cycle on television or social media pages. For example, when a crisis happens, 24-hours news stations such as CNN have the ability to go and cover that crisis on a frequent basis (Hansen and Folkenflik 2005). Some presidents have taken full advantage of the media platforms that are provided to them during the time period in which they serve, such as President Kennedy and his use of television during his presidential debates with Vice President Nixon. Given these platforms, the president today engages in more direct contact with journalists than they did as they did in the past (Eshbaugh-Soha 2011, 58).

'Study Analysis

Address Before the American Society of Newspaper Editors (1961)

On April 20th, 1961 President Kennedy gave an address before the American Society of Newspaper Editors in which he opened up about the recent events that had transpired in Cuba. Still in his first year of office, President Kennedy was prepared to apologize for one of the first major blunders that occurred in his new Administration. How President Kennedy responded to this crisis would impact not only how his approval ratings at home, but how the world would perceive this young president. This is especially considering the escalating tensions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union that led to the Cold War.

He began his press conference mentioning that Cuba was an "unhappy island, as in so many other arenas of the contest of freedom, the news has grown worse instead of better" (Kennedy 1961). He then goes onto mention that the United States did not want to intervene militarily on the island of Cuba they would intervene if the Cubans threatened to impact the U.S. national security (Kennedy 1961). He tells the reporters that historically this has not been the first time that these "small freedom fighters" led by Castro have posed a threat to larger nations that represent totalitarianism (Kennedy 1961). He referred back to his Inaugural Address with themes dealing with crisis and liberty as he said that this rebellion is not "the final episode in the struggle of liberty against tyranny" (Kennedy 1961). Kennedy then went on to defend those

brave freedom fighters that fought to defend their small island in an effort to show that these fighters truly believed in fighting against communism, so the U.S. should still be inspired to continue the struggle as well (Kennedy 1961). “While we could not be expected to hide our sympathies, we made it repeatedly clear that the armed forces of this country would not intervene in any way.” (Kennedy 1961)

In this specific quote, Kennedy is trying to argue that the United States will not intervene in these specific security matters. Even though the United States did not want to get involved in this particular situation because of the seriousness of the Cold War, it would have been a mistake for the United States to not get involved in any sort of manner. In addition, there are a few notable words from this speech including “we” which indicates that the president is indeed aware of some of the actions that he represents and symbolizes as the President of the United States. Hence, it is no surprise as Barbara Hinckley notes that the word “we” is one of the most heavily used employed subjects in presidential sentences (Hinckley 1985, 27).

Any unilateral American intervention, in the absence of an external attack upon ourselves or an ally, would have been contrary to our traditions and to our international obligations. But let the record show that our restraint is not inexhaustible. Should it ever appear that the inter-American doctrine of non-interference merely conceals or excuses a policy of non-action--if the nations of this Hemisphere should fail to meet their commitments against outside Communist penetration--then I want it clearly understood that this Government will not hesitate in meeting its primary obligations which are to the security of our Nation! (Kennedy 1961)

Some of the specific goals within this speech included the central message that any and all unilateral attacks on the country would have contradicted our nation’s belief in further protecting our own national security. In addition, he is trying to make the United States appear as if they are not the bad guys in this situation because this “intervention” in most circumstances would have been against both “traditions” and “obligations” that the United States had previously held. We tried hard to restrain ourselves from acting, but he is saying that defeating a communist nation does not require a level of restraint. The United States could also not afford to remain neutral in

the case of the crisis because it would almost make it seem like we were appeasing Communism and allowing it to potentially develop in the Western Hemisphere.

The evidence is clear--and the hour is late. We and our Latin friends will have to face the fact that we cannot postpone any longer the real issue of survival of freedom in this hemisphere itself. On that issue, unlike perhaps some others, there can be no middle ground (Kennedy 1961).

His specific goal in giving this address was to try to preserve the security of the American people in the Western Hemisphere and how there can ultimately be no other options to change his mind or make a new decision otherwise. By mentioning that the “hour is late” he is referencing to the ongoing Cold War in which the spread of Communism must be prevented in the Western Hemisphere as quickly as possible. President Kennedy from a political perspective needed to make sure that the United States looked and sounded tough and strong especially since they were defeated by a small nation of guerrilla fighters. In the context, of the Cold War, the United States rationale at the time was how can we expect to counter the larger threat (the Soviet Union) in this case when we had difficulty defeating a smaller threat like Cuba.

We intend to profit from this lesson. We intend to reexamine and reorient our forces of all kinds--our tactics and our institutions here in this community. We intend to intensify our efforts for a struggle in many ways more difficult than war, where disappointment will often accompany us (Kennedy 1961).

In this particular passage, Kennedy fully stated his intention to hopefully take away some important lessons and learn from his mistakes during this crisis. At the same time, he also acknowledges that this crisis will not be easy and there is a chance that the U.S. might falter. By stating that “disappointment will accompany us” he is creating a barrier between himself and potential future errors because he is revealing that things have the potential to still go wrong. However, it is important for him to acknowledge his mistake because according to Neustadt ineffective actions or an incapacity to make decisions would ultimately hurt his presidential power (Neustadt 1960, 61). As previously mentioned by Michael Genovese, during a crisis the nation expects that a president should have complete control over the situation (Genovese 2007,

87). When all does not go to plan, the president needs to admit that mistakes had been made because his power is at stake and also his credibility because when he takes action things should go according to plan even if they do not have total control over the situation.

The following day at a press conference on April 21, 1961 in the immediate aftermath of the Bay of Pigs failure, President Kennedy said he was still consulting with many other nations on how they were going to properly handle the matter, but he was going to spend much more time talking about the issue (JFK Library, n.d.). He was quoted as saying in his speech following his humiliating defeat that “victory has a thousand children, but defeat is a lonely orphan” (Matthews 2011, 331). I believe in this statement that he is accepting the fact that failure is not an option not just in this case, but in the prolonged fight against Communist influence. Even though the president repeatedly mentioned that he would not comment any further on the crisis he was being asked whether it was true that the Secretary of State and Under Secretary of State had initially opposed the invasion (Reeves 2009).

