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ENCOURAGING BIPARTISANSHIP: POLARIZATION AND CIVILITY

AS RHETORICAL TOOLS FOR AMELIORATING THE

U.S. SENATE'S PARTISAN ENVIRONMENT

by

Angela Marie McGowan

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2015

ABSTRACT

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by Angela Marie McGowan

May 2015

On October 1, 2013, the Senate buckled under the pressure of

intense partisanship. Dramatically demonstrating their lack of mutual agreement, senators

refrained from conducting the nation's business for 16 days. Considerable media

attention covered this shut down, especially the ensuing rhetorical activities of

the Senate's female policymakers who urged bipartisanship. The flurry of activity

surrounding the legislative impasse sparked this dissertation's conceptual orientation.

Accordingly, this investigation reveals how Washington lawmakers can, in good faith, set

aside partisan views in order to accommodate policy objectives.

This project reveals rhetorical strategies that, when utilized, are capable of

facilitating Senate bipartisanship. Each chapter analyzes a variety of women senators'

discourse, including 98 floor speeches and 75 media texts, to critically assess how their

rhetorical strategies elevated the Senate's partisan environment. Specifically, Chapter II

examines how constitutive rhetoric and the rhetoric of polarization helped these

policymakers create a bipartisan reality. Chapter III discusses media framing and

narrative theory to understand how journalists constructed the government shutdown

narrative. Chapter IV employs Campbell's (1989) model of feminine style to assess how

female senators encourage civility. Finally, Chapter V argues that by using rhetoric that

urges civility, relationship building, and rhetoric of polarization, the senators strengthened legislative deliberation

In conclusion, the dissertation contributes to the scholarly conversation about civility, incivility, and bipartisanship. The project's findings expose rhetorically complex scenarios facing the government's legislative bodies, the rhetorical maintenance of deliberation, and how cooperative lawmakers rhetorically construct civility. Close attention to the discourse of female senators reveals, I argue, a comprehension of how motivated policymakers can rhetorically construct a bipartisan legislative body.

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May 2015

DEDICATION

I would never have been able to finish my dissertation without the support of my family and encouragement from friends. I am blessed to have had you by my side during all the highs and lows of graduate school.

I would like to thank my parents, Marcia and Daniel McGowan, for motivating me to follow my dream and for reminding me that I am braver than I believe, stronger than I seem, and smarter than I think. My sister, Lauren Froelich, was my cheerleader, and for that I am ever grateful.

I am thankful for the support of my friends. Kelly Kaiser, your humorous pictures and inspiring greeting cards elevated my spirits. Thank you Rebecca Shamble and Genva Anderson for the care packages and emotional support. I am fortunate to have had the reassurance of Colleen Mestayer, Amanda Cline, and Elizabeth Smith. I appreciate all the baked goods, academic encouragement, and for believing in me.

I dedicate the dissertation to my nephew, Daniel Froelich, and express my hope that as he grows up our lawmakers learn how to put their partisan affiliations aside and legislate in good faith.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As the clock struck 12:01 a.m. on October 1, 2013, the United States Federal

Government shut down, and the "world's greatest deliberative body" buckled under the

pressure of extreme partisans who were more interested in grandstanding than governing.

During the bitter budget battle, Congressional Republicans and Senate Democrats

exchanged undercutting statements and created a dysfunctional government. Many

blamed the tea party Republicans for the "manufactured crisis," and 70% of respondents

to a *Wall Street Journal*/NBC News poll expressed their belief that Republicans in

Congress put their political agenda before the good of the country (King, 2013). The

government shutdown debate reflected a more partisan and individualistic Senate in

which lawmakers argued for a side that benefited their particular interests. The partisan

rancor supported researchers' findings that Congress has become intensely divided, and

politicians' partisan bickering made the gulf between the parties worse (Abramowitz,

2010; Bond & Fleisher, 2000; Mann & Ornstein, 2012; Sinclair, 2008).

Partisan polarization makes party votes more attractive and creates ideological

distance between the two parties (Sinclair, 2000). Consequently, the Senate has become a

space for divisive political rhetoric, partisan conflict, and an occasional lapse of civility

(Sinclair, 2000). The Senate's handling of the 2013 government shutdown illustrates how

the contemporary Senate functions rhetorically within a polarized political environment.

For instance, as senators urged their colleagues to reopen the federal government, many

violated Senate Rule 19 that states that no lawmaker will use conduct unbecoming of a

senator. As a result, Senator Reid (D-NV) delivered a speech on the Senate floor that

encouraged his colleagues to maintain the habits of civility and decorum (USS, 2013g).

Civility is vital to legislative deliberation, because civility suggests that a member is

willing "to listen to colleagues, to learn from other legislators, and to accept the outcome

of deliberation, especially in the congressional budget process" (Thurber, 2000, p. 241).

Thus, civility is an influential factor in developing relationships, trust, and comity. In

urging his colleagues to follow Senate rules, the majority leader sought to restore the

Senate to its status as a governing body that encouraged an open exchange of ideas and

deliberation.

　　　　While some senators expressed frustration with their colleagues' "theatrical

showdown politics" (USS, 2013a, p. S6909) and "the divisive and irresponsible path

down which some Members of Congress wish to take our country" (USS, 2013a, p.

S6921), others strengthened the linkage between civility and deliberation by using their

experiences to encourage relationship building in the Senate. For example, Senator

Klobuchar (D-MN) told *Huffington Post* readers, "During a time when Congress is

synonymous with gridlock and obstructionism, the women are showing we can move past

the partisanship, roll up our sleeves and get things done" (Klobuchar, 2014, para. 7). The

senator's story suggested that the Senate's women adhered to the norms of reciprocity

and courtesy, which symbolize respect for others and ability to recognize alternative

views as legitimate (Uslaner, 1993). Courtesy and reciprocity generate comity, which is

the result of civil Senate behavior. Comity refers to standards of behavior for members

and mutual respect of the other chamber's decisions (Uslaner, 1993). Comity enhances

cooperative decision-making, and "the decline of comity points to the waning of a system

of norms and the larger values that sustain them" (Uslaner, 1993, p. 10). One of the

Senate's defining characteristics is that senators have to deal with members of both parties on a daily basis and frequently have to transform today's opponents into tomorrow's allies (Ornstein, 2000). To better understand the rhetorical strategies available to senators who wish to stimulate legislative deliberation, this dissertation examines the rhetorical strategies that senators can use to urge bipartisanship.

Civility is a catalyst for bipartisanship, and during the government shutdown, a group of cross-party senators emerged as leaders who created a productive and civil legislating environment. Senator Collins (R-ME), in particular, worked with senators from both parties to create a budget framework that removed the threat of an immediate default. Senator Collins described the bipartisan group as leaving "their partisanship at the door" as they negotiated "as real patriots who care about America" (USS, 2013q, p. 7506). While urging her Democratic and Republican colleagues to join her efforts, Senator Collins refrained from partisan blame and sent out bipartisan vibes (Newton-Small, 2013b). Close bipartisan political alliances, such as those shared by some in the Senate, encouraged civility and mutual respect (Newton-Small, 2013b). This dissertation studies the women in the Senate's discourse to answer the following research question: What rhetorical strategies are available to U.S. senators who want to encourage bipartisan legislative deliberation? In answering this question, I contribute to evolving conversations in the communication studies and political science disciplines that examine civility within the modern U.S. Senate and begin a dialogue about the rhetorical construction of bipartisanship.

This project provides a rhetorical understanding of legislative deliberation by illustrating how rhetoric frames public problems and how senators encourage

bipartisanship despite the increase in partisan polarization in the Senate. To explore the central research question, I examine congressional debate rhetoric by studying the 2013 government shutdown. The women in the 113th Senate provide a case study for understanding senators' efforts to shape a legislative agenda inside and outside the Senate. By studying the rhetoric senators used throughout the debate, I offer an understanding of the rhetorical complexities facing today's legislative body, how rhetoric maintains a deliberative system, and how policymakers rhetorically construct a zone of civility in the Senate.

The central issue of this dissertation concerns how senators encourage legislative deliberation by pursing civility, cross-party relationships, and polarization. Specifically, I argue that the women in the 113th Senate coordinated a rhetorical strategy that sought to improve the chamber's partisan environment. To understand how a group of policymakers can change the Senate's partisan tone, I analyze Senate floor debate and media texts. First, policy debates involve multiple rhetors, occur across time, and represent an ongoing engagement of text and context (Asen, 2010). Therefore, I study senators' floor speeches to understand how their rhetoric supports camaraderie and seeks to ameliorate the Senate's partisan atmosphere. Second, I study media texts, including newspaper and magazine articles and website postings, to discern how the news media and women senators facilitate deliberation by constructing a narrative that credits women senators with creating a bipartisan plan to reopen the federal government. In this chapter, I provide the context for the dissertation, discuss deliberation in the Senate, give an overview of women in politics, and outline the dissertation's chapters.

The Federal Budget and the 2013 Government Shutdown

The U.S. Constitution requires that before the federal government can spend money, policymakers must pass a budget bill to fund the federal government for the following fiscal year. Article I, Section 9 states, "No money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law" (Oleszek, 1989, p. 47). The federal budget process is the most essential piece of legislation for a functioning government (Snowe, 2013). Defense, entitlements, discretionary domestic, and interest on national debt comprise federal spending (Oleszek, 1989). In 2013, Republicans and Democrats could not agree on a bill to fund the federal government for the next year. I subsequently discuss the federal budget, explain the 2014 budget negotiations, and overview the women senators' roles in the government shutdown talks.

The Federal Budget

The Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 created budget committees in each chamber who manage Congress's budget process and articulate Congress's overall fiscal policy (Patashnik, 2005). Specifically, the Senate and House each have a Budget Committee that offers a full federal budget that determines mandatory and discretionary spending and revenue. House and Senate budget negotiations happen at a budget conference that requires the two sides to sit down at the table, offer compromises, and work toward a balanced and bipartisan budget deal. Deliberations about the federal budget offer no party advantage; instead, parties draw attention to unfavorable issues and arguments about various topics included in the budget (Sellers, 2010). After the Budget Committees write their annual budget resolutions and both chambers have passed the final version, the Appropriations Committees in the

House and Senate take over. The Committees on Appropriations decide the actual funding levels for government agencies and programs. The Appropriations Committee includes 13 subcommittees that pass bills to fund their programs for one year (Sinclair, 2007). The federal government's fiscal year begins on October 1, and because it is hard to pass all thirteen bills by that deadline, Congress often passes a continuing resolution (CR) that temporarily funds the government (Sinclair, 2007).

Despite the evolution of the budget, some parts of the process have remained stable. First, the president submits his or her budget to Congress. After reviewing the president's budget proposal, the House and Senate Budget Committees write their respective resolutions that detail a tentative congressional budget (Patashnik, 2005). Second, the United States Constitution requires that each year the House and Senate agree on 13 appropriations bills to fund the federal agencies and set spending priorities ("The budget," 2014). The House and Senate debate and vote on the 13 appropriation bills, send the bills to the president, and the president must approve the bills. After the president clears the bills, the House and Senate work together to pass a budget bill. Third, the president has 10 days to sign or veto the House and Senate approved budget bill. Fourth, if the president and Congress cannot agree on a spending bill that funds the government from September 30—October 1, federal programs and agencies shut down for lack of funding (Schick & LoStracco, 2000). Fifth, to end a government shutdown, Congress must pass a bill to fund the government, and the White House must sign it ("The budget," 2014).

Because the two parties have drifted apart and become more homogenous, partisan conflict over the budget can cause the process to breakdown (Patashnik, 2005).

Since 1976, the United States government has shut down 17 times with the last shut down occurring in 1995 and lasting 21 days (Rosenberg, 2013). Similar to the 2013 shut down, the federal budget in 1995 provided the means through which Republicans could enact their agenda (Sinclair, 2007). More recently, the federal government closed because of partisan gridlock over President Obama's healthcare reforms. Policymakers ended up passing initial budget resolutions on highly partisan votes, which is not surprising considering that the 113th Congress was the most polarized Congress in history. In 2013, no Senate Democrat was more conservative than a Senate Republican and no Senate Republican was more liberal than a Democrat (Kraushaar, 2014). The recent government closure, Senator Collins (R-ME) argued, was a prime example of the gridlock that was gripping Washington (Page, 2013).

Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Negotiations

During the 113th Congress, Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) was the Chair of the Senate Budget Committee, and Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) chaired the Senate Appropriations Committee. The Senate and House each passed a budget, but some Republicans did not let the two budgets go to a conference committee; thus, legislators could not work out their differences and find a long-term solution. Senators attempted to get the House and Senate's "budgets together to conference a deal to set our budget priorities for the next several years" (USS, 2013b, p. S6977). According to Senator Murray, the Democrats tried to begin a budget conference 19 times, but Senate Republican leadership blocked the committee from meeting. Specifically, Senator Cruz (R-TX) prevented budget bills from going to conference. From September 26—October 16, 2013, the Budget Committee Chairwoman Senator Murray stood on the Senate floor

and urged her colleagues to "keep the clean resolution, send it to the House, keep the

government open, and do what we should do as leaders and adults and come to a budget

agreement" (USS, 2013b, p. S6978). She repeatedly pressed her colleagues to pass "a

clean continuing resolution, have the House pass a clean continuing resolution, and then

do the job we were sent here to do" and not "let the gridlock and dysfunction in

Washington, DC cause more harm to our families and businesses" (USS, 2013b, p.

S6978).

Additionally, senators wanted House members to pass the Senate's short-term CR

that was stripped of ideological riders. The CR would have kept the government open

until November 15, 2013 and given policymakers six weeks to negotiate the budget while

the government stayed open. In Senator Mikulski's (D-MD) opinion, the House passed

"provocative bills" that were "politically motivated" and refused to walk across the aisle

and the dome to pass a clean short-term CR (USS, 2013c, p. S7012). Senator Mikulski

expressed frustration with the House budget's ideological riders that included defunding

the Affordable Care Act and restructuring how America paid its debt (USS, 2013b).

Echoing the chairwoman's sentiments, Senator Murray (D-WA) suggested that some

Republicans wanted to "kill a continuing resolution that will simply keep our government

open for a few short weeks so we can do the work we should have been doing for the last

6 months" (USS, 2013b, p. S6977). She urged, "Let's pass a clean resolution, keep the

government open for a few short weeks, do the responsible thing, say to the Nation and to

the world that we will pay our bills and raise the debt ceiling" (USS, 2013b, p. S6977).

On October 1, 2013, the government shut down and hundreds of thousands of

federal government employees were unable to fulfill their duties, and the closure cost

America billions of dollars (Weisman & Parker, 2013b). Senators, such as Senator Mikulski (D-MD), delivered speeches and gave statements to the news media claiming that the government shutdown had terrible costs for America's economy, our standing in the world, and "the functioning of our government" (USS, 2013d, p. S7078). Also, Senator Boxer (D-CA) observed, "It [government shutdown] is a dangerous game and it has devastating consequences for our families" (USS, 2013b, p. S6997), and Senator Murkowski (R-AK) advised lawmakers "to recognize that there are real lives, real families who are lying awake tonight wondering what the rest of this week is going to mean to them" (USS, 2013c, p. S7042). Senator Feinstein (D-CA), chairwoman of the Intelligence Committee, discussed the impact of the shutdown on civilians and concluded that "our shutdown is the biggest gift we could possibly give our enemies" (USS, 2013d, p. S7081).

Unlike the Senate, who met and discussed the possibility for a compromise, Speaker Boehner (R-OH) refused to put the Senate's clean CR on the House floor and let House members vote, because he said that he did not have enough support for the bill (USS, 2013c). Senator Boxer (D-CA) fumed, "Listen, there is no shortage of arguments we could have. Even within our own parties there are different views on many issues" (USS, 2013b, p. S6996). Beyond frustrated, Senator McCaskill (D-MO) suggested that it was hard "to figure out who has really lost their minds–one party, the other party, all of us, the President" (USS, 2013c, p. S7013). The Republican Party, in particular, was described as being in a bad condition, and a *Wall Street Journal/*NBC News poll found that Americans blamed the Republican Party for the shut down by a 22-point margin

(King, 2013). Shutting the government down became a political weapon and a fierce budget fight ensued.

The government shutdown highlighted the divide in the Republican Party between tea party Republicans, such as Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX), and moderates like Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) (Page, 2013). For instance, Senator Collins described herself as being outspoken in her "opposition to Obamacare and have cast many votes consistent with that position" yet she did not support her House colleagues' attempts to link Obamacare with the funding of government (USS, 2013h, p. S7235). During the shutdown, Senator Collins "searched for common ground on reforming ObamaCare" and offered a three-point plan that included repealing the Affordable Care Act's medical device tax, funding the federal government, and giving agencies flexibility when dealing with sequester cuts (USS, 2013h, p. S7235). Senator Collins concluded her October 5 floor speech by calling upon her colleagues to "come out of their partisan corners, to stop fighting, and start legislating in good faith" (USS, 2013h, p. S7235).

Senator Murkowski (R-AK) and Senator Ayotte (R-NH) were the first to call Senator Collins (R-ME), lend support, and help end the gridlock. Then, Senator Klobuchar (D-MN), Senator Heitkamp (D-ND), and Senator Shaheen (D-NH) joined their efforts to end the stalemate. Shortly thereafter, six men became part of the bipartisan group and within two weeks, the group negotiated a package that would end the shutdown ("Senator Susan Collins," 2013). Senator Collins described the bipartisan group, consisting of six Democrats and six Republicans, as trying to do what the American people wanted, which was to govern responsibly (K. Hunt, 2013). The participants held constructive sessions that yielded a bipartisan outline to end the

government shutdown. Senator Ayotte told *Today's* Savannah Guthrie, "What we need is problem solving. That's why I'm proud to be here with Susan and Lisa and get this resolved for the country" (K. Hunt, 2013). Senator Murkowski added, "And again, we think that the women in the Senate . . . do have a good bipartisan solution that works. Let's get to it" (K. Hunt, 2013). Senator Landrieu (D-LA) supported Collins's plan and stated that around "15, 20, or 25 other senators from both parties who have worked together to find common ground on many issues could come up with equally meritorious proposals" (USS, 2013h, p. S7235). The bipartisan group developed a budget framework that became part of the final budget deal that the Senate and House leadership negotiated.

The female members of the Senate never stopped working together, and they led efforts to compromise and move beyond a partisan debate. Speaking at *Fortune Magazine's* Most Powerful Women Summit, Senator Collins (R-ME) told the audience that a bipartisan group of women senators led the way on a deal to end the government shutdown ("Senator Susan Collins," 2013). She disclosed that her female colleagues refrained from partisan jabs and sketched out a plan ("Senator Susan Collins," 2013). Additionally, Charlie Rose interviewed Senator McCaskill (D-MO) and asked her to discuss women being at the forefront of bringing about the compromise; she stated, "All of us don't have much patience for posturing. We want to get to the meat of the matter and get it decided" (Rose, 2013b).

On October 16, 2013, Senate Majority Leader Reid (D-NV) and Minority Leader McConnell (R-KY) broke through the partisanship and gridlock by proposing a budget bill that made no significant changes to the Affordable Care Act. Congress approved the legislation and ended the 16 day government shutdown. The measure easily passed with

less than half of the Republicans and all the Democrats in the Senate siding with Senator

Reid (D-NV) (Mascaro, Memoli, & Bennett, 2013). President Obama immediately signed

the bill, and federal agencies began reopening. Although Senator Cruz (R-TX) and some

of his Republican colleagues remained committed to defunding the Affordable Care Act,

they did not use delaying tactics to block the compromise from passing in the Senate.

Senator Cruz did, however, speak with the press when Senator McConnell (R-KY)

announced the plan on the Senate floor. Mascaro et al. (2013) described Senator Cruz's

actions as "an usual breach of Senate courtesy" (para. 23).

After signing legislation that reopened the government and enabling America to

pay its bills, President Obama delivered a speech that addressed divided government and

polarization in Congress. He told the audience that Republicans and Democrats believed

that some policies were misguided and advised Congress to "work together to make

government work better, instead of treating it like an enemy or purposely making it work

worse" (Obama, 2013, para. 28). President Obama insisted, "If we disagree on

something, we can move on and focus on the things we agree on, and get some stuff

done" (Obama, 2013, para. 11). Senator Collins (R-ME) agreed with the president and

expressed her hope that the pendulum would swing back in the moderates' favor (Page,

2013), and Senator McCaskill (D-MO) told PBS' Charlie Rose that compromise was

essential to overcoming divided government (Rose, 2013b).

In summary, during the government shutdown, many key players pursued their

own agendas, and some senators created a highly divisive environment. For instance,

serving as the party spokesmen in the Senate, Majority Leader Reid (D-NV) and Minority

Leader McConnell (R-KY) performed a vital role in shaping the government shutdown

debate. Also, Senate Democrats demonstrated their loyalty to the president as they helped the Affordable Care Act remain intact. With the increase in partisan polarization, some senators and their party leaders crafted messages that promoted their party positions and engaged in obstructionist strategies to kill legislation. Conversely, other senators collaborated to reconcile shutdown efforts and showed their partisan colleagues what happens when senators compromise. Their communication, I argue, played an important role in creating a functioning legislative chamber.

<div align="center">Deliberation in the U.S. Senate</div>

The Senate and House are distinct governing bodies that have different policy goals and policymaking tools at their disposal. Senators, for instance, represent states, and Senate constituencies are recipients of federal funds whereas House constituencies are not (Lee, 2005). Unlike members of the House, senators carefully decide when and under what conditions to participate as part of the party team; thus, individualism and partisanship simultaneously occur in the Senate (Sinclair, 2000). The Senate is often characterized as individualistic, because the chamber is "known for its oversized personalities and iconoclasts" (Smith, 2005, p. 259). In addition, senators' six year terms give them more time to grow their policy agendas, and they are better positioned to pursue their visions of good public policies (Swers, 2013). Furthermore, although there are significantly fewer senators than representatives, senators must cover the same policy ground; therefore, senators are more likely to be policy generalists rather than specialists who develop an expertise in a limited number of issues (Swers, 2013).

The House and Senate also have different rules governing debate, and the rules reflect the distinctive resources available to minority and majority parties in the chambers

(Bach, 1982). The Senate is a deliberative body that protects minorities' rights and "brakes the runaway train of government" (Smith, 2005, p. 258). For instance, unlike the House of Representatives, the Senate has unlimited floor debate and is characterized as more floor-oriented and collegial (Smith, 2005). How the Senate "functions is determined by the behavior of the individuals within it," and "that behavior is molded by the institution's rules and norms" (Sinclair, 1989, p. 3). "Norms," according to Sinclair (1989), "specify what form individual members' behavior should take" (p. 206). Senators must make good use of their time when they speak on the Senate floor, because Senate rules prohibit senators from speaking more than twice on the same issue in a single day. In this section, I explore Senate norms and rules and deliberation in the chamber.

Senate Norms and Rules

The Senate's formal rules guide senators' approaches to policymaking because they supply lawmakers with behavior rules, standards of assessment, and emotive commitments. For instance, Senate rules require that the Senate presiding officer recognize any senator who wishes to speak on the floor and give that individual as much time as he or she requests (Smith, 2005). Also, in an effort to form a psychological barrier between speakers, senators should address their remarks to the presiding officer instead of to their colleagues (Matthews, 1960). Although these rules and norms are in place, senators will sometimes misuse the powers inherent in the Senate rules. This action, combined with senators not knowing each other well, can put sizeable strain on the Senate's norms (Sinclair, 1989).

Although most senators work within the existing structure to achieve their policy goals, some will disrupt the policymaking process. For example, the filibuster is a

powerful tool that can affect when and if legislation is passed. Senators have increased the use of extended debate, such as the filibuster, and this is a change in the reciprocity norm (Sinclair, 1989). The filibuster, which is a stalling device that involves extended debate and the refusal to schedule a vote, protects minority rights by enabling the minority party to block votes on the majority party's agenda items (Sinclair, 2007). Reciprocity implies a respect for other people and their beliefs, and senators who abuse their right to unlimited debate show a disregard for others' viewpoints.

Furthermore, a senator can speak indefinitely unless the Senate invokes cloture (Kane, 1971). In 1917, the Senate adopted Rule 21, the cloture rule, which describes the Senate's character and states that if a two-thirds majority of senators are present they can vote to end a debate. In 1975, the Senate changed that rule to three-fifths of all senators (Smith, 2005). Cloture is used infrequently partially because the tradition of unlimited debate is entrenched in the Senate. Senators are able to use cloture motions more than once for the same bill and prevent amendments.

The Senate's tolerance of obstructionism, such as senators holding legislation hostage, complicates the Senate decision-making process (Sinclair, 1989). The minority party can wield influence by stopping passage of legislation that the Senate majority favors. When this happens, Senate leaders must work around their obstructionist colleagues who invoke tactics that limit floor debate and prevent votes. These dysfunctional behaviors are predictable responses to a divisive political environment. Despite these obstacles, unanimous consent agreement is a tool that the majority party leader can use to schedule floor debate (Smith, 2005). Unanimous consent agreements require that senators agree to move legislation to the floor for debate, may apply limits on

the time for debate, and constrain the kind of amendment that is offered (Swers, 2013).

Furthermore, the Senate gives individual lawmakers leverage over the floor agenda, thus

making the Senate floor a decision-making arena (Bach, 1982). When senators exploit

Senate rules and disrupt floor business, the Senate schedule becomes difficult to solidify

(Sinclair, 1989).

The Senate exists to solve problems and maintains a reputation that when

emotionally laden issues arise, senators follow the norms of conduct. Matthews (1960)

believes that political ideology can affect a senator's ability to conform to the folkways

and influences her or his effectiveness in the Senate. Norms of behavior can help senators

avoid personal attacks, unnecessary foulness, and encourage senators to debate a policy

without using language that humiliates a colleague (Matthews, 1960). Matthews

concludes that the Senate folkways, including the norms of courtesy and reciprocity, "are

highly functional to the Senate social system since they provide motivation for the

performance of vial duties and essential modes of behavior which, otherwise, would go

unrewarded" (p. 116). Unfortunately, in the 1990s, "the world of courtesy" was "turned

upside down" when "civility gave way to unrestrained partisanship and to a frontal

assault on reciprocity" (Uslaner, 2000, p. 39).

The norm of courtesy, for instance, permits senators to cooperate, decreases

partisanship, and helps senators obtain cross-party votes (Matthews, 1960). When

senators follow the norm of courtesy, they create a civil chamber, because "courtesy

involves treating others with respect, even—or especially—if they disagree with you"

(Uslaner, 2000, p. 34). Examples of courtesy include senators praising their colleagues

and offering compliments. The norm of courtesy is still observed in the Senate even

though it is often violated (Sinclair, 1989). As evidence of this, Charlie Rose asked

Senator McCaskill (D-MO) to comment on the fact that Republican women refused to

campaign against her because they had developed strong cross-party relationships (Rose,

2013b). She responded, "In the previous eras in the Senate there was more of this

collegiality that reached across the aisle."

The Senate attributes its civil deliberations to its practice of courtesy, civil

language, and bipartisan friendships (Uslaner, 2000). Because the Senate is relatively

small, senators rely upon personal relationships during the policymaking process

(Loomis, 2000). Some senators even brag about their abilities to work with the opposing

party (Uslaner, 2000). Compromise is central to the legislative process and friendships

make compromise across partisan lines possible, because friends trust one another and

share commonalities (Uslaner, 2000). When senators trust one another, Uslaner (2000)

suggests, "civility turns into comity" (p. 35). Comity involves reciprocity. The norm of

reciprocity, including vote trading, requires patience and an understanding of senators'

divergent views. Reciprocity proposes that a senator who provides his or her assistance

should be repaid accordingly (Matthews, 1960).

In sum, Congress provides a space in which the demands, interests, and opinions

of citizens and their elected officials find articulation. The Senate's rules and norms

structure decision-making. Sometimes senators use the chamber as an opportunity to

further their individual goals by using partisan discourse or becoming more involved in

the discussion. An examination of the debate surrounding the government shutdown

illustrates how the political conditions, Senate folkways, and structural features of the

American system of government affect senators' abilities to rhetorically construct a zone of civility.

Senate Deliberation

Deliberation involves obtaining facts, arguments, and assessing the information; therefore, when senators deliberate, they make policies more appropriate, educate the public about an issue, and help fellow lawmakers reach an intelligent decision (Quirk, 2005). Although floor debates vary in their deliberative value, discussion occurs when senators listen and contribute to discourse about policy choices. Quirk (2005) defines deliberation as "the intellectual process of identifying alternatives, gathering and evaluating information, weighing considerations, and making judgments about the merits of public policies" (p. 316). Rhetoric boosts deliberation by offering senators a means for constructing policy problems, crafting solutions, and promoting policies to citizens (Asen, 2010). Legislators must use outside and inside strategies to influence the legislative process (Cook, 1989), and when a bill is important and controversial, such as a budget bill, senators' addresses on the floor are usually long speeches delivered from a manuscript (Matthews, 1960).

Rhetoric can enable effective communication between policymakers while also establishing and maintaining a deliberative system (Dryzek, 2010). Deliberation, according to Quirk (2005), includes four elements: identifying and developing alternative policies, estimating the consequences of those policies, assessing the ethical or emotional significance of policies and consequences, and refining provisions. Public deliberation refers to "a discourse among people on issues that concern the public good and that is

initiated in a specific social context and carried out in a manner aiming to be reflective and egalitarian" (Guttman, 2007, p. 412). In a deliberative process, citizens listen to others in a fair-minded way, ask questions, view issues from many standpoints, and formulate opinions during this process (Guttman, 2007).

Congressional debate offers a forum for determining national policy by influencing senators' votes, is a means for communication between advocates, and is a place for legislators to publicize their positions within the debate (Cain, 1954). Debate occurs because opposing groups unite, "each seeing good or defensible reasons for support, but disagreeing on the nature and meaning of the proposed policy" (Goodnight, 2010, p. 83). The Senate floor is a place for policymakers to express their approval of, or opposition to, a measure; therefore, decision-making frequently happens on the Senate floor. Floor statements are a fast way to spread the word, reinforce supporters' commitments to a cause, and encourage enthusiasm among the group (Matthews, 1960).

A productive floor debate includes "direct confrontation between opposing claims with substantial presentation of reasoning, evidence, criticism, and rebuttal" (Quirk, 2005, p. 335). Floor debates, which often receive media coverage and increased coverage of a policy issue, produce information that benefits policymakers and the public (Quirk, 2005). Public policy debates are a "productive, situated communication process where advocates engage in justifying and legitimating public interests" (Goodnight, 2010, p. 66). During policy debates, elected officials discuss the policy's costs and benefits with respect to national interest and potential outcomes (Goodnight, 2010). For instance, the 1995 budget debate emphasized the tension between the want-satisfaction provided by

popular programs and the ideal-satisfaction provided by balancing the budget (Levasseur, 2000).

When people deliberate, they need to have open minds and focus on problem solving; consequently, Senate deliberation can be hindered by conflict and partisanship. Quirk (2005) suggests that if participants in deliberation believe that their goals are in conflict, "they will make exaggerated and misleading claims, focus their attention on relative outcomes, and neglect whatever interests they do not have in common" (p. 320). Partisanship only exacerbates this problem. The move toward extreme partisan politics began in the 1970s with the changing role of politics and political parties, Watergate, and the conflict in Vietnam (Uslaner, 2000). The result was an individualistic Senate in which senators became more willing to exploit their right to unlimited debate (Sinclair, 2009) and propose legislation from committees on which they did not serve (Sinclair, 2000).

Furthermore, as the two major parties began highlighting their differences rather than working toward consensus, voting on the Senate floor became more partisan (Sinclair, 2009). Congress's partisanship can hinder legislators' efforts to create new policies, and the gridlock can harm the progression of our county (Greenblatt, 2004). In the 1990s, for instance, there was an outbreak of the filibuster centered partisan strategy, and this partisan action caused incivility in the Senate that blocked the passage of important legislation (Sinclair, 2000). Also, between one-half and two-thirds of the roll calls were party votes, and partisan polarization made staunch party membership more attractive (Sinclair, 2009). More recently, members of both parties frequently insulted each other and received an historically low congressional approval rating (Clemmitt, 2010).