In spite of the setback which the Bay of Pigs served to the United States, President Kennedy discussed important lessons that he needed to learn in order to prevent another potential catastrophe like Cuba from happening again. His first lesson was that nations like Cuba, who support communism, should not be underestimated no matter how large or small their nation is geographically because of the advantages and power that these communist leaders have at their disposal (Kennedy 1961). This power in Kennedy’s view can hinder or prevent the growth of a self-ruled state (Kennedy 1961). Kennedy secondly emphasizes the importance of Cuba, despite the country’s small size compared to our own country, in that we simply cannot allow the spread of communism to countries especially in our own hemisphere (Kennedy 1961). “Power” as Kennedy stated, “is the hallmark of this offensive-power and discipline and deceit” (Kennedy,1961). Kennedy of course was referring to the fact that the issue of whether or not the issue of freedom for Latin Americans can no longer be debated or viewed as consequential issue because freedom for the whole Western Hemisphere was now very much at stake (Kennedy 1961). Lastly he discusses the danger that these nuclear weapons and arms can serve to the world and the country (Kennedy 1961). He decries Castro as someone who betrayed the “promise of revolution” and ultimately ushered an era which instead induced terror (Kennedy 1961). Nations like Cuba in Kennedy’s view will be “swept away with the debris of history” (Kennedy 1961). In

this statement he is trying to inform his fellow citizens that nations that follow Communism like Cuba will most likely not last. Kennedy concluded his speech by mentioning that he intends to learn his lesson from the debacle and that he believes that the world gains both strength and skills from having freedom (Kennedy 1961). This freedom and security is a challenge and a right that the United States has to continue to fight for if it wishes to remain free and prosperous (Kennedy 1961). Once again, Kennedy is trying to promote the benefits of a capitalistic, free society like America as opposed to a communist nation such as Cuba.

President Kennedy learned through his missteps in this failed invasion that ultimately Cuba would be a much harder problem to combat than his Administration initially thought. He took the failure hard personally and mea culpa for the failure saying he alone was responsible for the catastrophe (Matthews 2011, 33). This included the fact that just a few months earlier before the Bay of Pigs, Kennedy delivered an “Alliance for Progress” speech in that the Cuban invasion would be carried out without direct U.S. military action (Matthews 2011, 333).

After the resolution of the crisis, Kennedy wanted to ensure that the mistakes that he made during the crisis would not be repeated later on in future cases. After all, the Cold War at that particular time was so unpredictable and uncertain, as the speech shows in Cuba, that there was a great deal of caution in how the United States and Soviet Union would respond to each other’s actions. Another big takeaway that the Kennedy Administration learned from his Bay of Pigs experiences was to avoid the mistake of allowing groupthink. Groupthink refers to a psychological drive for consensus in a group even if it means suppressing or not addressing your own thoughts and concerns (Hansen 2013). So even if a person disagreed about a certain point or idea brought up, they would not speak out against it for a number of potentially different reasons including possibly feeling inferior to the opinion of the president. After all, when you’re working under the highest office in the land, it can be pretty intimidating.

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Aides of President Kennedy said that the overall failure that was associated with this crisis really had a really negative impact on the president (Neustadt 1990, 176). It shook his confidence and revealed some levels of arrogance in his administration's handling of the crisis (Neustadt 1990, 249). He described the crisis to then former Vice President Richard Nixon as the "worst experience of my life" and he grew frustrated often asking himself how he could have been so stupid to think that plan had the potential to work (Reeves 2009).

A *Gallup* poll from April 1961 found that at the time after the crisis 61% of Americans approved of how Kennedy handled the Cuba invasion and 15% disapproved (Saad 2016). However, despite his mishap, Kennedy's approval ratings went from 78% to 83% in the aftermath of the crisis (Saad 2016). Kennedy's approval ratings may have increased during that time because he took responsibility for his actions and was honest that he made a mistake. He managed to move on from the crisis without any real significant damage to his public image. Meanwhile, the prisoners that were captured by Castro's forces remained captive for another 20 months, as the United States ultimately negotiated a deal with Fidel Castro (JFK Library, n.d.). Even though Kennedy was well aware that Cuba would prove to be a problem in the future, he probably did not expect to face a situation as grave as the Cuban Missile Crisis.

[Cuban Missile Crisis Address to the Nation \(1962\)](#)

Before giving his speech to the nation, President Kennedy called the publishers of newspapers such as *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* to request cooperation given the grim situation the country was about to face (Noonan 2017). President Kennedy's tone within this nighttime broadcast focused on a language that was very different from his inaugural address (JFK Library n.d.). Unlike the rather optimistic tone of his inaugural address, President Kennedy talked about the uncertainty and perils that the nation faced in the midst of their new effort to combat the buildup of more nuclear weapons. This was all despite the United States best intentions to "maintained the closest surveillance of the Soviet military buildup on the island of Cuba" (Kennedy 1963). However, from Kennedy's perspective the investigation of the Soviet

nuclear buildup on the island had produced “unmistakable evidence” that these weapons were “offensive missiles” with no benevolent purpose other than to “provide a nuclear strike capability against the Western Hemisphere” (Kennedy 1963). Part of the reason why Kennedy mentioned the unmistakable evidence on behalf of these weapons was to show the American people that the Soviets really did have missiles on Cuba and he might have also been trying to cover up for our last major involvement in Cuba which was the Bay of Pigs.

Kennedy described how these nuclear-ballistic missiles were in a distance and range of striking locations such as Mexico City or Washington D.C. (Kennedy 1963). This description was meant to create an even further sense of how serious this situation was and what the potential consequences for failure in this situation could potentially lead to. Kennedy gave descriptions of the air bases and of the nuclear sites to provide further context into how far the Soviets had progressed in placing the weapons on this island. He then references how the “urgent transformation of Cuba into an important strategic base” (Kennedy 1963) by the Soviets ultimately

constitutes an explicit threat to the peace and security of all the Americas, in flagrant defiance of the Rio Pact of 1947, the traditions of this nation and hemisphere, the joint resolution of the 87th Congress, the Charter of the United Nations, and my own public warnings to the Soviets on September 4 and 13(Kennedy 1963).

This urgent threat, once again signifies the serious security threat the Soviets pose in this particular situation to the safety and well-being of Americans in addition to the number of treaties and violations they participated in. In addition, this quote also reveals how the Soviets are largely responsible for the current predicament, not because of any past or current actions from the United States.

Kennedy then went on to quote the Soviet government to show culpability as one of their spokesman had reassured the Americans that “the arms buildup in Cuba would retain its original defensive character, and that the Soviet Union had no need or desire to station strategic missiles on the territory of any other nation” (Kennedy 1963). This once again characterizes and shows how the Soviets desire and placing of these missiles went against their promises and any obligations they might have made to the United States. In addition, according to President Kennedy, the Soviet Government stated "there is no need for the Soviet Government to shift its

weapons for a retaliatory blow to any other country, for instance Cuba” (Kennedy 1963). In addition, Kennedy warned his audience of the dangers of nuclear weapons:

We no longer live in a world where only the actual firing of weapons represents a sufficient challenge to a nation's security to constitute maximum peril. Nuclear weapons are so destructive and ballistic missiles are so swift, that any substantially increased possibility of their use or any sudden change in their deployment may well be regarded as a definite threat to peace (Kennedy 1963).