In summary, although the Senate's rules support civility, there are contexts in which senators' goals are intense and create great conflict. When this happens, senators' rhetoric can erode the Senate's civility and encourage partisan polarization. During the government shutdown, some senators' rhetoric contributed to the decline of civility in the Senate while others bolstered civility by crossing party lines to create a plan to end the impasse. Senator Landrieu (D-LA), for instance, acknowledged that policymakers had tried to work to understand where the other side was coming from. She encouraged her colleagues "to set aside the bitterness and the rancor and try to find a way forward" (USS, 2013m, p. 7429). The Senate's women frequently spoke of compromise as they offered suggestions with the understanding that neither party would achieve everything they wanted (Steenland, 2013). The women senators' calls for bipartisanship continued throughout the government shutdown.

<div align="center">Women in the Senate</div>

During the 2013 government shutdown, the Senate's women collectively urged Congress to start deal making. Their efforts, such as hosting informal gatherings to discuss how to reopen the federal government, pushed through the gridlock and offered a bipartisan deal. When covering the government shutdown, many news outlets shared stories about the Senate's women putting aside their ideological differences while helping a bipartisan group unite to find a sensible, workable solution to end the manufactured crisis (Bassett, 2013; Camia, 2013; K. Hunt, 2013; S. Hunt, 2013; Koren, 2013; Newton-Small, 2013a, 2013b; Spillius, 2013; Timm, 2013; Weisman & Steinhauer, 2013). The senators' civility and bipartisanship earned them Allegheny College's third annual Prize

for Civility in Public Life (Mauriello, 2014). During the ceremony, Allegheny College

President attested:

> This year we're going to honor a moment in time when 20 women in the Senate at
>
> a very difficult and challenging moment in American politics, a time when
>
> incivility was reigning, got together and said enough and set a wonderful example
>
> for us and particularly for young people. (Newton-Small, 2014, para. 3)

With this in mind, the Senate's women were chosen as the rhetors. Their discourse

provides the means for understanding the rhetorical strategies senators can use to

encourage bipartisanship in a partisan political environment. To provide background on

the rhetors, the following section overviews the history of women in the Senate and

introduces the women serving in the 113th Senate.

History of Women in the Senate

The history of women in the Senate is one of sluggish, hard-fought gains across

nine decades. Rebecca Felton (D-GA) was the first woman to serve in the Senate, and she

was appointed to fill a vacancy in November 21, 1922. Scholars use the phrase "the

widow effect" to describe women, such as Senator Felton, who enter Congress to replace

a deceased husband (Solowiej & Brunell, 2003). The widow effect influenced the gender

composition of Congress, because 14 women senators were first appointed and five were

elected to fill an unexpired term (Manning & Brudnick, 2014). In 1931, Hattie Caraway

(D-AR) became the first woman elected to the Senate. Although she was originally

appointed to fill the vacancy caused by the death of her husband, Senator Caraway later

won elections on her own (Solowiej & Brunell, 2003). Margaret Chase Smith (R-ME)

forged new ground by becoming the first woman to serve in both congressional

chambers, and her 36 years in Congress marked changes for the role of women in politics (Sherman, 2001).

The 1980s saw a slow but steady growth in the number of women in Congress (Foerstel & Foerstel, 1996). Women running for the Senate in the 1980s faced a daunting political environment. The United States was involved in the Cold War and issues of national security usually work to a male candidate's advantage (Foerstel & Foerstel, 1996; Kahn, 1996). In 1985, Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) became the first woman elected to the Senate without first being a successor (Solowiej & Brunell, 2003). In the 113th Senate, Senator Mikulski was known as "the dean of female senators," was the longest-serving woman in Congress, and was the first female chair of the Appropriations Committee (Foley, 2013).

In 1992, often referred to as the "Year of the Woman," the political climate was ripe for the election of women to Congress. A record breaking 11 women ran for the Senate (Delli Carpini & Fuchs, 1993). Many women ran "as women" in an attempt to capitalize on their differences from men (Dolan, 1998). Women's outsider status worked in their favor, because voters who were fed up with incumbents "perceived [women] as more honest and concerned about the public good" (Dolan, 2005, p. 31). Furthermore, some voters were upset about the Thomas-Hill hearings, and the Congressional elections focused on stereotypical "women's issues" such as healthcare and education (Foerstel & Foerstel, 1996). For instance, Senator Boxer (D-CA), Senator Feinstein (D-CA), Senator Braun (D-IL), and Senator Murray (D-WA) portrayed themselves as champions of women's rights and urged voters to support them because they too were fed up with business as usual and scandal in Congress (Dolan, 1998). Senator Murray, the first

woman senator from Washington, encouraged voters to consider her gender when casting a vote (Kahn, 1996). Her slogan was "just a mom in tennis shoes" (Swers, 2013, p. 8). Senator Murray won the election despite facing criticism for being the only woman senator with children living at home (Foerstel & Foerstel, 1996). The 102nd Congress included the largest group of women elected in one cycle with the number of women in the Senate tripling from 2 to 6 (Foerstel & Foerstel, 1996).

As more women joined the Senate, they began establishing their own norms and reputations. For instance, women senators may differ in their political ideologies but, according to former Senator Hutchinson (D-TX), they usually "resolve conflicts the way friends do" (Carlson, 2012, para. 7) and others suggest that the women do not "go for the kill, especially among themselves" (Newton-Small, 2013a, para. 11). Women senators have historically supported each other socially during their monthly bipartisan dinners and when discussing certain policies (Swers, 2013). They have also been known to mentor one another and build camaraderie and cohesion (Swers, 2013). Senator Mikulski (D-MD) often coordinates when the women senators go to the floor together on an issue, and the senators are frequently "willing to band together for the good of a cause" (Swers, 2013, p. 242).

At the swearing in ceremony for the 113th Congress, Senator Mikulski (D-MD) told her female colleagues:

> You stand here now in the footsteps of so many women who for so long would have liked to have been here . . . . you have a band of sisters. And we're going to not only make history, we're going to change history. (Foley, 2013, para. 10)

Since Senator Mikulski began serving in the Senate, the number of women has grown

from 2 to 20. During an interview in Senator Mikulski's office in the Capitol, female

senators told the *National Journal* that women "make special contributions to the

Senate—in the issues they highlight, in their collegial style, and in the close-knit network

they have formed, despite their differences" (Lawrence, 2013, para. 6).

Women in the 113ᵗʰ Senate (2013-2014)

Twenty women, four Republicans and 16 Democrat, served in the 113th Senate.

The group was diverse and included women who were single, childless, grandmothers,

mothers, and taking care of elderly parents. During the 2013-2014 session, five women

chaired Senate committees, one female senator chaired two committees, and every Senate

committee had at least one woman on it (Manning & Brudnick, 2014). Even the women's

restroom had more women; Senator Klobuchar (D-MN) told a forum audience, "For the

first time, we had a traffic jam in the women's senator's bathroom. There were *five*

women in there. There's only two stalls!" (Franke-Ruta, 2012, para. 3, emphasis in

original). Because there were only 20 women senators serving in the 113th Senate, it was

easier for them to get to know one another and attend events that created prosperous

bipartisan relationships.

During an interview with Dianne Sawyer, the Senate's women shared their desire

to "usher in a new era of bipartisanship" (Roberts, 2013, para. 2). Despite their

differences, the senators had a mutual desire to collaborate and pragmatically approach

the political process (Keller, 2012; Lawrence, 2013). The women running for reelection

in 2014, for instance, ran from the middle, not the fringes (Singer, 2014). Furthermore,

the group claimed to be collaborative, less confrontational than their colleagues, and encouraged problem solving and consensus building (Nuzzi, 2014).

One of the ways the Senate's women encouraged relationship building was by meeting for dinner every six weeks to discuss topics ranging from their children to how to solve the budget crisis (E. Green, 2013). Coach Barb began organizing the dinners when she became a senator, and the dinners have featured Senator Landrieu's (D-LA) pecan pie and Senator Collin's (R-ME) Maine sweet potatoes. Senator McCaskill (D-MO) credited the dinners with helping to break some of the gridlock that stalls legislation in Congress (Foley, 2013). Interestingly, the dinners were sometimes held in the Strom Thurmond room, which is ironic considering he was a crusader against women's rights (Carlson, 2012; Franke-Ruta, 2012). The dinners offered a safe space for women to share their triumphs and concerns, cultivate friendships, and restore some of the natural camaraderie that was lost in the Senate (Carlson, 2012). Senator Feinstein (D-CA) described the group as not a clique, sorority, or a club but instead a group of friends who understood each other's struggles (Roberts, 2013).

The dinners were a place for the women to discuss their problems and passions. The dinners, Senator Mikulski (D-MD) shared, were "a refuge with no agenda, nothing to prove [except] finding common ground where we're going to talk about what we're going to work on in other committees or circumstances" (Bash, 2012, para. 19). Senator Klobuchar (D-MN) disclosed that the women did not repeat what was said in the room, they never discussed the male senators, and the dinners helped forge their relationships (Franke-Ruta, 2012). Furthermore, Senator Gillibrand (D-NY) revealed that the dinner parties have three rules: no staff and no leaks and the women in the Senate agree to not

disparage one another publicly (Nuzzi, 2014). Senator Collins (R-ME) credited the women's supper club with fostering "bonds of friendship and trust among the women senators" (Schwab, 2013, para. 6). Their significant others also recognized the importance of the dinners; Senator Murkowski's (R-AK) husband did not question the nights she arrived home late because she attended a dinner. She shared, "He knows that that is a time that I value because I derive so much from the conversation, from the camaraderie that we have in our hour and a half at the end of a very long day" (Bash, 2012, para. 18).

In addition to dinners, the women in the Senate also have hosted bridal showers and baby showers, run together, and socialized in each other's homes (Lawrence, 2013). As evidence of this, Senator Clinton (D-NY) held a bridal shower for Senator Collins (R-ME) that was attended by every female senator and Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor (Keller, 2012). Senator Gillibrand (D-NY) admitted to buying Senator Collins's wedding night lingerie and described it as "elegant, like Susan, she deserves something elegant and beautiful, exactly like she is" (Schwab, 2013, para. 3). Even though the 113th Congress was more polarized that any other Congress (Kraushaar, 2014), the women's informal gatherings encouraged them to place relationship building ahead of partisan politics. As a result, the senators formed close political alliances.

In sum, the senators' dinners provided an opportunity for the women to share common life experiences and foster collegiality. During an interview, Senator Heitkamp (D-ND) admitted that women's common experiences automatically put them "in a spot where you probably maybe look at things like you would if you were a mom. So you know I'm probably thinking what Amy's [Klobuchar] is thinking" (K. Hunt, 2013).

Despite their similarities, Senator Mikulski (D-MD) described the women of the Senate as being "like the US Olympic team: we come in different sizes, but we sure are united by our determination to do the best for our country!" (Keller, 2012, para. 15). The women senators' rhetoric offers a means for understanding how a group of policymakers uses rhetoric to become effective bipartisan advocates.

<p align="center">Method</p>

Discourses function in an institutional context and must be examined within that particular situation (Keremidchieva, 2012). In an effort to contribute to communication scholars' developing knowledge of the rhetoric of civility, incivility, and polarization, I analyze the 2013 government shutdown debate by investigating senators' floor speeches, media campaigns, and journalists' coverage of the senators' leadership efforts. In so doing, I illuminate how senators encourage bipartisanship in a partisan political environment. In the following section, I offer an argument for why rhetorical criticism is the best method for conducting this research, discuss the artifacts being analyzed, and overview rhetorical concepts that are used to interpret the texts.

Rhetorical Criticism

Rhetoric consists of word choice and the role symbols play in gaining an audience's commitment. The subject matter of rhetorical criticism is discourse that aims to influence (Black, 1978). One of the most forceful arguments a critic can make for rhetorical criticism is "its merit in clarifying values in specific pieces of discourse and relating these to societal tendencies" (Scott, 1984, p. 93). A critic's motive is to expose how a rhetorical act teaches, delights, moves, flatters, alienates, or heartens (Campbell, 1989). Critics accomplish this by translating a rhetorical act or object in terms that their

audience will understand and educating the audience about the rhetorical situation. Critics help readers appreciate the nuances of the art of oratory, expose the power elite's mystification strategies, and transmit cultural heritage (Dow, 2001).

Dow (2001) prompts critics to discard social scientists' vocabulary of discovery and embrace the language of creation and art. Whereas scientists study natural phenomena, critics study the products of rhetors (Black, 1978). Specifically, a critic's unit of analysis is an artifact, and the standards used in criticism to assess the artifact are rooted in the assumption that objective reality does not exist. Rhetorical analysis, thus, accounts for different viewpoints and positions from which political actors speak (Foss, 2009). Rhetorical critics understand an artifact because of their personal interpretation of the text; therefore, texts have multiple meanings. It is the critic, not the text, the audience, or the method, that authorizes the interpretation (Dow, 2001).

Rhetoric, more specifically persuasion, is instrumental to the policymaking process, because senators' rhetorical strategies influences how their colleagues evaluate and coordinate information and issues. Rhetoric, therefore, can help senators unify, resolve disputes, and implement policies. For instance, as senators decide to support or prevent the enactment of laws, they join decision-making groups and rely on information through personal knowledge, research, and staff support to reach a decision. To understand the rhetorical strategies that senators use to govern in a partisan climate, I analyze Senate floor debate, senators' public relations campaigns, and the news media's coverage of the government shutdown.

Artifacts

There are a few reasons why the dissertation focuses on the 2013 government shutdown and women senators. First, the budget bill, which is rooted in partisan politics, is a significant piece of legislation that affects all Americans. The story of the 2013 government shutdown provides the context for this study, because the situation reveals how Washington operates when senators put their partisan affiliations aside to accommodate competing political and policy objectives. Unlike representatives, senators are historically known for maintaining civility on the floor and for working with senators from different ideological persuasions (Sinclair, 2000). During the shutdown, however, some senators made partisan jabs and failed to follow Senate rules. Consequently, the situation suggests that some senators are just as partisan and hostile as their colleagues across the dome.

Second, the goal of this project is to understand what rhetorical strategies are available to senators who want to encourage bipartisan legislative deliberation. Given this, I selected a group of senators who took a bipartisan approach to legislating during the government shutdown. The Senate's women, in particular, delivered floor speeches and executed media campaigns that encouraged their colleagues to step out of their partisan corners and legislate in good faith. Additionally, politicians and the news media claimed that women senators primarily provided the leadership during the shutdown debate (USS, 2013q). Each chapter analyzes women senators' discourse to understand how their rhetoric created bipartisanship and combated the Senate's partisan environment.

Next, floor debate works within the framework of procedural democracy, identification, and persuasion; consequently, floor speeches are recitations of strategic

communication and are an important part of legislative deliberation. Senate floor debate is used to direct discussion and influence debates by reinforcing, determining, or activating policymakers' positions on a bill (Smith & Smith, 1990). To understand how senators encourage bipartisanship during their floor speeches, Chapters II and IV offer an analysis of 98 floor speeches that senators delivered between October 1—October 17, 2013. I located women senators' floor speeches on CSPAN's website and cross-referenced their speeches with the *Congressional Record*. The dissertation's findings contribute to congressional debate literature by offering an understanding for how a group can use floor debate to advocate their positions before a larger audience.

Additionally, given that new technologies permit senators to shape messages that target specific audiences, this project also studies the news media's coverage of the government shutdown. During the 16 day shutdown, some news outlets reported that a group of bipartisan senators reached a compromise that helped reopen the federal government. Bennett and Entman (2001) argue, "Mediated political communication has become central to politics and public life in contemporary democracies" (p. 1). To understand how senators use the news media to deliver bipartisan messages, I searched Google and women lawmakers' Senate websites for footage of their media campaigns. I found over 35 videos ranging from 30 seconds to 10 minutes. I discovered that senators appeared on a variety of television stations including CNN, MSNBC, NBC, Fox News, and PBS. Pew Research Center concludes that audiences for these news channels hold different political views; therefore, I selected a sample of texts that showed how divergent channels covered the government shutdown (Pew Research Center, 2009).

Moreover, I used the phrases "women senators' bipartisanship" and "women senators + government shutdown" while searching the ProQuest Newstand database and Google. As a result, I located newspaper articles that discussed the women senators' contributions to the government shutdown talks. The women in the Senate were quoted in news articles published by newspapers such as *The New York Times, USA Today, The Guardian*, and *Washington Post*; newsmagazines including *Time, National Journal, U.S. News & World Reports, The New Yorker,* and *The Atlantic*; online news sources like *The Daily Beast, Huffington Post, NPR,* and *Politico.* I located artifacts from every woman senator except Senator Gillibrand (D-NY) and Senator Cantwell (D-WA). These texts furnish a robust sample of senators' discussion of the government shutdown.

In summary, deliberation is important to the legislative process, because a lone senator cannot pass a policy on her or his own. The texts analyzed in this dissertation offer a means for studying how the U.S. Senate uses rhetoric to perform its government functions. The floor speeches, in particular, offer a means for supporting the argument that women in the Senate enacted a rhetorical strategy that encouraged bipartisanship and thus improved the Senate's partisan environment. Also, the news media provides the public with the information they need to create a set of beliefs about the political system and their attitudes toward the topic. Consequently, this project examines senators' media interviews, newspaper articles, and magazine articles to understand how the news media contributes to a policy discussion.

Rhetorical Concepts

The dissertation analyzes artifacts using rhetorical concepts, because rhetoric enables effective communication while maintaining and establishing a deliberative

system. Values and norms change over time, but when some norms deteriorate, the system falls apart and results in less cross-party cooperation and a weakened political system. To understand how senators overcome this obstacle and encourage bipartisanship, each substantive chapter uses a different rhetorical theory to analyze the texts.

First, Charland's (1987) notion of constitutive rhetoric and the rhetoric of polarization are used to analyze women's floor speeches. Polarizing rhetoric is "a characteristic set of rhetorical devices that interact with a pre-existing but latent polarized setting, precipitating two or more tightly knit, antagonistic, and mutually exclusive factions" (Scott, 1981, p. 53). Polarizing rhetoric includes forceful language that portrays people and events vividly and serves to polarize audience sentiment against the event or person (Raum & Measell, 1974). A polarizing rhetorical message can help individuals feel "hailed" and define the identity of those being interpellated. Collective appeals, Charland suggests, depend upon rhetoric, and the group that comes to being exists only through an ideological discourse that constitutes them. Constitutive rhetoric creates a collective identity that legitimates ways of collective life by transcending individual differences (Drzewiecka, 2002). The rhetor's polarizing rhetoric is situated within a larger narrative that features an ending that a constituted people must complete. Thus, collective identities are constituted through a series of narratives that position the people as subjects within a text (Charland, 1987). Polarizing discourse creates mutually exclusive groups, and constitutive rhetoric can work with polarizing rhetoric to create a group's common identity. I argue in this chapter that constitutive rhetoric can polarize the audience and create a common "bipartisan" identity.

Second, I use media framing and narrative theory to analyze senators' media

campaigns and the media's coverage of the government shutdown. Framing offers a way

to describe the power of a communicative text and therefore becomes a rhetorical

strategy that distinguishes certain words and symbols from the rest of the news (Entman,

2003). According to Fisher (1984), humans are natural storytellers, *homo narrans*, and

the stories people share are a way to establish a meaningful life-world and a way of

"relating a truth about human condition" (p. 6). Journalists and politicians become

storytellers when they use symbols to create and communicate stories that give order to

human experience. These stories "induce others to dwell in them to establish ways of

living in common, in communities in which there is sanction for the story that constitutes

one's life" (Fisher, 1984, p. 6). The narrative enables people to understand others' actions

because it makes a situation meaningful for communities and cultures (Fisher, 1984).

Thus, the narrative paradigm, according to Fisher, offers a means for studying the

narrative dimensions of socially and politically consequential discourse. These theories

enable me to support the argument that in framing the shutdown in a particular way,

policymakers and the media offered a narrative that was politically consequential because

it included a public argument for bipartisanship.

Third, I use feminine style and literature on civility to analyze women senators'

floor speeches. The Senate's formal rules guide senatorial decorum to reduce

spontaneous hostility and instill a sense of civility in the chamber. Darr (2011) describes

civility as "a set of standards for conducting public argument" (p. 604). Scholars

generally argue that civility is an important characteristic of public deliberation in our

democracy (Ivie, 2008). Senators should embrace civility as a norm, because courteous

rhetorical exchanges between policymakers help them address problems as a community (Jamieson, 2000). While studying women senators' floor speeches, I argue that the women senators encouraged civility by using rhetoric that was personal, anecdotal, and sought identification based on lived experiences. Campbell's (1989) model of feminine style helps develop this claim. Campbell's model of rhetoric emerged from her studies of women's rhetorical choices and describes "feminine style" as rhetoric that has a personal tone, uses personal experiences, is structured inductively, emphasizes audience participation, and encourages identification between speaker and audience. Scholars have since used feminine style to study male and female political discourse and discovered that rhetoric containing elements of feminine style appear to be less combative than other styles of communication (Jamieson, 1988).

In sum, the central issue of this dissertation concerns how senators encourage legislative deliberation by using rhetorical means to achieve bipartisanship. Policymaking requires that elected officials exchange ideas and knowledge. I use different rhetorical theories and media framing to understand how the women in the Senate promoted respectful politics by taking into account others' considerations.

<p style="text-align:center">Chapter Synopses</p>

I analyze floor speeches, media campaigns, and media coverage of the government shutdown to illuminate how a group of senators use rhetoric in the performance of their government functions. This dissertation expands scholars' investigation into legislative deliberation by exploring the ways in which senators persuade their colleagues to support their policy.

In Chapter II, I examine how constitutive rhetoric and the rhetoric of polarization help policymakers create a bipartisan reality that combats the Senate's partisan environment. First, I suggest that in using constitutive rhetoric, the political elite attempted to interpellate an audience by calling a shared, collective identity into existence. Second, characteristics of the rhetoric of polarization, including message variables and strategies of affirmation and subversion, helped rhetors weave calls for bipartisanship into their group identity and vilify colleagues who do not collaborate. Thus, I elucidate how the rhetoric of polarization can intensify partisanship but also unite the political elite, and I reveal how constitutive rhetoric helps policymakers create a collective identity that reconstitutes a people. I conclude that by associating themselves with righteous acts, discouraging partisan politics, and questioning the opposition's ethos, senators were able to call a common, collective identity into existence.

In Chapter III, I continue the discussion of partisan polarization by examining how some in the news media covered the government shutdown. I study women senators' media campaigns, interviews, and the news media's coverage of the government shutdown. In so doing, I uncover the news media's construction of the 2013 government shutdown narrative. According to Bennett and Edelman (1985), "Stories are among the most universal means of presenting human events" (p. 156). In this chapter, I seek to understand the narrative that was told in the news by analyzing a public conversation about the government shutdown. Consequently, I uncover how the media framed the government shutdown dispute and how policymakers created a public relations campaign that helped journalists configure a policy debate. I argue that in framing the shutdown in a particular way and going public, policymakers and the media

offered a public argument in the form of a narrative. I uncover how the senators'
discourse and the news media created a narrative about the government shutdown that
motivated particular beliefs and actions.

Moving beyond polarization, Chapter IV studies how a particular rhetorical style
can help senators encourage civility; particularly, I study the connection between
feminine style and civility. I suggest that feminine style offers a means for creating civil
exchanges between policymakers. I suggest that three components of feminine style
(viewing the audience as peers, claims of personal experience, and inviting audience
participation) contribute to the outcome of comity, including reciprocity and courtesy. I
also maintain that the women senators' rhetorical strategies appear to be grounded in the
Senate folkways, particularly the norm of civility. As more senators recommit themselves
to following the Senate's folkways, hopefully a new era of deliberation will ensue and
acts of incivility will be replaced with rhetoric that encourages bipartisanship.

Finally, Chapter V integrates the themes developed in the preceding chapters and
offers cumulative insights that provide larger implications of the research. In this chapter,
I argue that by enacting a rhetoric of bipartisanship and modeling bipartisan behavior, the
women in the Senate strengthened legislative deliberation. To support this point, I focus
on three rhetorical tools the group used to achieve bipartisanship: civility, relationship
building, and a rhetoric of polarization. By paying careful attention to senators'
discourse, we can deepen our understanding of the rhetorical strategies senators use to
impact a policy agenda and how their rhetoric constructs a bipartisan political
environment.

In closing, this project sets out to examine the intersection of deliberation and political communication by studying Senate floor debate and media texts. The government shutdown offers a case for studying a moment in U.S. congressional history when senators who were ideologically opposite used rhetoric to create cross-party relationships and draft a bipartisan plan to reopen the federal government. Moving forward, I maintain that by delivering floor speeches and participating in media interviews, women senators' rhetoric crafted a narrative that shared a vision of what a functioning Senate looked like and bipartisanship was a focal point of the story. In studying the rhetorical strategies available to the Senate's women, I uncover how they collectively created a bipartisan environment that encouraged legislative deliberation.

CHAPTER II

CONSTITUTING A GROUP IDENTITY

During the 2013 legislative session, House Republicans and Senate Democrats could not agree on a spending plan for the 2014 fiscal year. Since Congress did not pass a law appropriating funds past September 30, 2013, the federal government shut down. Senate Democrats claimed that "our government shut down because the Tea Party faction in the House put their own personal agendas and partisan politics ahead of progress for the American people" (USS, 2013h, p. S7229). They believed that although there were "pragmatic people devoted to this country who want to solve the two major problems we have facing us right now," a group of right wing extremists remained committed to slowing down or stopping the economy, because they did not get their way in an election (USS, 2013k, p. S7360).

The shutdown exposed Washington gridlock at its worst, and senators, such as Senator Baldwin (D-WI), spoke out against their Republicans colleagues who were "committed to playing the same political games offered by the House" (USS, 2013a p. S6921). These games included "crisis-to-crisis governing; uncertainty for our economy and for families and businesses, economic insecurity" (USS, 2013a p. S6921). This example of a stalemate was a consequence of two institutions and individual actors vying for power (Binder, 2003). Stalemate refers to times when "legislators and the president have been unable to reach a compromise that alters the policy status quo" (Binder, 2003, p. 35). During the government shutdown, legislators needed to end the legislative stalemate to "solve these problems, not just for the future of this country here in America but also for our standing in the world" (USS, 2013c p. S7043).

The Senate women's caucus was heavily involved in trying to end the impasse (Weisman & Steinhauer, 2013) and became instrumental in shaping the budget agreement that broke through the gridlock (Chavez, 2013). Although rivalries exist among some of the women senators, they generally seek "to combat the toxic partisan environment in Congress" by promoting "the idea of social mixing across party lines to reduce partisanship and promote civility" (Swers, 2013, p. 242). Sixteen Democrats and four Republicans comprised the 113th Senate women's caucus, and the senators spanned the ideological spectrum. Shortly after the government reopened, Senator Mikulski (D-MD) told Marlo Thomas that women senators faced the government shutdown head on, and Senator Collins (R-ME) acknowledged that women became the initial organizers of a bipartisan group who contributed to the development of the final budget deal (Thomas, 2013). The senators exhibited bipartisanship, which is "achieved when members of both parties are involved in making legislation" (Snowe, 2013, p. 230).

Polarization can prevent bipartisanship, and scholars, political pundits, and the press describe today's political arena as "polarized." Definitions of polarization emphasize the presence of opposing principles and points of views (Fiorina & Abrams, 2008; McCarty, Poole, & Rosenthal, 2006). For instance, partisan polarization refers to "the increased ideological space separating two reasonably cohesive congressional parties" (Foreman, 2008, p. 88) and "a separation of politics into liberal and conservative camps" (McCarty et al., 2006, p. 3). Polarization can also be rhetoric that creates or intensifies fundamental divisions and differences within a group and is a rhetorical strategy used in American public address (Raum & Measell, 1974). The polarization

process creates conflict that sparks conversations and can encourage an audience to reconsider their opinions.

America's democracy has weathered turbulent times, and polarized parties are not novel in American politics (Mann & Ornstein, 2012). Most scholars agree that the political elite has become more polarized over the past several decades (Fiorina, Abrams, & Pope, 2011; McCarty et al., 2006). Political elites refers to "partisan political elites" who are politicians holding elected office and maintain some control over policy (Levendusky, 2009). Even though legislators claim to be committed to "compromising" and use phrases like "working together," polarization in Congress has increased sharply (Poole & Rosenberg, 2007). Elected officials are ideologically split with Democrats claiming positions that are more liberal and Republicans fully supporting conservative initiatives (Poole & Rosenberg, 2007). Thus, today's political parties are more internally unified and ideologically distant than they have been in centuries (Mann & Ornstein, 2012). Polarization in Congress can result in gridlock over major national policies such as budgetary balance (Galston & Nivola, 2006) and an unworkable stalemate (Snowe, 2013). Partisan polarization is arguably the most problematic feature of modern American politics (Mann & Ornstein, 2012).

I explore senators' polarizing rhetoric constitutively–as a rhetoric that "calls its audience into being" (Charland, 1987, p. 134). Charland (1987) builds on Burke's (1969) view of rhetoric as identification and Black's (1970) notion of the second persona to explain how audiences come to identify with the persona implied in the text. Examinations of constitutive rhetoric typically focus on how rhetoric reveals "the very character of a collective identity, and the nature of its boundary, of who is a member of

the collectivity" (Charland, 1987, p. 135). Republican members of Congress could not be persuaded to shed their preexisting political views, and I suggest that constitutive rhetoric helped senators create a collective identity that reconstituted a people. Consequently, this analysis expands on previous work by focusing on how constitutive elements are embedded in senators' public address. Senators interpellated audiences by calling a common and collective identity into existence. I suggest that the rhetors' speeches constitutively united the target audience around the concept of bipartisanship; in so doing, the senators suggested that bipartisanship was the only solution to the stalemate caused by divisive political parties.

This chapter studies contemporary conditions of divided government by examining an example of the Senate's deliberation. Currently, few scholars study polarization rhetoric, and this research fills that void in the literature by offering an analysis of 98 floor speeches that were delivered during the U.S. government shutdown debate in 2013. In what follows, I argue that policymakers' rhetorical strategies created a bipartisan reality that combated the Senate's partisan environment. Although the government shutdown was the result of a larger bicameral issue, I focus solely on partisan polarization within the U.S. Senate because "the Senate was intended [by the framers] to be a tool for checking the passions of the House" (Binder, 2003, p. 16) and to "serve as a restraint on a populous and potentially rash House" (Binder, 2003, p. 45). In order to understand the significance of the rhetorical situation, I first summarize the political setting and offer a literature review of elite and mass polarization. Then, I explain polarizing rhetoric, constitutive rhetoric, and conduct an analysis of the women senators' floor speeches. I conclude with a discussion of implications.

Partisan Politics and the Government Shutdown

During the government shutdown, some senators blamed the Republican Party, specifically members of the Tea Party movement, for the "manufactured crisis" that caused a self inflicted wound on the nation's economy (USS, 2013a, p. S6921). A few senators argued that House Republicans took the government hostage by using "poison pills" to "defund the Affordable Care Act" (USS, 2013a, p. S6943). Senator Warren (D-MA) acknowledged that "in effect, the Republicans are trying to take the government and the economy hostage, threatening serious damage to both unless the President agrees to gut the Affordable Care Act" (USS, 2013c, p. S7029). Senator Warren continued, "In a democracy hostage tactics are the last resort for those who cannot win their fights" (USS, 2013c, p. S7030). Echoing her colleague's sentiments, Senator Landrieu (D-LA) maintained that "they [Republicans] are so committed to using the Federal Government as a hostage, or the full faith and credit of the United States as a hostage to change a bill they had every opportunity to change" (USS, 2013c, p. S7046). Similarly, Senator Shaheen (D-NH) argued, "I would say to my colleagues in the House, you cannot take this government hostage and expect that we are going to be able to negotiate" (USS, 2013d p. 7097). The House's hostage-taking operation was successfully executed, and the government shut down for 16 days. The 2013 battle between hostage-takers and ransom-payers offers a template for exploring polarization within contemporary politics.

From September 30—October 17, 2013, the Republican-controlled House and Democrat-controlled Senate traded funding bills in which the Affordable Care Act was used as a bargaining chip. When drafting the budget bill, the House attached conditions to defund or delay the Affordable Care Act. Senator Murray (D-WA) argued, "Instead of

working on a bipartisan budget that would strengthen our economy, tea party

Republicans began manufacturing this crisis to defund the Affordable Care Act" (USS,

2013c p. S7037). President Obama and the Democrat-controlled Senate firmly agreed

they would not pass a bill that defunded the Affordable Care Act (Peralta, 2013). House

conservatives, however, demanded "a significant hit to the health law as a price for

keeping the government open" (Weisman & Peters, 2013). The Senate repeatedly

removed provisions that defunded the Affordable Care Act and sent the bills back to the

House. Since Congress did not appropriate the funds needed to keep the federal

government operating, the government shut down on October 1, 2013.