This represented Kennedy’s acknowledgment that these nuclear weapons could potentially cause a lot of harm and destruction and would ultimately cause a lot of harm and threaten the world. I think this summed up the United States attitude towards nuclear weapons not just at the beginning of the Cold War, but also throughout the rest of it as well. Considering the world had just finished fighting a World War less than 20 years before this speech was given the image of harm and destruction was something Kennedy might have considered in his analysis of the severe danger these weapons posed.

Kennedy also openly acknowledged that like the Soviet Union, the United States also possesses nuclear weapons, however, unlike the Soviet Union, the U.S. has never used another territory or nation to place their own nuclear arsenal (Kennedy 1963).

For many years, both the Soviet Union and the United States, recognizing this fact, have deployed strategic nuclear weapons with great care, never upsetting the precarious status quo which insured that these weapons would not be used in the absence of some vital challenge. Our own strategic missiles have never been transferred to the territory of any other nation under a cloak of secrecy and deception; and our history -- unlike that of the Soviets since the end of World War II -- demonstrates that we have no desire to dominate or conquer any other nation or impose our system upon its people (Kennedy 1963).

Kennedy was really trying to take a tough stance on the Soviets by almost challenging them to rhetorically ask themselves, why do you need to place your weapons in Cuba if it isn’t for the purpose of being aggressive towards the United States? After all, Cuba is only 90 miles off of the coast of Florida, so these weapons would be in closer proximity to the United States than any other surrounding communist nation. Kennedy even alluded to U.S and Soviet relations dating back to before World War II to show how the relationship between the United States and the

Soviets have not been as tense as it has been illustrated to be. He then goes on to emphasize the “clear and present danger” and high level of threat that these nuclear weapons pose to the destruction not only of the United States, but of the world (Kennedy 1963).

President Kennedy was well aware of how applicable the Cuban Missile Crisis was in relation to other historical events that the United States had been involved in.

The 1930's taught us a clear lesson: aggressive conduct, if allowed to go unchecked and unchallenged, ultimately leads to war. This nation is opposed to war. We are also true to our word. Our unswerving objective, therefore, must be to prevent the use of these missiles against this or any other country, and to secure their withdrawal or elimination from the Western Hemisphere. (Kennedy 1963).

President Kennedy loved reading and learning about history and he was able to witness a very important historical event up close and personal. During the 1930s, President Kennedy's father Joseph was appointed the Ambassador to England (Farris 2013, 97). Kennedy then became exposed to the beginnings of World War II as Hitler marched across Europe and nations such as England appeased Hitler's conquest. President Kennedy's exposure to the crisis led him to write his own senior thesis at Harvard and later a book called *Why England Slept* which attempted to examine why England had appeased Germany (Farris 2013, 99).

Kennedy has shown that the United States has at least made the effort to reduce the use of nuclear weapons by discussing how they have made “strenuous efforts to limit the spread of nuclear weapons” (Kennedy 1963). He also wants to explain that he doesn't want to start a war with the Soviets because he recognizes that the Soviets may also strive for more peaceful resolutions (Kennedy 1963).

Kennedy tries to assure many alarmed Americans by saying that even though the U.S. opposes war if the Soviet Union acts aggressively, then the U.S. has a responsibility to protect not only our own citizens, but also the lives of those in other nations throughout the Western Hemisphere (Kennedy 1963). Kennedy then goes on to list in a step by step process how he plans to defend against the Soviet Union in 7 different steps including a quarantine, a closer surveillance of Cuba, a reinforced Guantanamo Bay and a calling of different United Nations meetings (Kennedy 1963). He then tries to persuade Khrushchev to stop his aggressive actions by saying that “these new weapons are not in your interest. They contribute nothing to your

peace and well-being. They can only undermine it” (Kennedy 1963). President Kennedy was candid when he was talking about the Russians noting that as a whole the nation was opposed to war and wanted a peaceful resolution to the buildup of these harmful nuclear weapons. Direct action could potentially be taken by the United States if necessary. President Kennedy wanted to sound tough and against his foreign adversary especially considering that at the last United States-Soviet Union summit prior to the crisis, Khrushchev bullied and pushed Kennedy around (Thrall and Wilkins 2008). In his television address he specifically called the “blockade” of Cuba a “quarantine” because using the word “blockade” might have connoted a military action and it could have potentially alarmed the nation (Noonan 2017). In his closing remarks, he connected it back to the hope of the country that their goal will focus on not more or less victory, but rather that the right course of actions will be taken.

The path we have chosen for the present is full of hazards, as all paths are; but it is the one most consistent with our character and courage as a nation and our commitments around the world. The cost of freedom is always high, but Americans have always paid it. And one path we shall never choose, and that is the path of surrender or submission (Kennedy 1963).

Even though the path ahead will be rather difficult road ahead with a fair share of trials and tribulations, but the worst course the country could take according to the president is to do absolutely nothing.

Our goal is not the victory of might, but the vindication of right; not peace at the expense of freedom, but both peace and freedom, here in this hemisphere, and, we hope, around the world. God willing, that goal will be achieved (Kennedy 1963).

In the end, as previously mentioned, Kennedy decided to launch a blockade against the Soviets and that ultimately led to President Khrushchev agreeing to withdraw Soviet missiles from Cuba on October 28th 1962 (Saad 2002). During the crisis, President Kennedy appeared to remain both cool and calm (Neustadt 1990). His temperament and personal demeanor was clearly reflected in the rhetoric that the president used. According to a Gallup poll taken right after his speech on October 22nd, 1962, 84% of Americans approved of the blockade that President Kennedy proposed in nationally televised speech (Saad 2002). In addition, his approval rating was at 63% prior to the blockade and it jumped to 74% afterwards (Saad 2002). The country as a whole has

had a very negative attitude towards Fidel Castro and Cuba even up to the year 2002, viewing him and the country with a 78% unfavorable viewing with a 9% favorable rating (Saad 2002).

However, Former Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy felt that one of the most important lessons from the crisis was “the importance of placing ourselves in other country’s shoes” (Matthews 2011, 373). President Kennedy learned from his mistakes from the Bay of Pigs and he proceeded to make the right strategic and communicative decisions in dealing with the Cuban Missile Crisis.