The legislators' game of chicken sparked theatrical politics that dominated the

government shutdown debate. Consequently, Senator Mikulski (D-MD) declared that the

best deliberative body in the world was about to become "a deadbeat nation, not paying

its bills to it sown people and other creditors" (USS, 2013p, p. S7486). Senator Murray

(D-WA) observed, "Given all the infighting we have seen recently, governing by crisis

clearly isn't working for Republicans" (USS, 2013a, p. S6908). Joining her colleague,

Senator Ayotte (R-NH) stated, "We have wasted too much time and energy on political

brinkmanship and self-inflicted fiscal crisis that also keep us from focusing on the real

challenges we face" (USS, 2013e, p. S7131). The Republican senator acknowledged that

although she wanted to repeal ObamaCare, "the ObamaCare exchanges opened and

continued anyway" and governing by crisis was no way to run a government (USS,

2013e, p. S7131).

Some policymakers were especially frustrated with the Tea Party faction in the

House and Senate. On September 24, 2013, Senator Cruz (R-TX), who is described as

"one of the architects of the GOP position that contributed to this impasse" (Peralta, 2013, para. 14), delivered a 21 hour floor speech against the Affordable Care Act. Senator Cruz is a self-proclaimed Tea Party patriot and a leader within the group. Broadly, the Tea Party movement arose "in the context of the long-term growth of partisan-ideological polarization within the American electorate and especially the growing conservatism of the activist base of the Republican Party" (Abramowitz, 2012, p. 197). Specifically, the Tea Party movement emerged in the aftermath of the 2008 recession (Rosenthal & Trost, 2012) and "the natural outgrowth of the growing size and conservatism of the activist base of the Republican Party during the preceding decades" (Abramowitz, 2012, p. 209). Although some Tea Party supporters argue that the movement is separate from the Republican Party, data indicates that movement sympathizers overwhelmingly identify with the Republican Party and describe their political views as conservative (Abramowitz, 2012).

The Tea Party movement consists of highly ideological and uncompromising conservatives (Mann & Ornstein, 2012) who call forth the spirit of America's tea-dumping colonists in Boston (Von Drehle et al., 2010). In 2009, CNBC commentator Rick Santelli called for a "tea party" protest to the Obama Administration's economic recovery plans (Von Drehle et al., 2010). Since then, Tea Party activists have continued protesting excessive government spending, taxation, government interference with personal freedoms, and maintain a belief that President Obama is leading America toward socialism (Rosenthal & Trost, 2012). Moreover, Tea Party activists view President Obama and Democrats as their "enemies" (Atkinson & Berg, 2012). Tea Party supporters, along with the Republican Party, have maintained a unified strategy of

opposing and obstructing President Obama's important initiatives (Mann & Ornstein, 2012).

In October 2013, America was the only democratic nation in the world to send civil servants home, shut the doors to national parks and museums, and close government agencies all because elected officials could not get along. Senators, such as Senator Murray (D-WA), called "on the House Republicans to cut the Tea Party loose, give up these partisan games, and pass the Senate's bill to prevent the government shutdown" (USS, 2013a, p. 6908). During the budget negotiations, many legislators used polarizing rhetoric to argue their points.

<div align="center">Partisan Polarization</div>

In the early twentieth century, America had conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans who resolved their ideological differences more easily than today's elected officials (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2008). Beginning in the 1950s, ideological polarization in America's governing bodies changed the political landscape and "sharp partisan divisions have become deeply embedded in national political life" (Jacobson, 2003, p. 2). In fact, between the Richard Nixon and George W. Bush administrations, national politics became more polarized along partisan and ideological lines (Jacobson, 2003). Consequently, a British parliamentary-like system has resulted in which the political elite typically votes only with their party (Snowe, 2013). This separation creates two rival teams whose ideological polarization is deeply implanted in the body politic (Mann & Ornstein, 2008). Scholars, therefore, must study polarization's contributions to the political process (Brooks & Geer, 2008). The scholarly debate about the existence of polarization in the U.S. electorate is ongoing partially because political scientists diverge

on issues related to elite versus mass polarization and not everyone agrees that a polarized system negatively affects the political process. I explore these two issues below.

Elite versus Mass Polarization

To begin, elite polarization refers to "ideological homogeneity within each party and ideology differentiation between the parties" (Levendusky, 2010, p. 124). The political elite, or political class, is comprised of "public officials, party and interest group leaders, activists, financial contributors, and members of the political infotainment community" (Fiorina & Levendusky, 2006, p. 50). Political scientists argue that "elites are at the core of whatever movement [party or popular polarization] has occurred" (Hetherington, 2008, p. 1). Moreover, some scholars suggest that party polarization at the elite level has led to a transformation in the electorate (Lavine, Johnston, & Steenbergen, 2012). Regardless, the theory of elite polarization suggests that the political elite (i.e., officeholders, candidates, and activists) cause hyper-partisanship and gridlock (Abramowitz, 2013).

Scholars unanimously concur that the political elite is ideologically divided (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2008; Fiorina & Levendusky, 2006; Galston & Nivola, 2006); thus, "polarization of the top political echelons has been widely recognized by political scientists for half a century" (Fiorina et al., 2011, p. 16). By the end of the twentieth century, almost all Republicans in Congress were more conservative than every Democrat. Furthermore, Democrats in the House and Senate have become more liberal and Republicans have moved strongly to the right (Galston & Nivola, 2006; Jacobson, 2003). Conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans no longer hold key leadership

positions in their respective parties, and the number of moderates in both parties has diminished (Abramowitz, 2012).

Additionally, although alignment of partisanship at the elite level has sharpened, empirical researchers question whether the electorate is polarized. In a polarized electorate, people do not hold centrist attitudes but rather push toward ideological extremes, and as polarization increases, the centrists begin to disappear (Levendusky, 2009). We know that the public has become more aware of the growing intensity of ideological conflict between the political elite (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2008), and the number of Americans who are consistently conservative or liberal has doubled in the past 20 years (Pew Research Center, 2014). Interestingly, the alignment of partisanship within the electorate has resulted in more liberal Democrats being active and more active Republicans being conservative; consequently, the size of each party's activist base has increased (Abramowitz, 2012). Some suggest that "the most interested, informed, and active citizens are much more polarized in their political views" (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2008, p. 554). The Republican Party's activist base in particular has begun following the party's leaders further to the right, and in turn, conservative activists have become more hostile to the Democratic Party and its presidential candidates (Abramowitz, 2012).

Conversely, some scholars maintain that polarization in the United States is exclusively an elite phenomenon, because ordinary citizens are more likely to be in the center of the ideological spectrum (Fiorina et al., 2011). Fiorina et al. (2011) suggest that the public is not ideologically polarized. They propose that America is comprised of a small political class that is polarized and a public that is uninterested in politics (Fiorina

& Levendusky, 2006). There is considerable evidence, however, that those who are the most engaged in the political process are more polarized. Thus, partisan polarization is high among the most interested, informed, and politically active members of the electorate (Abramowitz, 2012). Furthermore, testing Fiorina et al.'s (2011) claims, Abramowitz and Saunders's (2008) research "does not support Fiorina's assertion that polarization in America is largely a myth concocted by social scientists and media commentators" (p. 554).

In summary, the 113th Congress is a different body from the one that existed in the 1960s. Over the last four decades, ideological differences between Democrats and Republicans have risen dramatically (Abramowitz, 2010). In fact, elite polarization has increased the ideological distance between the parties' positions on issues; thus, Democrats stand for "y" and Republicans stand for "z" (Levendusky, 2009). Polarization can be a formula for inaction, because legislators who are dismissive of their political opposition may not find solutions to major problems.

Effects of Polarization

One result of polarization is a party unity vote, and political parties spend a lot of time advancing their party's platform while also attempting to discredit the other party's initiatives (Snowe, 2013). For instance, increased partisanship can create policies that are narrowly focused and reflect a political party's interests more than the American public's interests (Snowe, 2013). Also, with polarization comes the possibility that extremists in a party advocate for and pass policies that citizens do not support (Brady, Ferejohn, & Harbridge, 2008). In fact, polarized parties may distort the other's proposals and paint the

party as being extreme (McCarty et al., 2006). Today's polarization may not represent the middle-of-the-rode voter's interests (Poole & Rosenthal, 1983).

Second, empirical researchers' data supports the relationship between polarization and gridlock (Campbell, 2008); therefore, polarization may prevent policymaking (Brooks & Geer, 2008). Congress is more likely to experience deadlock when ideological polarization is high (Binder, 2003). Polarization induced gridlock hinders Congress's ability to adjust to changing economic and demographic times (McCarty et al., 2006). Some suggest that partisanship is "wreaking serious damage on one of America's magnificent virtues, our greatness" (Snowe, 2013, p. 237). For instance, McCarty et al. (2006) find that polarization negatively impacts legislative productivity, because polarization seems to reduce output across an expansive range of legislation.

Conversely, scholars argue that polarization may yield some benefits such as offering a sharper distinction between the two political parties, internal party cohesion, and party unity (Brooks & Geer, 2008). Hetherington's (2008) data shows that polarization can also have beneficial outcomes and counters conventional wisdom that polarization harms political engagement. For instance, before legislators vote they typically gather information that connects their ideology and partisanship to how they should vote on an issue (Lauderdale, 2013). Additionally, an ideologically cohesive legislative majority may create strong leadership (Foreman, 2008) and a cohesive coalition can help push important messages through the chamber (Binder, 2003).

Moreover, polarization may actually encourage citizens to participate in politics. Party labels can help partisan elites tell the populous which policies are associated with the major parties (Lavine et al., 2012). Therefore, political parties have become central to

voters' political evaluations and policy preferences; "elites first send out cues about their position on the issues, and attentive voters–the informal activists–notice these cues and update their beliefs" (Levendusky, 2009, p. 17). Polarization and its party cues can help voters know whether to support a Democratic or Republican position on a policy issue or who to vote for in the next election (Levendusky, 2009, 2010). These "cueing messages" mean that Democratic Party elites take a more liberal position on issues and Republican Party elites align with conservative positions (Classen & Highton, 2009).

In summary, the two parties are "as coherent and polarized as they have been in perhaps a century" (Brewer, 2009, p. 60), and as more voters agree with the elite's polarized party cues, the more consistent their attitudes become (Levendusky, 2010). Brooks and Geer (2008) encourage scholars to not only appreciate polarization's contributions to the political process but also make room for it. Empirical research indicates that today's political landscape is deeply polarized, and rhetorical scholars can use their results as a basis for studying the rhetoric of polarization.

Polarizing Rhetoric

Communication scholars began studying polarization from a rhetorical perspective in the 1970s, but the study of polarizing rhetoric deteriorated after the social and political unrest of the 1960s and 1970s (King & Anderson, 1971; Lanigan, 1970; Raum & Measell, 1974; Scott, 1981). Although polarization currently appears in American political discourse, a limited number of researchers have studied today's polarizing rhetoric. Given the significance of elite polarization and its effects on contemporary politics, it is important that we understand how polarizing rhetoric unites and divides the political elite. Polarizing rhetoric is "a characteristic set of rhetorical

devices that interact with a pre-existing but latent polarized setting, precipitating two or more tightly knit, antagonistic, and mutually exclusive factions" (Scott, 1981, p. 53). Polarizing rhetoric includes forceful language that portrays people and events vividly and serves to polarize the audience (Raum & Measell, 1974). In the following section, I discuss three approaches to studying polarizing rhetoric.

First, King and Anderson (1971) state that polarizing rhetoric requires a rhetorical setting, rhetorical tactics, and an agent of the polarization. They define polarization as "the process by which an extremely diversified public is coalesced into two or more highly contrasting, mutually exclusive groups showing a high degree of internal solidarity in those beliefs which the persuade considers salient" (p. 244). According to King and Anderson, a rhetoric of polarization encompasses two principle strategies: affirmation, including images that promote a sense of group identity, and subversion, which refers to the selection of images that undermine the ethos of competing groups, ideologies, and institutions. They conclude that a strategy of affirmation occurs "when a communicator's motive is to persuade potential believers to accept a new concept; a strategy of subversion is implicit when a communicator's motive is to weaken or destroy the credibility of a concept" (pp. 244-245).

Second, Raum and Measell (1974) criticize King and Anderson's (1971) framework for not including message variables (argument and style) and non-message variables (external stimuli, personal dynamism, and confrontation). They describe polarization as "a highly complex phenomenon in which message and non-message variables play significant roles" (p. 35). Raum and Measell argue that the rhetoric of polarization requires that polarization exists prior to the event, polarization accompanies

a highly charged emotional environment, the agent of polarization sees the world as a battle of opposites, and the agent of polarization offers him or herself as a redeemer.

Rhetoric of polarization, according to Raum and Measell (1974), consists of two separate message strategies that are stylistic devices. The first type of a message includes concrete descriptive device such as "god- and devil-terms, *reductio ad absurdum,* and exaggeration" (p. 30). God-terms portray the speaker as righteous whereas devil-terms vilify the institution. *Reductio ad absurdum* portrays opponents in humorous situations or predicaments. Exaggeration includes over-statements that make situations seem more or less favorable than they are in reality.

Raum and Measell (1974) discuss a second message strategy called copula tactics. Copula tactics represent "distortions of reality and these distortions form the basis of judgments and arguments" (p. 31). Copula tactics, which reveal less about style and more about the argument, include "artificial dichotomies, we/they distinctions, monolithic opposition, motive disparagement, and self-assertion" (Raum & Measell, 1974, p. 31). The we/they distinctions suggest that the audience can only choose between two alternatives thus highlighting in-group solidarity and shunning the out-group (Raum & Measell, 1974). When a polarizing agent describes the opposition as monolithic, he or she implies that people who challenge the movement have despicable motives. Self-assurance suggests that only the rhetor can bring about necessary change.

Moreover, Raum and Measell (1974) discuss non-message tactics including external stimuli, personal dynamism, and confrontation. These non-message variables create and maintain an atmosphere of highly charged emotion (Raum & Measell, 1974). Emotional symbols, including patriotism, religion, and nostalgia, are "together devices"

that can create a climate of solidarity, because they have a symbolic value to a group (Scott, 1981). Personal dynamism is a speaker's ability to command attention, and confrontation happens at the symbolic and actual levels (Raum & Measell, 1974).

Third, whereas King and Anderson (1971) view polarization as "cause" rather than "effect," Lanigan (1970) describes polarization only as "effect." Lanigan is concerned with polarization as a reaction to certain kinds of behavior such as leadership patterns. Lanigan identifies isolation and confrontation as two "causal techniques" that create polarization. First, "isolation polarization" is seen from two perspectives; "(1) the isolation of the in-group versus the isolation of the out-group and (2) the isolation of the elite leadership within the in-group by virtue of the external conflict existent between the in-group and the out-group" (Lanigan, 1970, p. 108). Lanigan suggests that "confrontation polarization" includes "(1) the confrontation of the out-group by the in-group to force uncommitted persons to choose within the polarity, and (2) the internal confrontation of factions within the in-group that results in a traditional 'elitism'" (p. 111). An in-group, according to Lanigan, is concerned with stopping its opponent and assumes that majorities of people remain uncommitted to the issue and will be moved by a minority willing to commit itself to overt action.

Recently, policymakers used polarizing rhetoric while attempting to fulfill their constitutional responsibility to keep the "United States Government open and make sure the United States of America pays its bills" (USS, 2013i p. S7291). During the government shutdown, rhetors could use polarization to encourage their colleagues to either be part of the solution or remain part of the problem. Many senators and their constituents, after all, were "fed up with the political games that are being played here in

Washington" (USS, 2013h, p. S7229), and policymakers needed to work together to end the "manufactured crisis." In addition to using forceful language, I suggest that constitutive rhetoric helped the bipartisan group overcome division and construct a shared identity.

<div align="center">Constitutive Rhetoric</div>

Burke (1969) suggests that identification unites individuals along lines of interest and sets the stage for persuasion. Charland (1987) expounds on Burke's notion of identification by suggesting that a rhetor interpellates a group that exists outside discourse and forms the group's identity in a political narrative. Thus, collective identities are constituted through a series of narratives that position the people as subjects within a text (Charland, 1987). Placing the self in relation to others is a necessary process of constitutive rhetoric (Charland, 1987). Individuals feel "hailed" by a rhetorical message and constitutive rhetoric defines the identity of those being appealed to (Charland, 1987). Collective appeals, Charland suggests, depend upon rhetoric, and the group that comes to being exists only through an ideological discourse that constitutes them. Constitutive rhetoric's interest in language as a form of social action helps scholars understand how rhetors construct identities (Cheng, 2012), and it foregrounds how language use can create cultural beliefs.