[Remarks at the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance Services \(2001\)](#)

On Friday September 14th 2001, the president had the opportunity to speak at the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance of the Terrorist Attacks at the Washington National Cathedral (Schweizer 2004, 518). Even the President himself knew how important this speech would be in addressing a heartbroken and devastated nation while he was at the Cathedral, “the speech at the cathedral was the most important of my young presidency. I told my speechwriters- Mike Gerson, John McConnell and Matthew Scully-that I wanted to accomplish three objectives: mourn the loss of life, remind people there was a loving God, and make clear that those who attacked our nation would face justice” (Bush 2009, 146). These three objectives were certainly three central elements and themes within his Cathedral speech. In addition, I thought that the president did a nice job of focusing on a few other elements of his speech including using a religious tone to commemorate the loss of life, in addition to focusing on the loss of individual lives not for the purpose of inciting fear or trying to go after the terrorists. President Bush also wanted to show the world and the nation a large sense of commitment to unifying the nation during those dark and trying days. He also wanted to emphasize the price of freedom that the United States had to ensure, in addition to how the United States would formulate a response and how justice would be served.

In his speech, the president also talked about the heroes of September 11th. He mentioned first that the country had been exposed to the gruesome images of the fire and destruction that came with the attacks. Now President Bush was using this opportunity in his speech to memorialize the individual names of lives that were lost in the attacks and the roles that they had as either passengers or as first responders on those planes (Bush 2001).

They are the names of men and women who began their day at a desk or in an airport, busy with life. They are the names of people who faced death and in their last moments called home to say, 'Be brave,' and, 'I love you' (Bush 2001).

President Bush's rhetorical strategy of repeating the "names" of those who lost their lives in the attack was tragically very poetic. This was the first time really in American history that a terrorism occurred domestically right before our eyes.

The president discussed how Americans have typically responded to these attacks by acknowledging that the United States holds a big responsibility to combat these acts of evil (Bush 2001). He also began the usage of the phrase "*an hour of our choosing*" which showed that in some capacity the United States would respond to these attacks on our time (Bush 2001).

In the beginning of the speech, President Bush described the high level of American suffering at that particular time period.

We are here in the middle hour of our grief. So many have suffered so great a loss, and today we express our Nation's sorrow. We come before God to pray for the missing and the dead and for those who love them (Bush 2001).

I thought that overall this statement was intended to show how the United States would unify and even though the country was in the midst of a national disaster. Bush's use of the word "we" really signified his commitment to unity in the trying days ahead of the crisis. His reference to "God" also shows the president's religious views and how it reflects his own method of coping with this terrible tragedy. In addition, it is important to keep in mind that the speech did occur in a Cathedral, so his use of "God" in this setting is also perfectly understandable and reasonable.

Just 3 days removed from these events, Americans do not yet have the distance of history. But our responsibility to history is already clear: To answer these attacks and rid the world of evil (Bush 2001).

These attacks were the first domestic attacks on U.S. soil since Pearl Harbor, so tragedy was a very historical event. Just three days removed from this tragedy, it is highly unlikely that Americans would be able to fully process just how historical this event was even though they were clearly aware of its significance. In the short span of time since these attacks, however, President Bush wanted to remind Americans that when the nation had been attacked in the past be it in a war or other conflict, the United States had a "responsibility" to their own history in

that they would actively respond to these attacks. As in previous cases, as the United States grew larger and more powerful it decided to take on more responsibilities and in the spirit of the Roosevelt Doctrine, become the world's "police power" ("Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine 1904"). The purpose of this would be to protect not only our allies' security interests, but in this particular case our own domestic security. In addition, when President Bush announced that he was going to find those responsible for those who committed the attacks, the President later took action by performing actions such as forming the 9/11 Commission or even invading nations such as Iraq (President Bush also had the objective of establishing democracy in Iraq as well as locating Weapons of Mass Destruction).

America is a nation full of good fortune, with so much to be grateful for. But we are not spared from suffering. In every generation, the world has produced enemies of human freedom. They have attacked America because we are freedom's home and defender (Bush 2001).

In this particular passage, President Bush's objective was to provide the American people some example or reason for why the terrorists attacked our country. The terrorists attacked America because we are the world's symbol of both freedom and democracy. The intelligence community seemed to be pretty aware of who was responsible for the attacks, but President Bush was more focused on telling Americans *why* they attacked us as opposed to *whom*. Both questions were very significant and important to everyday Americans, but knowing who did it would not really change the sad reality that these attacks occurred. Instead, answering why these terrorists decided to attack our country provides reasoning as to why this tragedy occurred. Bush acknowledges to a degree the case of American exceptionalism and how we have been blessed and fortunate, but we still have enemies such as radical terrorists.

Uniquely throughout his speech President Bush used a very religious tone to commemorate the loss of life. He alludes the tragic loss of life to a sign from God that despite the suffering, is apart of God's great plan for all human life. He then discusses how overcoming adversity and hardships and uniting as one country can serve as the fundamental core of who we are as a country. President Bush tried to emphasize how Americans have always had to pay a price for the freedoms that we hold dear and that at our core Americans are united and fight for very noble and just causes.

In his closing remarks mentions God in a religious tone “As we have been assured, neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor death can separate us from God’s love” (Schweitzer 2004, 519). President Bush used this religious tone in order to help the country cope with the crisis and as previously mentioned the spiritual aspect that he mentioned allowed him to cope as well. In addition, as previously mentioned it is important to consider the location of the speech (a cathedral) as to why he decided to invoke a religious tone.

Some critics of the president later viewed his speech from the Cathedral as a national eulogy that was closely related to the Inaugural Address because of its character and overall rhetoric (Campbell and Jamieson 2008, 102-103). However, this is what President Bush deliberate intention. He intended for this service to be a somber moment for a nation that needed leadership and healing in the aftermath of a horrific crisis. President Bush’s central themes of his speech focused on unity. As a leader, President Bush wanted to bring people together and rally their spirits optimistically, which is something that I think is quite admirable. In his September 11th speech to the nation, President Bush brought back the “beacon on the hill” metaphor which had been used as a previous metaphor by previous presidents (Heidt 2013, 241). This light-dark metaphor as well as the beacon metaphor was used by President Bush throughout his presidency (Heidt 2013, 241). In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, Bush’s approval ratings soared to 90% according to a CNN/USA Today/Gallup Poll that was conducted between September 21st and 22nd (Moore 2001). This rating was one of the highest ratings that Gallup has ever seen for any U.S. president (Bump 2017). Even 9 out of 10 Democrats approved of the president, two weeks after the crisis (Bump 2017). This rating was both significant and interesting especially considering the controversy that surrounded the 2000 Presidential Election where President Bush narrowly beat Democratic Candidate Al Gore. To show how drastic an increase President Bush had after September 11th it is important to consider he only had a 57% approval rating from February 1st-4th 2001 after getting elected president (“Presidential Approval Ratings-George W. Bush” n.d.).

In addition, an ABC News and *Washington Post* poll found that many families became very supportive of engaging in a conflict involving the military (Bump 2017). This was surprising to me at least considering that the president had not committed any troops specifically

in any of the speeches that I looked at, but it is ironic that these early years of support would later lead to later years of disengagement and unsatisfactory attitudes toward the wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan. According to Gallup more than half of the country saw the speech as it was being broadcasted on television (Moore 2001). Despite the president's boost in approval ratings, his rhetorical and political success did not extend the entire duration of his presidency. In 2005, his administration's handling of Hurricane Katrina would change not just his approval ratings, but the historical viewpoint of his administration.

[Address in Jackson Square \(2005\)](#)

In the immediate aftermath of the hurricane landing, President George W. Bush gave a speech in the Rose Garden in which he stated his intention to work with and authorize the Transportation and Defense Departments among many others, to try and locate some of the missing civilians, while also trying to provide the necessary supplies to the city (Bush 2010, 319). This contradicts some prior notions that the president simply did not respond at all to the crisis. After this speech, Bush spent many days deliberating and discussing with federal agencies and local community leaders in New Orleans how to appropriately respond to the crisis (Bush 2010). Then on day eighteen of the crisis, President Bush gave a primetime address to the nation on from Jackson Square, where he returned to New Orleans (Bush 2010, 326). In his address to the nation, the president tried to optimistically rally individuals living in the Gulf Coast by encouraging and empowering them to overcome the hardships and challenges that they now faced. President Bush himself said that he viewed the speech as an “opportunity to explain what had gone wrong, promise to fix the problems, and lay out a vision to move the Gulf Coast and the country forward” (Bush 2010, 327).

President Bush tried to encourage his fellow Americans by reminding them of their history of overcoming difficult situations such the Pilgrim landing in Plymouth to the Dust Bowl, reinforcing that Americans will always build bigger and better things than they were before. Like the September 11th speech at the Cathedral, the president offered rhetoric which he wanted the American people to both contemplate and reflect on the notion of unity (Campbell and Jamieson 2008,102-103). He really emphasized on the theme of unity because whenever a crisis ensues or a part of our nation seems divided, it is important that the country joins together to try and help solve the problem and comfort those who were negatively impacted by it.

In his address, Bush began by focusing on the desperation that he saw and the devastation and destruction this storm had cause, as now many Americans were now facing dire situations such as homelessness and starvation, “we have seen fellow citizens left stunned and uprooted, searching for loved ones, and grieving for the dead and looking for meaning in a tragedy that seems so blind and random” (Bush 2005). In addition, the storm is very devastating and unique in the fact that now “we have also witnessed the kind of desperation no citizen of this great and generous nation should ever have to know -- fellow Americans calling out for food and water” (Bush 2005). However, he then dually noted the optimism and hope that many of the survivors of the Gulf Coast had in the aftermath of the storm and how they all had the same spirit and strength from God, “These days of sorrow and outrage have also been marked by acts of courage and kindness that make all Americans proud.” (Bush 2005). This once again, showed President Bush invoking his religious tone, which ultimately won him some voters, as he ran as a compassionate conservative.

Bush then referenced a few of the examples of generosity on behalf of the men and women on the ground in Louisiana as they displayed in areas such as “the community of Chalmette, {where] the owner of one of the homes invited that individual in” (Bush 2005). In spite of the damage the storm inflicted on the region, President Bush makes sure to acknowledge that both faith in God and the strength of the American spirit can play a large role in re-building the city of New Orleans (Bush 2005).

Across the Gulf Coast, among people who have lost much and suffered much and given to the limit of their power, we are seeing that same spirit: a core of strength that survives all hurt, a faith in God no storm can take away and a powerful American determination to clear the ruins and build better than before.

Tonight so many victims of the hurricane and the flood are far from home and friends and familiar things. You need to know that our whole nation cares about you, and in the journey ahead you are not alone. To all who carry a burden of loss, I extend the deepest sympathy of our country. (Bush 2005)

Once again, playing his role as the compassionate conservative, President Bush is doing his best to appear sympathetic to the cause of those who were directly impacted and devastated by the

storm. He still is intent on having the citizens of New Orleans, well aware that their president has not abandoned them after this crisis.

Bush also made sure to thank those public servants who offered help and sacrificed themselves in order to help re-build the city again and that he and other members of the federal government would do “what it takes” in order to rebuild the city again (Bush 2005). His goal is to rebuild the confidence and optimism of the American people in this particular case. In addition, the federal government would “stay as long as it takes to help citizens rebuild their communities and their lives” (Bush 2005). Bush again is trying to emphasize that he has not forgotten the people of New Orleans and that the city will rebuild itself into something great again. The president then discussed three separate commitments to the citizens residing in the Gulf Coast by discussing how he will provide shelters by October of that year and how Congress had already pledged to donate \$60 billion to help those affected by the disaster (Bush 2005). These three commitments were: meeting the “immediate needs of those who had to flee their homes and leave all their possessions behind”, to help those in the Gulf Coast by rebuilding and to make the region as strong as it can possibly be (Bush 2005). This showed that the president’s level of commitment towards taking action in order to effectively respond to the crisis. He also discussed the role of the federal government in the process of rebuilding the city in the aftermath of the crisis to show that they were actively working with local communities to help the citizens of New Orleans (Bush 2005). He announced a plan called the “Gulf Operations Zone” which sought to help displaced citizens within the areas of Mississippi and Alabama by providing different conservative programs such as tax relief (Bush 2005).

In addition, the president acknowledged in his proposal a large sense of mea culpa and he took some more responsibility for his actions as President of the United States.

Four years after the frightening experience of September 11th, Americans have every right to expect a more effective response in a time of emergency. When the federal government fails to meet such an obligation, I as president am responsible for the problem, and for the solution (Bush 2005).