Discourse functions constitutively by producing three ideological effects: a collective subject, a transhistorical subject, and an illusion of freedom, which spurs individuals to action (Charland, 1987). According to Charland (1987), narratives of constitutive rhetoric offer a current moment as a final point on a predetermined historical timeline and feature an ending that a constituted people must complete. First, the

constitution of people occurs through interpellation. Rhetoric hails an audience through narratives, and although many will be "hailed," only some know that the message is directed at them (Charland, 1987).

Second, Charland (1987) believes that constitutive rhetoric connects the audience to a transhistorical subject; thus, a narrative offers consubstantiation between one group and across generations. The ideological effect that Charland advances is linked to Burke's (1969) idea of consubstantiality in that differences between people are transcended when the person is convinced of being similar to someone else. Subjects can only act in ways that are consistent with a narrative that has a fixed ending before it is told. Charland believes that the narratives of constitutive rhetorics are teleological in that they suggest that a current moment is a definitive point on a predetermined historical timeline and feature an unfinished ending that the constituted group must complete.

The third ideological effect is the illusion of freedom (Charland, 1987). Audiences are constrained by the narrative's boundaries of constitutive rhetoric but believe that they have the ability to act freely. In order to be constituted, people must adhere to a narrative that positions a "people" as subjects within a text and follows the norms of the story. This conception of "people" is reminiscent of McGee's (1975) argument that "people" are constituted through the social and political myths they accept. The narrative calls the people into being, and once constituted, the people believe they can freely act but are doing so "towards a predetermined and fixed ending" (Charland, 1987, p. 141). Rhetors adopting constitutive rhetoric engage a narrative that has defined terms, limits, and seeks political ends (Morus, 2007).

There is room for a new constitutive discourse when people are dissatisfied with their material conditions (Morus, 2007). The success of the constitutive rhetoric depends on the rhetors' cultural authority and the conditions that warrant a response (Morus, 2007). Most would agree that the material conditions of the government shutdown, for instance, caused a feeling of dissatisfaction among elected officials. Rhetors with some "cultural authority" could then "hail a reconstituted people through constitutive narratives that provide an explanation for current problems and provide hope for a solution" (Morus, 2007, p. 146). In this case, constitutive rhetoric helped the rhetors create a collective identity that legitimated ways of collective life by transcending individual differences (Drzewiecka, 2002).

In short, Charland (1987) believes that individuals are hailed by narratives and seek to become consubstantial with the protagonist. I suggest that voting for the Senate's CR was an important part of the narrative, and senators who supported the CR encouraged their colleagues to negotiate and find the sensible center. Taking the perspective of constitutive rhetoric, I advocate that people who supported the Senate's bill became part of a collective "we" that emerged as a bipartisan group. Senator Mikulski (D-MD) urged, "We, the Democrats, hopefully with others who will join with us to find the sensible center—America always governs best when it finds the center, a sensible center" (USS, 2013b, p. S6978). I label the interpellated group the "Sensible Center." This label coincides with an identity of a "people" that the speakers rhetorically constructed. In so doing, the Sensible Center became a collective subject, which according to Charland (1987) must override individual differences to establish a collectivity. In this case, those who were interpellated came from different political

parties, and people who supported the Senate's bill, I subsequently argue, attempted to

reconstitute senators' identities as "bipartisan." Utilizing the notion of constitutive

rhetoric, I examine how polarizing discourse helped create a group identity.

<center>Polarized Factions</center>

According to King and Anderson (1971), the rhetorical phenomenon of

polarization requires a diversified public that is divided into contrasting groups that share

a high degree of internal solidarity. During their floor speeches, for instance, senators

acknowledged the two polarized factions that developed within the legislative branch:

those who supported the Senate's CR and those who did not. Positioning the self in

relation to others is an important process of constitutive rhetoric, and during the

shutdown, rhetors demonized the opposition while constituting a group. Senator Landrieu

(D-LA), for example, described the Republicans as being reckless, namely "an

identifiable group, led by the Senator from Texas" (USS, 2013h, p. S7237). Within their

polarizing rhetoric, senators subdivided Republicans and attempted to reconstitute some

Republicans' identities as legislators. Charland (1987) suggests that the vehicle through

which rhetors constitute audiences is a narrative; thus, I discuss below the narrative that

called the audience into being and show how the government shutdown debate met King

and Anderson's standards for polarizing rhetoric.

To begin, in order for polarization rhetoric to be present, the environment must

already be polarized and speakers can tap into the divisions (Raum & Measell, 1974).

Throughout their floor speeches, some senators spoke in terms of Democrats versus

Republicans. Senators' constitutive rhetoric took the form of a narrative account of "us"

versus "them" and summoned an ideological discourse that constituted "the people."

While Senator Murray (D-WA) maintained that Republicans caused the government to shut down and did not want to talk to bridge that divide, Senator Baldwin (D-WI) urged Republicans to join Democrats' efforts to pass a responsible budget. Senator Murray highlighted the differences between "our side" and "their side" when she stated, "We know on our side that negotiation on a budget deal is not going to make us happy. We know the House Republicans won't be happy" (USS, 2013i, p. S7288). Research suggests, as does the government shutdown, that elite partisanship is extreme and fosters a polarized political environment.

While discussing the contentious political environment, some senators pleaded for their colleagues to "cross the aisle" (USS, 2013c, p. S7012). Identification became a rhetorical tool that helped rhetors overcome divisive individual matters. After all, rarely will "B" become "substantially one" with "A," for political party A has few interests that are joined with political party B. Burke (1969) proposes identification as an alternative to persuasion, and "A is not identical with his colleague, B. But insofar as their interest are joined, A is *identified* with B" (p. 20, emphasis in original). Only Republicans who were open to working with Democrats could become consubstantial. Therefore, the mutually exclusive groups that emerged were not along partisan lines, because members of both parties worked together to offer solutions. For example, Senator Murkowski (R-AK) reminded her colleagues, "Regardless of who is in the majority or who is in the minority, in order to make it work for the country we have to be working together" (USS, 2013q p. S7505). When the government shut down, the rhetors created a narrative and constitutive rhetoric helped them interpellate Republicans who were open to changing their policy

positions. Senator Klobuchar (D-MN), for instance, acknowledged that not every Republican in the chamber tried to slow the vote down (USS, 2013a).

The rhetors presented division in the context of constitutive rhetoric, and in order to unite, the senators had to find the ways in which their colleagues had "common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, attitudes that make them *consubstantial*" (Burke, 1969, p. 21, emphasis in original). Charland (1987) suggests that new collective identities are constituted on the backs of existing identities that have lost their power. I label policymakers who supported the Senate's CR as "group A." Alternatively, "group B" was comprised of Republicans, Tea Party members, and policymakers who created a manufactured crisis that threatened "the full faith and credit of America with a government default" (USS, 2013a, p. S6921). The rhetorical creation of the two groups was a copula tactic that encouraged a we/they distinction by highlighting the in-group versus out-group dichotomy and promoting solidarity (Raum & Measell, 1974). To pass their policy, "group A" needed to constitute an audience that included members of "group B."

Next, identification occurs because there is division and polarization can promote solidarity. This group cohesiveness creates a "we feeling" (King & Anderson, 1971). Burke (1969) states that "to begin with 'identification' is, by the same token, through roundabout, to confront the implications of *division*" (p. 22, emphasis in original). In this situation, the "we" group was comprised of senators who supported a Senate "bill to keep the government running that is free of any ideological policy provisions" (USS, 2013d, p. S7085). Throughout the analysis, I refer to the "we" group (group A) as "continuing resolution supporters" (CRS). CRS wanted to reopen negotiations and return Congress to

regular order. They were not interested in governing by crisis but instead, according to

Senator Ayotte (R-NH), wanted to "work together to get the government funded again"

(USS, 2013e, p. S7131). CRS supporters, such as Senator Ayotte (R-NH) and Senator

Mikulski (D-MD), described themselves as working "this out on behalf of the American

people" (USS, 2013g, p. S7176) and demonstrated statesmanship rather than

brinkmanship and gamesmanship (USS, 2013i). Constitutive rhetoric overrides individual

differences to establish a collectivity and this "we" technique helped CRS create a

common identity.

　　　　Although many Republicans originally opposed the Senate's CR, CRS had to

interpellate an audience that was sympathetic, namely uncommitted Republicans. To do

so, the rhetors created an identity that defined "inherent motives and interests that a

rhetoric can appeal to" (Charland, 1987, p. 137). At different historical moments, groups,

such as Republican senators, can gain a new identity that warrants a different form of

collective life. CRS, including Senator Murray (D-WA) and Senator Hirono (D-HI)

hailed the audience to "to join us in putting a stop to this madness," "join us at the table

in a budget conference" (USS, 2013j, p. S7319), and "to stop the ideological games and

irresponsible rhetoric" (USS, 2013j, p. S7345). In so doing, CRS explained their desire to

extend a hand to the other side of the aisle and some, such as Senator Baldwin (D-WI),

urged "a people" to end their political games, "to start governing and to pass a

responsible budget that invests in the middle class and strengthens our economy" (USS,

2013h, p. S7230). In this case, the rhetors, including Senator Hagan (D-NC), appealed to

the Sensible Center's interest in supporting a "responsible bill that keeps the government

running at currently reduced spending levels" (USS, 2013i p. S7280). CRS, thus,

interpellated their Republican colleagues and offered solutions within the boundaries of the narrative they created. CRS's target audience should have felt invited into the vision and hailed by a rhetorical message that included collaboration and responsible governing.

Additionally, identifying a common foe is an important polarizing rhetorical strategy, because polarization presupposes the existence of a perceived common foe (King & Anderson, 1971). CRS depicted the "other" side (group B) as being an "anarchy gang in the House" (USS, 2013f, p. S7163) that was comprised of a "a rump group of Republicans and the Republican House leadership that have made a terrible mistake in shutting the government down" (USS, 2013h, p. S7235). Moving forward, I refer to this coalition as "group against continuing resolution" (GACR). Senator Landrieu (D-LA) described GACR's actions as irresponsible and reckless and informed House Republicans that they "cannot get Democrats to any negotiation table unless they put their weapons down" (USS, 2013h, p. S7236).

Furthermore, Senator Boxer (D-CA) accused GACR of having "bashed in the heads of the American public on a beautiful day as we are coming out of a recession" (USS, 2013o, p. S7456) and choosing a partisan road that was sending America right over a cliff (USS, 2013p). To achieve identification with potentially hostile senators, CRS drew "on identification of interests to establish rapport between himself and his audience" (Burke, 1969, p. 46), and consequently interpellated a group that supported the common foe narrative. Because a rhetorical constitution of a public requires identification, senators' polarizing rhetoric may have made it difficult to constitute the Sensible Center. Given this, some members of GACR could not be interpellated because the division was too deep.

In sum, two divisive groups emerged during the government shutdown debate. Although some senators spoke in terms of Democrats versus Republicans, it appears that the in-group included members of both parties. CRS claimed to support democratic principles, bipartisan negotiations, and collaboration, whereas the GACR, or the common foe, supported gridlock, deadlock, hammerlock, hurting communities, governing by crisis, and threatening America's progress. As individuals realized they were being addressed, the interpellated subjects should have begun participating in the discourse. Senator Collins (R-ME), for instance, urged her colleagues to "come out of their partisan corners, stop fighting, and start legislating in good faith" (USS, 2013h, p. S7235). Senators' widespread frustration and the parties' disunity created a rhetorical opportunity. I subsequently examine CRS's rhetoric to understand how the rhetors hailed an audience within the confines of a narrative that included three rhetorical tactics.

Rhetorical Tactic: Message Variables

Analysis of constitutive rhetoric reveals the character of a group's collective identity, and polarizing rhetoric, such as message variables, creates identification while helping rhetors portray people and events in a particular way. A speaker, after all, wants to motivate listeners to action (Stevens, 1961). To do so, a rhetor should identify him or herself with others "through sympathetic attitudes of his own" (Burke, 1973, p. 268). Senator Mikulski (D-MD), for instance, spoke on behalf of CRS when she acknowledged her desire to return to regular order, including having floor debates that discussed legislation aimed at meeting human needs (USS, 2013k). Her identification worked to accomplish what Burke (1973) describes as "establishing rapport with an audience by the stressing of sympathies held in common" (p. 268). Because message variables, such as a

speaker's argument and style, are concrete description devices that warrant an audience response, an audience becomes an integral part of the message (Raum & Measell, 1974). I discuss identification by analyzing CRS's floor speeches and offer an understanding of how they used god and devil-terms to constitute the Sensible Center.

God and Devil-Terms

First, CRS used god-terms while associating themselves with righteous acts and encouraging the audience to work across the aisle, find common ground, and "give up the blame game on both sides" (USS, 2013e, p. S7132). The rhetors portrayed themselves as responsible legislators who wanted to solve America's problems by working with people across the aisle. Senator Hagan (D-NC), for example, suggested that their "bipartisan plan to finally put our fiscal house in order" would resolve differences and reach solutions that worked for the American people and the economy (USS, 2013i, p. S7280). Also, Senator Mikulski (D-MD) disclosed, "I extend my hand to the other side of the aisle, as I have done repeatedly during the year I have chaired this Committee of Appropriations. I have negotiated. I have compromised" (USS, 2013g, p. S7189). Unlike a handful of Republicans who had "no interest" in any negotiation discussions, Senator Murray (D-WA) suggested that CRS was willing to negotiate because that is how a democracy works (USS, 2013g). Similarly, Senator Shaheen (D-NH) told her colleagues that bipartisan efforts were important to moving the country forward and thinking about how to achieve agreement in the future (USS, 2013q, p. S7509). CRS's constitutive rhetoric invited policymakers to define themselves as working to better the country and the group became constituted through the mutual desire to not play political games. Collaboration, common ground, and compromise appeared to be key god-terms.

Furthermore, CRS encouraged their colleagues to do the honorable thing join them in ending the "manufactured crisis." CRS created a narrative suggesting that the Sensible Center could act freely in the world; therefore, the narrative accomplished Charland's third ideological effect, which states that freedom is an illusion. Senator Ayotte (R-NH) encouraged her colleagues "to get our act together" and create "a fiscally responsible plan that puts our Nation first and puts us on a path to economic security" (USS, 2013e p. S7131). Audiences are constrained by the narrative telos of constitutive rhetoric, and although they believe they can act freely, they have to act within the narrative's boundaries (Charland, 1987). CRS's narrative outlined solutions that were consistent with the characters' motives and suggested that the Sensible Center would choose the righteous path. For instance, Senator Heitkamp (D-ND) challenged "the good people in the House Republican caucus who have already recognized that the best thing to do would be to pass a clean CR" (USS, 2013g, p. S7203).

Second, CRS's constitutive rhetoric took the form of a narrative account of the government shutdown that included disparaging GACR affiliates. Specifically, CRS used devil-terms that vilified GACR and blamed them for their not taking the commonsense step and passing the Senate's bill. "The shutdown happened," Senator Murray (D-WA) argued, "because tea party Republicans and the Republicans who would not stand up to them chose brinkmanship over negotiations for six straight months" (USS, 2013j, p. S7335). CRS chastised GACR for being "irresponsible" and "unreasonable" (USS, 2013h, p. S7235), holding "our economy hostage" (USS, 2013c, S7014), deciding there was no value in a democracy (USS, 2013c), and engaged in "poison pill partisanship"

(USS, 2013d, p. S7086). Here we see a rhetoric that encouraged "union by some opposition shared in common" (Burke, 1973, p. 268).

In vilifying GACR, CRS raised objectives against the opposition and thus rhetorically constituted a group that was different from the common foe. Republicans, CRS argued, brought on the government shutdown and caused Americans to needlessly suffer. Rhetors, such as Senator Murray (D-WA), blamed GACR for harming the American system, which "breaks down when one side refuses to negotiate in advance of a crisis, and it falls apart when a minority refuses to allow the basic functions of our government to perform unless their demands are met" (USS, 2013j, p. S7320). In this narrative account, the story characterized GACR negatively, because they caused ranchers to lose everything (USS, 2013c), put the United States at a "heightened risk of terrorist attack" (USS, 2013d, p. S7081), and burdened our veterans because of partisan games (USS, 2013f). Senator Baldwin (D-WI) concluded that Republican leadership in the House only offered political games and brinksmanship and blamed GACR for small business owners' struggle to create jobs (USS, 2013h).