This passage in particular was very impactful in my opinion because it not only shows the president taking responsibility for his actions, but also him alluding to the September 11th attacks, which I discussed earlier in this paper. He led such a successful response in the aftermath

of September 11th, but he was having a rather difficult time in this particular response. In a political context, this was a very significant admittance because he knew that he was being blamed for the poor response by the media and public approval ratings, even if other outside factors were also involved in the slow process. For example, because the event did occur at the state level even in national emergency as president he had to respect state's rights and he had to wait for the Governor of Louisiana's input in responding to the crisis (Bush 2010, 321). That is why Mayer noted in his definition for image that is "both truth and a lie, both accurate perception and the gap between reality and perception" (Mayer 2004, 621). In addition, President Bush also had a photo taken of him in Air Force One "hovering over the damage" suggesting that he "was detached from the suffering on the ground" (Bush 2010, 318). This hurt his overall public image and as President of the United States he understood that "public relations matter when you are president, particularly when people are hurting" (Bush 2010, 318).

After admitting to mistakes made on behalf of the federal government, President Bush decided to take action in order to show that his apology would not just come along with an empty promise: "So I have ordered every Cabinet secretary to participate in a comprehensive review of the government response to the Hurricane" (Bush 2005). The president's main objective in doing this comprehensive review was to acknowledge that the government will "learn the lessons of Hurricane Katrina. We are going to review every action and make necessary changes so that we are better prepared for any challenge of nature, or act of evil men that could threaten our people" (Bush 2005).

In a large sense, President Bush was admitting *mea culpa* in regards to his administration's handling of the crisis and he wanted to emphasize that the mistakes that were made during this hurricane would hopefully not be repeated again in the unfortunate chance that a crisis of this proportion would occur. By ordering his Cabinet Secretaries to participate in this overview of the government response he is also indicating that he is trying to be an actively engaged president. This also requires the president to be decisive and take action in this current situation. As Jeffery Tulis notes, this could potentially place President Bush in a very difficult position because if he becomes unable to fulfill or keep some of the promises that he has made it will put some political pressure on him. So by ordering a review, he is essentially "going public" and asking for their support in his endeavor to fix the mistakes of the crisis. His ineffective

actions however, according to Neustadt could serve a great danger to his presidential power even if it wasn't entirely his fault (Neustadt 1960, 61).

Every time, the people of this land have come back from fire, flood, and storm to build anew -- and to build better than what we had before. Americans have never left our destiny to the whims of nature, and we will not start now. These trials have also reminded us that we are often stronger than we know with the help of grace and one another. They remind us of a hope beyond all pain and death -- a God who welcomes the lost to a house not made with hands. (Bush 2005)

President Bush tried to rally the spirits of individuals that lost their lives by acknowledging that despite all of the trials and struggles the nation endured through the storm, the nation would come together and would be able to come back stronger than ever.

In an interesting line of his concluding speech, the president compares the funeral march of jazz musicians in New Orleans to a line which symbolically showed how spirit would triumph over death (Bush 2005). This once again is in direct relation with President Bush's attempt to rally Americans in the aftermath of the tragic event.

After the storm finished ravaging through that particular region, there turned out to be over \$100 billion in damage as a result of the storm ("Hurricane Katrina" n.d.). In addition, hundreds of thousands of Americans were now suddenly homeless. In the aftermath of his poor performance during his Hurricane Katrina response the president's approval ratings according to Gallup from August 22nd-August 25th, 2005, dropped down to 40% while his disapproval rating remained at 56% ("Presidential Approval Ratings-George W. Bush" n.d.). A *New York Times* and CBS News poll from that same time period found that 51% of participants that they surveyed disapproved of the way President Bush responded to the crisis (Stolberg, Thee and Stefan 2005). 44% of those in that same poll found that they had "little to no confidence at all" in how the government responded to the situation (Stolberg, Thee and Stefan 2006). A *Wall Street Journal* and NBC News poll found a 40% approval rating of the president (Murray 2005).

Some have viewed President Bush's words and actions as different factors that ultimately contributed to his sliding public approval rating (Campbell and Jamieson 2008, 102). However, President Bush repeatedly mentioned that only the governor could have control of the crisis and the delayed response was partly due to Governor Blanco's indecision as to whether

allow the federal government to have control of the situation (Bush 2010, 309). He mentioned how he took important steps before the landing of the hurricane such as authorizing the “largest prepositioning of relief supplies in FEMA’s (Federal Emergency Management Agency) history (Bush 2010, 314). In addition, the president worked with Congress to secure up to \$126 billion for rebuilding funds for New Orleans (Bush 2010, 328). In his memoir *Decision Points*, President Bush stated that “public relations matter when you are president, particularly when people are hurting” (Bush 2010, 318). However, despite the president’s well-intentioned and best efforts, it was later estimated in the aftermath of the hurricane that hundreds of thousands were displaced not just in Louisiana, but in surrounding states as well (“Hurricane Katrina” n.d.). The storm overall cost over \$100 billion in total damages (“Hurricane Katrina” n.d.) Overall, the former president believed his biggest substantive mistake was waiting too long to deploy active-duty troops to search the area and try to help and locate civilians (Bush 2010, 331). However, despite his best efforts, the public’s image of the president during the crisis has been mostly negative due to the federal government’s slow response to the crisis. Even if it was not necessarily and entirely the president’s fault.

President Bush viewed Hurricane Katrina as a “political opportunity that some critics exploited for years” (Bush 2010, 330). In addition, he acknowledged that 2005 was damaging for him politically along with other factors such as the violence in Iraq, so most of his political capital was gone by the end of that year (Bush 2010, 330). Some analysts view the president’s legacy through the prism of two different images of President Bush: the first image consists of him and his bullhorn speaking to the firefighters after the 9/11 attacks, while the other image is of him flying over the hurricane spot and not landing (Stolberg, Thee and Stefan 2006). Even political opponents such as New York Democratic Senator Chuck Schumer noted that the poor response to Hurricane Katrina might have been “the worst thing that’s happened to George Bush in the six-years of his presidency” (Stolberg, Thee and Stefan 2006). Bush himself admits that he should have “done more to signal my sympathy for the victims and my determination to help, the way I did in the days after 9/11” (Bush 2010, 331). Schumer argued that this negative event was even more damaging for the president because it questioned just how compassionate he was and given the fact that Bush ran as a “compassionate conservative” during both presidential campaigns, this kind of criticism negatively impacted his political image (Stolberg, Thee and

Stefan 2006). Opinion editors, Sheryl Gay Stolberg, Megan Thee and Marina Stefan, from the *New York Times* thought that President Bush's speech in Jackson Square transformed a president who led the war on terror to a president who was interested in solving poverty and crime (Stolberg, Thee and Stefan 2006). As a leader, it was important that President Bush accept and acknowledge responsibility for mistakes like Kennedy did during the Bay of Pigs (even though he may not have directly made these decisions). Even though it may not have paid Bush the same dividends in his approval ratings as leader I admired him for being both honest and forthcoming.

Analysis

In this section, I will cover how I analyzed the speeches by looking for buzz words or words that played a large role in explaining the president's goals for the speech. My main arguments based off of my analysis are that it is difficult to determine a level of success for the president because the definition varies from person to person, taking action in response to a crisis matters just as much as rhetoric and public opinion polls matter to the president because they allow him to gauge the level of public opinion. For future research, it would be interesting to use different tools to measure presidential success besides polls and based off of how President Trump's tenure as president whether speeches will have any impact on approval ratings.

When I analyzed the individual sections of the speeches for my case study, I focused on looking for specific buzz words in each divided section. I wanted to see if there were any words or phrases that stood out and would explain the goal the president might be trying to state in their speech. In addition, I looked at the specific goals of the speeches themselves. As I previously discussed in my research methodology section, I used a variety of polls in order to measure the overall success of the president's speech after it was delivered. Over the course of my research I looked at about 9 different polls each from Gallup, *The Washington Post* and ABC News, *The Wall Street Journal* and NBC News and *The New York Times* and CBS News. I interpreted the results of these polls as either a high or low approval based on whether or not the percentage listed in the reporting was above a 50% rating. For example, in the case of a Gallup poll rating of President Bush at 40% after the Hurricane Katrina crisis is an approval rating that I would consider to be on the lower end.

It is difficult to provide a definition of whether or not a president was successful or not in their response to a crisis. What was “successful” in the eyes of one person may be viewed as the exact opposite from the perspective of another. In the case of this paper, I am basing success and failure off of public opinion rankings from credible sources. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for a president to pay attention to how the public perceives a president especially during a crisis. From a political perspective, how the public perceives the president is extremely important. As Neustadt, mentioned, one of the major powers of the presidency is the ability to persuade others and have access to a bully pulpit that has a larger influence on the impact of the world, more so than other public officials can even image. If the president is in his first term of office, public opinion may have such a dramatic impact that it may play a role in determining the likelihood of the president getting re-elected even before the election. In the second term of office, public opinion can still matter immensely because it will determine how successful the president will be in helping his predecessor get elected. In relation to leadership, I never really considered focusing on the personalities of the individual presidents including a psychological background as illustrated by Thomas Preston (Preston 2000, 107). This would be interesting for future research from a psychological perspective to study what thinking behaviors and patterns the presidents typically undertake and why they think about things in that particular way.

I thought that in a lot of ways the pen would be mightier than the sword, but it turns out that taking actual action seems to matter more than the use of rhetoric. I think that President Kennedy for example received higher approval ratings because he was able to resolve the crisis, not because he gave a successful speech. It was because of his Administration’s actions that saved the country from us going straight into a nuclear catastrophe. If Kennedy had just given a speech on the blockade without actually taking any action on it, nobody would have taken the United States seriously. Plus, the world might have ended because we did not do anything to stop those Soviet ships. In another example of President Bush and Hurricane Katrina, had he just promised that he would authorize the use of the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) to help the citizens of New Orleans, without actually doing anything about it, his credibility would have eroded. Hence, this relates back to Meyer’s argument about image because a president would have a pretty negative image if he did not take any action after saying that he would do something. This applies especially in a crisis. In the “Hurricane Katrina” and

“Cuban Missile Crisis” speeches, both presidents in detail, explained exactly how they were going to resolve both of the crises. The power of persuasion means sticking to your promises and delivering on a plan or agenda if you promised you did. In a non-crisis example, President Bush promised during his Republican National Convention speech in 1988 that he would not raise taxes, but he two years later he did and this might have played a role in his defeat to President Clinton in 1992. Actions promised or detailed in a speech need to be carried out otherwise the president and more importantly the country may lose a level of credibility in its relationship with other nations. I believe that part of the reason the United States has become so widely respected or admired throughout the world, despite some of our flaws, is that once we are committed to a course of action or we make a promise, we usually follow through with our commitments. This has helped us in establishing trust with other nations and has in a large way caused these nations to further respect us.

Even though presidents may not hear the direct response of the public while giving the speech, he certainly will hear their opinions in polls and approval ratings. As previously mentioned, the president has a very unique role in the world, so there is a lot of focus and emphasis on what presidents decide to say in a speech or an address. Especially during a crisis, Americans would like to turn to the president as a leader as a symbol and voice for how a country would respond to a crisis. All eyes appear to be on the president when he gives a statement and what the president says can have a significant impact on how the world would react to these statements as a result. When the Cuban Missile Crisis speech was delivered in front of millions of Americans, they yearned to hear the voice of President Kennedy not his advisors view or a member of the Joint Chief of Staff’s perspective. I am not trying at all to diminish the role that these figures played in Kennedy’s eventual decision to blockade Cuba, but they were not elected through an electoral system by the American people to serve and represent their interests. Only the president has the unique responsibility of serving and representing the interests of the entire nation, not just a specific constituency or state, like legislative officials have to.

However, I think it is worth noting how astonishing a case the current state of our country is in with how much emphasis the president puts on how well he is received by the public. According to a poll from Quinnipiac University, President Trump as of March 22nd 2018 has a

40% approval rating (Nelson 2018). Despite these low approval ratings, it almost seems to have no impact on how President Trump views himself and the success of his administration. This same poll suggested that 56% of respondents didn't believe that the president has good leadership skills and 49% of respondents want the Democrats to win control of the House of Representatives in the next upcoming midterm elections (Nelson 2018). President Trump has also faced a fair share of crises thus far in his presidency including the Las Vegas Massacre and Hurricane Harvey. However, an interesting case to review is the reaction to Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico because another Quinnipiac University poll found that 36% of those polled thought that the "federal government has not done enough" (Blake 2017). I say this is interesting because Trump has lower approval ratings at that point in the crisis (3 weeks) than President Bush did with a 44% approval rating (Blake 2017). There might be a number of different reasons for the low approval numbers, but maybe a lack of an address from the island played a role. To give President Bush credit, he did speak directly from New Orleans while the crisis was still ongoing. Despite low approval ratings, it does not seem to bother the president that much as he argues that he is still successful and his policies are working. The upcoming elections and his own re-election in 2020 will determine whether or not the president should have paid closer attention to the public opinion numbers. One thing's for sure though and that is our current state of the country shows how important it is for academic and non-academic purposes to pay attention to the rhetoric that the president uses.