Identification by antithesis was part of CRS's polarizing discourse, because the rhetors identified an adversary and offered a course of action that could be taken against the antagonist. Charland (1987) maintains that a group needs more than a common enemy to identify with others, and identification by antithesis can move beyond this to include recognition of a common foe (Goehring & Dionisopoulos, 2013). In vilifying GACR, CRS promoted identification with an audience by virtue of a common foe. For instance, Senator Murray (D-WA), a former preschool teacher, expressed her disappointment with GACR's actions and compared them to bullies who do not play well in the sandbox

(USS, 2013e). She scolded her colleagues when she stated that Americans counted on legislators to "be responsible adults and to come to the table and work out our disagreements between each other" (USS, 2013e, p. S7110). In fact, according to CRS, Americans expected the House and Senate to work together; however, GACR engaged in too many "political games" that caused gridlock (USS, 2013h, p. S7229) and jeopardized "the full faith and credit of the United States of America" (USS, 2013l, p. S7372). Constitutively, CRS's public address relied partially on a well-defined foe that the group rallied against.

Furthermore, identification through antithesis can inspire congregation through segregation or through "union by some opposition shared in common" (Burke, 1973, p. 266). CRS suggested that GACR's "political posturing" created a dysfunctional democracy (USS, 2013d, p. S7086). A characteristic of constitutive rhetoric is that it offers a composition of who is involved and omitted by its characterizations (Goehring & Dionisopoulos, 2013). In this case, CRS juxtaposed their collective identity against the foe. Some senators argued that "the only reason this crisis continues is the House Republicans' refusal to take up the bill and pass it right now–a bill that will get our government open and running again" (USS, 2013i, p. S7288). In so doing, they blamed GACR for the "unnecessary inflicted crisis" because they were "holding the economy and critical services hostage to score political points" (USS, 2013j p. S7319).

In sum, CRS constructed a narrative that included god-terms and offered collaboration as the way to ending the government shutdown. Additionally, CRS used Devil-terms, including party blame, which criticized GACR and suggested that the Sensible Center should work together to stop the "villainous" GACR. CRS used phrases,

such as "political games," "zero sum politics," and "governing by press release," to describe GACR's actions. In debasing the opposition, CRS told the Sensible Center how not to act and called them to perform in a way that was unlike the common foe. CRS thus created a dichotomy and encouraged the Sensible Center to work together to end the "manufactured crisis."

Copula Tactics

First, a common copula tactic is a speaker drawing artificial dichotomies by suggesting that only two alternatives exist (Raum & Measell, 1974). Throughout the debate, senators presented two options when others may have been available, and therefore constrained the audience by the narrative telos of constitutive rhetoric. For instance Senator Murray (D-WA) stated, "We knew there were two options: conference or crisis—working together toward a bipartisan budget or lurching separately into a completely avoidable government shutdown" (USS, 2013j, p. S7319). Additionally, Senator Hirono (D-HI) challenged her House colleagues to stop the "ideological games and irresponsible rhetoric" and instead focus on "negotiating on fiscal issues and other policies" (USS, 2013j, p. S7345). Although the Sensible Center was led to believe that they could act freely, the interpellated individuals were encouraged to follow the logic of the narrative and respond appropriately to the situation.

The narrative offered two options: the Sensible Center could work with CRS to move the Senate's framework forward or they could work with GACR and cause America to default on its loans. For example, Senator Boxer (D-CA) explained that Congress could take two roads. The first road was a "bipartisan road" that got legislators into a budget conference and opened up the government. The second road, heading

"straight over the cliff," was a "partisan road" that would "bring a world of hurt on the people" (USS, 2013p, p. S7498). Senator Boxer suggested that the partisan path punished people who worked hard for the federal government, whereas the bipartisan road helped the country flourish. The audience could either support the CR or keep hurting Americans, because "everybody is losing when we cannot come together with a plan, with the resolve to do the job we are tasked to do, which is basic governing, and keeping the government open is basic governing" (USS, 2013i p. S7292). In each of the examples, the speaker explicitly stated that only two options existed, and although the Sensible Center was free to choose, the narrative encouraged "the people" to take the bipartisan path. It was up to the Sensible Center to "conclude the story to which they are identified" (Charland, 1987, p. 143).

Second, monolithic opposition is a copula tactic that occurs when a group attempts to portray the opposition as unreasonable (Raum & Measell, 1974). This message variable establishes the perception of a defined conflict in a political debate. In the narrative, for example, CRS depicted GACR as perpetuating partisan fighting and failing to legislate in good faith. This copula tactic worked in conjunction with artificial dichotomy to create a framework that delegitimized the out-group's motives. Senator Landrieu's (D-LA) believed that "some friends on the other side have taken hostage innocents . . . and demanded things that are way beyond their ability to use their political leverage" (USS, 2013l, p. S7391). The Sensible Center was configured by CRS, presented in the narrative, and should have accepted CRS's understanding of the world. While some in the audience may have originally voted against the CR, the narrative offered a way for individuals to reconstitute their identity and support a more

"reasonable" group. In so doing, CRS encouraged Republicans to "reconstitute the material world" and "insert" him or herself as "subjects-as-agents into the world" (Charland, 1987, p. 143)

In short, CRS portrayed themselves as seeking bipartisanship, vilified GACR, created an artificial dichotomy, and established a monolithic opposition while constituting a new group. In an effort to get the government working and let America be America again, Senator Mikulski (D-MD) suggested that her colleagues "must have a sense of urgency and come together on a program that ensures the United States of America pays its bills" (USS, 2013p, p. S7486). In order for this to happen, CRS acted as a polarizing agent who sought to interpellate an audience. CRS called on the audience "to follow narrative consistency and the motives through which they are constituted as audience members" (Charland, 1987, p. 147). I demonstrate below how this rhetorical approach to budget negotiations also contributed to CRS's strategy of affirmation.

Rhetorical Tactic: Strategy of Affirmation

King and Anderson (1971) maintain that for a rhetoric of polarization to occur a group must employ a strategy of affirmation that includes the selection of images that promote a sense of group identity and persuade the audience to accept a new concept. The strategy of affirmation, thus, can assist rhetors as they persuade people "by identifying your cause with his interests" (Burke, 1969, p. 24). In identifying with like-minded individuals, CRS confronted the implications of division including different political ideologies and approaches to governing. Senator Mikulski (D-MD), for instance, acknowledged that there were pragmatic people on both sides of the aisle who wanted to solve the problems facing America (USS, 2013e). I suggest that constitutive rhetoric and

the strategy of affirmation advanced a narrative that constituted a people who supported the Senate's CR.

First, CRS's narrative included words (e.g., America, Americans, constitution, democracy, Founding Fathers freedom, liberty, and safety) that encouraged consubstantiality between members of different political parties. Constitutive rhetoric, after all, finds common ground and sets up the conditions for a group identity (Cheng, 2012). For instance, Senator Klobuchar (D-MN) urged her colleagues to do the right thing for our democracy. "Let's get this done," Senator Klobuchar expressed. "We owe it to the people we were elected to serve, we owe it to the country. Let's end this government shutdown now" (USS, 2013d p. S7086). The "acts and events in a narrative are linked through identification arising from the narrative form" (Charland, 1987, p. 139). In using emphasizing similarities, CRS does what Burke (1973) calls "identification by unawareness" in that they united people who ordinarily had disparate interests. Most senators remained committed to passing policies that bettered America but ideological differences affected the policies they created. CRS called the Sensible Center into being by emphasizing actions and outcomes that were important to both parties. Senator Collins (R-ME), for instance, asked her members from both parties to come together and allow the government to reopen (USS, 2013i).

Furthermore, CRS used patriotic language that prompted a strong sense of group identity and encouraged potential believers to accept their interpretation of the world. A symbol that is placed within a narrative, according to Charland (1987), is ideological because the narrative creates "the illusion of merely revealing a unified and unproblematic subjectivity" and "because they occult the importance of discourse,

culture, and history in giving rise to subjectivity" (p. 139). For instance, Senator Warren (D-MA) declared, "In our democracy, government is just how we describe what we, the people, have already decided to do to together" (USS, 2013f, p. S7163). "Democracy" and other ideological terms became a technique for identification because they served to help the CRS overcome divisive political interests. Within the boundaries of the narrative, some Republicans and most Democrats were constituted as the Sensible Center and the new identity erased political differences. In uniting, the Sensible Center established that "we may not agree on much, but there does seem to be bipartisan agreement that the shutdown has to end" (USS, 2013g, p. S7190).

Second, CRS's narrative included words that described bipartisanship (e.g., negotiate, common ground, and compromise), and constitutive rhetoric helped CRS create a group identity that supported bipartisanship. Bipartisanship is important because a democratic government breaks down when one side refuses to negotiate. CRS's discourse offered an identification shift that encouraged compromise-seeking legislators to work on behalf of the American people. After all, "America is a middle-of-the-road nation," Senator Mikulski (D-MD) proclaimed, "we need an environment where the middle speaks" (USS, 2013q, p. S7517). Senator Hirono (D-HI) reminded everyone that "the work of the Senate is to debate and to deliberate with the goal of finding consensus solutions to the challenges our Nation faces" (USS, 2013h, p. S7227). CRS constituted the Sensible Center within the discourse of bipartisanship. The discourse enabled the group to reshape individual identities by inviting them to share in a rhetorical creation that connected them to larger political goals.

Additionally, CRS stressed the importance of cooperation. Senator Murkowski (R-AK) encouraged her colleagues to "do what we have signed up to do, which is to work together" (USS, 2013i, p. S7292-S7293), and Senator Shaheen (D-NH) shared her "hope that we are all going to come together to get this done in the next couple of days" (USS, 2013n, p. S7445). Similarly, Senator Boxer (D-CA) mentioned, "Then we sit down as friends, as colleagues across the aisle, and we negotiate all the important issues that Republicans care about and Democrats care about. I look forward to those negotiations" (USS, 2013l, p. S7409). CRS's constitutive rhetoric works within the context of polarizing rhetoric to establish a group, encourage action, and identify interest to which their rhetoric appeals.

Finally, the Affordable Care Act became a means for identification. Senator Boxer (D-CA) suggested that the "shutdown was brought to us by the Republicans" and blamed families' suffering on the House Republicans' "temper tantrum about the healthcare law, the Affordable Care Act" (USS, 2013j, p. S7326). In addition to debating the bill before, during, and after it became a law, discussion ensued during the government shutdown talks. During their floor speeches, senators had "made crystal clear what our positions are on ObamaCare at this point" (USS, 2013i, p. S7291). Burke (1973) suggests that rhetors can identify with an audience by establishing a rapport and stressing sympathies that they all hold in common. For instance, Senator Ayotte (R-NH) shared her desire to repeal ObamaCare, but she did not support her Republican colleagues' strategy to shut down the government as a way to address healthcare in America (USS, 2013g). Likewise, Senator Klobuchar (D-MN) admitted that she has some ideas for changing the law, too, but she wanted to debate the law in a "rational manner, not as part of poison pill

partisanship" (USS, 2013d, p. S7086) and Senator Collins (R-ME) acknowledged, "Even the staunchest advocate of ObamaCare, including the President himself, recognize the law is not perfect" (USS, 2013h, p. S7235).

In short, when using a strategy of affirmation, rhetors will select images that promote a sense of group identity. The analysis suggests that the Sensible Center was a group of bipartisan senators and CRS's constitutive rhetoric, along with the strategy of affirmation, told a story that brought a collective identity into existence. As CRS created identification between Democrats and Republicans, they constituted the Sensible Center. Specifically, symbols of "patriotism," words like "cooperation" and "collaboration," and the Affordable Care Act became key elements within CRS's audience design. To create group cohesion, rhetors may also use a strategy of subversion that includes images that undermine the common foe.

Rhetorical Tactic: Strategy of Subversion

A strategy of subversion, like the strategy of affirmation, must be present when a group uses the rhetoric of polarization (King & Anderson, 1971). The strategy of subversion occurs when a rhetor's motive is to weaken the common foe's credibility by selecting images and words that undermine the competing group's ethos (King & Anderson, 1971). The strategy of subversion can cause people to have little hope for the future and become dissatisfied with the status quo. When this situation arises, new constitutive discourses can be heard (Morus, 2007). CRS developed identification antithetically in that they placed themselves in opposition to the Tea Party, and their narrative created an identity that offered a different form of collective life. I argue that through the strategy of subversion, CRS framed the Tea Party as a common enemy,

because Tea Party supporters, according to Senator Murray (D-WA), were unwilling to join the Senate Democrats "in putting a stop to this madness" (USS, 2013j, p. S7319). As CRS undermined GACR's ethos, the group created a new reality that encouraged the Sensible Center to unite against the common foe. In so doing, the "evil" GACR became a character in the narrative. CRS urged the Sensible Center to oppose GACR's political actions because the opposition was "acting childish," "harming the country," and "out of touch with American's desires."

To begin, CRS suggested that the Tea Party's decision to not support the Senate's CR was a childish way to handle the situation and hurt America. Senator Boxer (D-CA) decried:

> Grow up. Curling up in a corner and having a temper tantrum with a blanket and your teddy bear is not the right way to deal with it. Open the government, sit down with us, and tell us what you want to fix. (USS, 2013l, p. S7408)

Additionally, Senator Murkowski (R-AK) believed that real people were hurting because House Republicans blocked legislators from being able to take "small, rational, reasonable steps" that would stop the madness (USS, 2013i, p. S7292). Those who found this discourse offensive would have rejected its constitutive appeals, because constitutive rhetoric happens only when members of a target audience feel invited into the rhetor's vision (Charland, 1987). As Republicans began supporting the Senate's CR, identification by antithesis facilitated consubstantiation.

Next, CRS attempted to weaken GACR's credibility by describing the opposition's approach to deliberation as inefficient and harming, Senator Heitkamp (D-ND) argued GACR was damaging "the greatest democratic body ever envisioned" (USS,

2013l, p. S7402). CRS maintained that GACR abandoned their congressional responsibilities when they refused to negotiate and created a manufactured crisis. Senator Heitkamp explained her disappointment with the Tea Party's deliberation by claiming that "we hear a lot about who is winning and who is losing politically. That is a sad day when that is the deliberation we have" (USS, 2013l, p. S7402). CRS also suggested that some Republicans were harming democracy and Americans. Senator Landrieu (D-LA) stated that "a group of people in the House" had "decided that for some reason they do not like democracy. I do not know what they would want to go back to, but it has taken 230-plus years to get here" (USS, 2013m, p. S7424). In fact, CRS maintained that GACR was playing with American lives and it was "an abdication of congressional responsibility" (USS, 2013d, p. S7081).

Furthermore, CRS implied that GACR was out of touch with Americans' desires. CRS described the opposition as threating America and this conception became a constitutive force. Senator Warren (D-MA), for instance, said that the Tea Party did not know what the American people wanted. The senator cautioned, "The American people don't want the extremist Republicans' bizarre vision of a future without government. They don't support it. Why? Because the American people know that without government, we would no longer be a great nation with a bright future" (USS, 2013f, p. S7163). Senator Murray (D-WA) also blamed the crisis on the House Republicans' refusal to take up the bill and pass it (USS, 2013g). A constitutive rhetoric defines the identity of those being appealed, and CRS's floor speeches described an "evil" that the Sensible Center could rally against.

In closing, "Constitutive rhetorics," according to Charland (1987), "leave the task of narrative closure to their constituted subjects" (p. 143). It was up to the Sensible Center "to conclude the story to which they are identified" (Charland, 1987, p. 143). Evidence suggests that constitutive rhetoric and strategies for polarizing rhetoric helped create a group identity and encouraged collective action. Senator Ayotte (R-NH), for instance, requested that members of both parties work together so that America does not continue moving from crisis to crisis (USS, 2013q). CRS's narrative offered collaboration, or bipartisanship, "as the ultimate point that must be reached in order to attain narrative closure" (Charland, 1987, p. 144). CRS's floor speeches called on the Sensible Center to follow the narrative.