Another element that I think should be considered for future research is whether or not speeches will even make a difference in public approval ratings. President Trump is such a unique example in our country because it appears that whatever he says his followers will continue to follow him even if his approval ratings decline. I remember during the beginning of the election cycle, he had mentioned that he could shoot somebody and his number would not go down (Diamond 2016). This is a pretty off-hand remark to make to say the least, but it appears that up to this point his followers are still just as dedicated to him even after he was elected.

For future research, I also think it might be important to consider how case studies might have an impact on jobs in the private sector. For example, as I mentioned crises are often evident in these settings as well and the right kind of leadership during these crises may also be appropriate. In that case, it is important for managers and other leaders in private sectors to at

least consider reviewing the benefits of deciding to invest time looking at the potential impacts that may arise in these cases.

If other scholars are interested in adding onto my project, an interesting next step would be to find other possible ways to measure success rather than just relying on approval ratings. As I previously mentioned, approval ratings are just one way of evaluating the job performance of a president, but it is also important to consider that there are other factors and criteria that exist. Determining other measurements is honestly up to the discretion of the person who decides to pursue the project, but measuring success is not an easy thing to do and it would involve a concrete method to do so.

After conducting my literature review, I firmly believe that context matters in these crisis addresses. It matters because it allows us to see the environment and time frame in which these crises speeches are delivered. I believe it is like adding intricate details to a painting. They are absolutely necessary to provide the average person a sense of why the president is discussing the matter and what they are talking about. As I previously mentioned, the president gives his speeches for a reason and there is a greater purpose beyond the speeches than meets the eye. Behind every speech and message that the president relays there is a political agenda that must be fulfilled so they can either increase their own ambitions or can solve the wants and needs of certain constituencies. In relation to my hypothesis, presidential rhetoric can help presidents actually lead during a variety of different crises. This is largely because it can help lay out the president's agenda and it reflects certain actions that the president may choose to partake in.

Conclusion

My research has taught me the importance of knowing the context of a crisis situation before you can analyze it or really understand it. Context allows a person the opportunity to understand what the president's world was like during that crisis. It allows the person to understand their perspective and the pressures they were facing during the crisis. However, it is important to realize that crises can occur in a variety of sectors and based off of my research I have learned that more successful outcomes come from those who have studied the mistakes of the past. In addition, I also learned that presidents should pay attention to approval ratings and

not get to caught up in whether solving a crisis will have political benefits because a president's sole purpose for wanting to address a crisis should be to help his fellow countrymen in need.

Based off of the literature that has been published so far, there have been a number of ideas that contributed to my analysis of presidential leadership using rhetorical strategies. The published literature on methods such as "Going Public" has been useful methods to help explain why the president focus so heavily on their rhetoric. The image of the presidency and how this image was presented and carried out to the world played a significant role in the type of response president provided during different crises. When the handling of a crisis is labeled as either a success or failure, it is largely based off of other important factors such as the public's opinion on the handling of the given situation or if the mission or goal was carried out as it was intended. Whether or not the speech delivered during a crisis is considered a success or failure is largely determined off of a number of different factors such as the political context of the speech, the approval ratings of the president when he delivered the speech and the location of the speech. Defining a crisis as a success or failure depends on an individual perspective of whether or not you thought that the president did a sufficient job of handling the crisis. For the purpose of this paper, I have tried to broaden my definition of a success or failure as much as possible for that very reason, but as I mentioned the purpose of my project is to focus on the success or failure as correlated with how a high or low a level, the president may have in their overall approval ratings.

I cannot emphasize the importance of context enough in these crisis situations. Many factors such as the political context, approval ratings and even the location of the speech, can be detrimental in the president's ability to solving the crisis. The location of the speech is interesting to note for example considering that President Bush's Hurricane Katrina speech was delivered right in Jackson Square in New Orleans to once again show that President Bush had no want or desire to be perceived as abandoning his fellow citizens.

Presidents and more importantly politicians in general, should pay a great deal of attention to approval ratings in order to determine how the public may feel about a particular set of issues or a problem. As George Edwards discussed, presidents need to have the public's backing on particular issues in order to be successful in pursuing different endeavors. As previously stated in my literature review, there are a number of reasons why the president wants

to or should engage in public opinion. Their job as previously mentioned, is to serve the president to the best of their ability. Presidents tend to have strong leadership skills that may carry over from personal and professional experience from different private and public sector careers.

Leaders from all sectors, either in the public or private sector have to deal with crises when they arise. These forms of crises can occur in a variety of different ways such as a restaurant owner watching their sales plummet due to a food poisoning incident or a doctor working on an emergency procedure due to a serious incident or injury. Although, the president's decision may have a more direct impact on more collective lives than a lot of decisions made in the private sector, both crises will directly affect the day-to-day lives of individuals. In the case of the presidency, just to note, there are differences between a crisis in the public sector versus the private sector. For example, popularity tends to be valued in the public sector as equally equivalent to profit in the private sector (Solomon, 2000).

My literature review has emphasized a couple of different key points such as the importance of the relationship between the president and the press, different models that have been used in emphasizing presidential leadership and the art of rhetoric that is used in describing the presidency. It also has provided some background information in regards to each of the 4 different crises. I chose to use a case study methodology over the options that I had presented to me earlier in my research process because it evaluates and investigates each historical event on the basis of a case. The beauty of a case study is that you can evaluate one particular case or you can evaluate multiple sets, but they are all fully investigated the exact same way. I acknowledge that my literature review does not discuss topics such as leadership and the president's relationship to the media as discussed in my introduction, but I feel that leadership often coincides with the rhetoric that a president uses. When the president engages with the public during a crisis he is attempting to lead them.

A president may view each different crisis as a political opportunity to help improve their image or promote their own agenda, but the sole function of the president during a crisis should be to put partisan behaviors aside and ultimately do what is good for the country. The rhetoric that is used should be to offer Americans a sense of security and stability given the unpredictable nature of a crisis. They should also be instilled with a sense of optimism and hope

that the crisis will be addressed and solved without anything detrimental occurring to our country. Presidential administrations will have their share of successes and failures, but how they respond to their crisis rhetorically shows that they are willing to face adversity and in the end triumph over any of the challenges they may have faced. I believe that as I tried to demonstrate in this project, looking to the past and historical crises that have occurred can help create future solutions for these crises.

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