Implications and Conclusion

Some of the best legislative decisions are reached through consensus (Snowe, 2013), but political segregation of Democrats and Republicans has created a gulf between the political elites. There was a time when bipartisan partnerships among policymakers produced notable policies, but bipartisanship began disappearing as repolarization rose in the 1970s (McCarty et al., 2006). Since the 1990s, parties' centers have moved toward ideological extremes, and "conservative" has become synonymous with Republican while "liberal" coincides with Democrat (McCarty et al., 2006). America's partisan political environment harms the Senate's standards for civility, hinders the passage of important legislation (Sinclair, 2000), and threatens established norms of accommodation and civil rivalry (Galston & Nivola, 2006). When the government shut down, the House and Senate needed to bridge the division between their budgets while legislating in a polarized political environment. This anlaysis expanded previous work on the political

elite's polarizing rhetoric by examining senators' floor speeches to understand how polarizing rhetoric can constitute a group identity and showed how constitutive rhetoric can encourage collective action.

During the shut down, the Senate and House became a legislative branch that was "no longer functioning, was stuck in gridlock and not able to get anything done" (USS, 2013q, p. S7506). As parties become more ideologically extreme, deliberation and compromise may become scarce. Communication scholars, therefore, must study senators' polarizing rhetoric to understand how it is strategically used to constitute a group identity. After all, political judgments in the Senate are part of a dynamic rhetorical process, and rhetoric can enable effective communication between policymakers while also establishing and maintaining a deliberative system (Dryzek, 2010). To this end, the government shutdown offered a context for understanding how polarizing rhetoric and constitutive rhetoric can help Democrats and Republicans transcend party lines and fix eroded "bonds that once helped produce political consensus" (Balz, 2013). Broadly, this chapter's findings contribute to our understanding of constitutive rhetoric and the rhetoric of polarization.

First, this analysis expanded earlier work on constitutive rhetoric by focusing on senators' floor speeches and investigating how constitutive rhetoric encourages policymaking. Whereas previous discussions of constitutive rhetoric have foucsed on political manifests (Charland, 1987), written word (Bacon, 2007; Goehring & Dionisopoulos, 2013), presidential discourse (Zagacki, 2007), technology (Gruber, 2014; Stein, 2002), and dispora (Drzewiecka, 2002), I argued that constitutive rhetoric helped rhetors create a bipartisan reality that combated Congress's partisan environment. I

suggested that constitutive rhetoric called the Sensible Center into being and positioned the audience toward bipartisan action in the physical world. For CRS's constitutive rhetoric to be considered successful, the Sensible Center had to be constitued as a unified people who lived inside the narrative and the rhetoric that constructed them had to achieve the narrative's conclusion.

Additionally, constitutive rhetoric leaves a narrative's resolution up to the people who have achieved consubstantiality. It is significant that during a time when "confrontation remains commonplace and true compromise is rare" (Balz, 2013), CRS interpellated an audience comprised of members of both parties. Since the Sensible Center did not exist in real life, CRS rhetorically composed the "Sensible Center" and described the individuals as people who were patriots, willing to aside partisan politics, come together, and collaborate. This label coincided with an identity of "a people" that Senator Mikulski (D-MD) rhetorically constructed. I suggested that legislators who supported the Senate's CR became part of a collective "we" that emerged as a rhetorically constructed bipartisan group. The outcome of the shutdown indicated that many political elites, regardless of their political persuasion, wanted to put partisan politics aside to pass a budget that would reopen the federal government. For instance, Senator Mikulski (D-MD) encouraged her colleagues to work honestly by rolling up their sleeves and tackling big problems together rather than retreating into their respective corners (USS, 2013o).

Second, this analysis built on the rhetoric of polariziation by examining how polarizing rhetoric can constitute a group identity. Results suggested that message variables, strategies of affirmation, and subversion permit rhetors to weave calls for

bipartisanship into their group identity and vilify colleagues who do not cooperate. The outcome of the shutdown proposed that many political elites, regardless of their political persuasion, wanted to put partisan politics aside. After all, according to Senator Murray (D-WA) America's political "system was designed to push both sides toward negotiations in a divided government, to encourage negotiation and movement toward common ground" (USS, 2013j, p. S7320). Polarizing rhetoric, which included party blame, became a rhetorical tool for creating a group identity that encouraged collective action.

Furthermore, findings suggest that polarizing rhetoric can actually encourage bipartisanship. The Sensible Center, after all, included Republicans and Democrats who united against a common foe. Snowe (2013) suggests that bipartisanship is "achieved when members of both parties are involved in making legislation from the beginning, in drafting the law, participating in the amendment process in the committee, and collaborating to ensure its passage" (p. 230). Sinclair (2008) describes bipartisanship as the opposite of polarization. Senators' floor speeches indicated that polarizing rhetoric can actually be inclusive. Inclusivity and bipartisan cooperation are essential tools for policymaking, especially when a decision requires that policymakers alter their long-term beliefs (Galston & Nivola, 2006). Democracy is about disagreement and displays of bipartisanship yield centrist results (Galston & Nivola, 2006). The government is also more likely to craft and finalize policies when moderate legislators are at the bargaining table (Binder, 2003). Therefore, many elevate bipartisanship as a more constructive and responsible basis for policymaking (Snowe, 2013).

In closing, during a time when the U.S. Senate faced historically low approval ratings, the self-inflicted shut down offered an opportunity for senators to encourage bipartisanship and forge relationships that may have resulted in future bipartisan deal-making. At the start of the 2013 legislative session, female senators shared their desire to usher in a new era of bipartisanship (Roberts, 2013). The women senators' collaborative approach restored balance to the legislative process and suggested that some senators were willing to put their political affiliation aside and legislate in good faith. As evidence of this, Senator Klobuchar (D-MN) wrote in an op-ed, "During a time when Congress is synonymous with gridlock and obstructionism, the women are showing we can move past the partisanship, roll up our sleeves and get things done" (Klobuchar, 2014). Despite all the chatter about partisanship and gridlock, the Senate's women forged a bipartisan path forward and used the media to persuade their colleagues to join their cross-party efforts. This conversation about polarization continues in the next chapter as I examine media texts to better understand the bipartisan narrative that news outlets and women senators collectively constructed.

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL EVENTS, ACTORS, ISSUES

Traditionally, legislators mount partisan media campaigns that frame issues and elevate problems on the agenda (Malecha & Reagan, 2012). Framing offers a way to describe the power of a communication text and is a rhetorical strategy that distinguishes certain words and symbols from the rest of the news (Entman, 2003). Entman (2003) defines framing as "selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution" (p. 417). Senators, for instance, can influence the terms of a debate through the language they use while delivering floor speeches, writing op-ed pieces, and appearing on television news programs (Sinclair, 1989). While covering the government shutdown, the news media produced numerous stories about the women in the Senate overcoming partisanship and offering a way to reopen the government (Camia, 2013; Chavez, 2013; K. Hunt, 2013; Newton-Small, 2013a, 2013b; Timm, 2013; Weisman & Steinhauer, 2013). In so doing, some journalists framed the debate by organizing a storyline that provided meaning to an unfolding series of events. For instance, as the women of the Senate became more involved in the budget negotiations, journalists began describing women's approaches to governing as collaborative and sensible (Bassett, 2013).

Additionally, the political elite will use the news media to shape a political conversation, and during the government shutdown, politicians attributed the reopening of the federal government to the women senators. President George W. Bush told Nicolle Wallace that "they [women] might save the country" (Timm, 2013). Similarly, Senator

McCain (R-AZ) and Senator Pryor (D-AR) said that the women of the Senate "can take

most of the credit for driving the compromise" (Bassett, 2013, para. 1). The women of

the Senate agreed, and during their interactions with the news media, they shared that

"we [women of the Senate] try to have a zone of civility that even if we disagree we're

not disagreeable with each other" (Bashir, 2013). Senator Klobuchar (D-MN) affirmed

Senator Mikulski's (D-MD) opinion when she told *NBC News* that the women of the

Senate "tend to have a friendship that means you trust each other when it comes to some

really hard issues and negotiations" (K. Hunt, 2013). These examples suggest that

politicians used the media to begin a conversation about trust, friendship, and

bipartisanship in Congress.

In addition to telling stories of friendship, the media offered a medium through

which the Senate's women could launch their public relations campaign. When the

occasion arises, legislators carefully craft a message's language and target appeals so that

they can draw wide support (Sellers, 2010). Specifically, when politicians go public they

form a congressional coalition that promotes a preferred set of issues. For example, while

appearing on Senator Collins (R-ME) and Senator Klobuchar (D-MN) went on CNN's

State of the Union to discuss their solutions to the government shutdown (Crowley,

2013). Similarly, Senator Collins, Senator Murkowski (R-AK), and Senator Ayotte (R-

NH) appeared on NBC's *Today* and tried to influence the government shutdown policy

debate by advocating that their colleagues move beyond partisan bickering and resolve

the issue for the country (Kopan, 2013).

Making the news is a constructive component of the policymaking process, and

most politicians seize any opportunity for media exposure (Sinclair, 1989). The news

media can help senators speed up the political process by identifying the cause of a particular event and assessing the solution(s) needed to fix a problem (Cook, 2000). As a result, senators can link their communication efforts to their colleagues by using publicity to set an agenda (Malecha & Reagan, 2012). Press coverage also helps legislators focus the media's attention on particular issues, problems, and solutions (Cook, 2000). Therefore, the news media's coverage of senators' public relations campaigns may spark collective interest in a plan and shape the public narrative.

This chapter examines how senators' public relations campaigns contributed to a narrative that shaped an audience's understanding of a political event. According to Fisher (1984), humans are natural storytellers, *homo narrans*, and the stories people share are a way to establish a meaningful life-world, or a way of "relating a truth about human condition" (p. 6). The news media and politicians became storytellers when they used symbols to create and communicate stories that gave order to human experience. These stories could "induce others to dwell in them to establish ways of living in common, in communities in which there is sanction for the story that constitutes one's life" (Fisher, 1984, p. 6). The narrative may have enabled people to understand others' actions because it made a situation meaningful for communities and cultures (Fisher, 1984). After all, narratives, according to Fisher, offer a means for studying a story's socially and politically consequential discourse.

This chapter studies the rhetorical communication appearing in the news media during the 2013 government shutdown. To accomplish this task, I analyze conversations about the government shutdown occurring in the news from October 1— October 16, 2013. I study the media texts to understand how journalists framed the

government shutdown dispute as a struggle for bipartisanship. Specifically, I explore the issues, political actors, and solutions that arose during the 2013 government shutdown. I argue that in framing the shutdown in a particular way and going public, policymakers and the media offered a politically consequential narrative. I also suggest that in highlighting women senators' bipartisanship, the news media transformed the partisan government shutdown debate into a story about relationships and cooperation. This chapter begins by providing background information on the government shutdown. I then discuss the intersection of policymakers and the news media by offering a review of media framing and narrative theory literatures. Thereafter, I analyze media texts to understand how the news media crafted a narrative about the government shutdown. The chapter concludes by detailing the study's findings and advancing implications.

Background: The News Media and the Government Shutdown

Journalists can generate content that is shocking or titillating, but when a story affects everyone, everyone should listen. The consequences of the government shutdown were far reaching; Senator Feinstein (D-CA) told a Bay Area reporter, "This shutdown has affected people much more deeply than the one 17 years ago, and there's a reason. More people in a family have to work to pay bills" (Mathai, 2013). As the news outlets covered the government shutdown, they framed the debate in partisan and bipartisan terms. Congress's polarization, a group of bipartisan senators, and women senators contributed to the government shutdown narrative.

First, some argued that the government shutdown was the result of a dangerously broken political system that was mired in chronic partisan dysfunction. Some news outlets attributed the "manufactured crisis" to partisanship in Washington. For instance,

the *Wall Street Journal* cited a poll that found that the American public had little faith in Congress's ability to oversee America's economy (King, 2013). Others proposed that Congress was so polarized that there was not "much room left at the edges of the ideological continuum" (J. Green, 2013, para. 4). Moreover, J. Green (2013) attributed the government shutdown to a "decades-long shift in the American political landscape" (para. 3), and Peralta (2013) argued that the government shutdown was the result of "weeks of partisan bickering and a very public airing of deep divisions within the Republican Party" (para. 2).

Instead of blaming Congress in general, some journalists blamed Republican conservatives in particular. For instance, Weisman and Peters (2013) reported, "The result of the impasse that threatened the nation's credit rating was a near total defeat for Republican conservatives, who had engineered the budget impasse as a way to strip the new healthcare law of funding" (para. 8). Additionally, McAuliff (2013) cited Senator Ayotte's (R-NH) floor speech as evidence that some members of the Republican Party disagreed with their colleagues' use of the Affordable Care Act as a bargaining chip.

Second, despite all the gloom, some in the news media discussed the government shutdown in terms of bipartisanship and credited the government's reopening to "the tight, bipartisan bonds that these women [senators] have formed" (Newton-Small, 2013a, para. 1). The news media framed the narrative positively while discussing the strategies the women senators used to push through the gridlock. For instance, Chavez (2013) wrote, "Women from both sides of the aisle stepped into the breach, coming together to lead our nation toward a solution" (para. 1). According to Chavez, the Senate's women put "aside their ideological differences" to "find a sensible, workable solution that paved

the way for an end of the impasse" (para. 3). While telling the story, some journalists described the women senators as collaborative (Steenland, 2013), refraining from partisan blame (Newton-Small, 2013b), being less concerned with ego, and wanting to find common ground (Timm, 2013). Additionally, Chavez described the women senators as bringing a "practical, collaborative approach . . . to problem solving" in an effort to restore "balance to the legislative process and ensuring that compromise truly means finding a solution that a majority can agree on" (para. 7).

In addition to explaining their approaches to governing, the news media examined the women's relationships. As evidence of this, S. Hunt (2013) wrote, "Rather than commendation, these women sought resolution. Rather than settle scores, they sat down together. Rather than stick with their teams, they found common ground for common good" (para. 4). Likewise, Newton-Small (2013a) credited the reopening of the federal government to the "bipartisan bonds these women have formed" (para. 1). Press accounts of the policy debate also vivified the story by supplying details and pictures of the senators collaborating. Others reported that the bipartisan talks began when most of the Senate's 20 women gathered for pizza, salad, and wine in Senator Shaheen's (D-NH) office (Newton-Small, 2013b; Weisman & Steinhauer, 2013).

In short, during the government shutdown, the news media offered a narrative that structured a political event and provided the audience with a common conception of the major events, solutions, and people involved. By weaving together a series of events, the story's structure personalized the policy debate and included protagonists who disrupted the social order. Seen from this perspective, the audience could infer that the women in

the Senate were willing to minimize their ideological differences for the betterment of the country.

U.S. Senators and the News Media

To maintain their status as senators, policymakers must make "news" by a journalist's definition of the term (Matthews, 1960). To do so, senators say certain things on the floor (Matthews, 1960) or embark on media tours that help them to frame the public debate (Swers, 2013). Also, the national press corps decides which legislators to use as sources for their congressional stories (Shellers & Schaffner, 2007) and whether an event is interesting enough to be considered news (Cook, 2000). As journalists select stories and policymakers to cover, elected officials do what they can to receive favorable coverage (Shellers & Schaffner, 2007). Compared to their colleagues in the House, senators have more opportunities for individual action and to be seen in the news (Cook, 2005). In the following section, I discuss why senators use the television to disseminate their messages, what happens when they go public, and I explore media framing.

Senators and Television Coverage

Press coverage is valuable because each sound bite and interview can help senators secure re-election, achieve their policy goals, or obtain their leadership ambitions. Therefore, senators strategically decide when they want to interact with journalists (Cook, 2000). For example, senators may choose to use external media when they want to make an issue salient and increase pressure on Congress to address an issue (Arnold, 1990). The political elite will use a variety of mediums to reach the American people and their colleagues, including television, press conferences, and stakeouts. The media and senators then work together to raise an issue and persuade the public to

support a particular solution (Cook, 2000). The news media can also help policymakers gain collective action by "concentrating the attention of distractible colleagues on their preferred issues and alternatives and protecting them from the potentially negative consequences of their votes" (Cook, 2005, p. 154).

When television producers need spokespeople on issues, they frequently ask senators to become visibly involved with the subject (Sinclair, 1989). There are many reasons why senators conduct their business in front of the television camera. For example, the television is multimodal, meaning it is visual and auditory, and helps viewers easily comprehend the message. Consequently, the television makes it easier for the audience to decipher the meaning of a message, to recall the content, and can invite a strong emotional reaction (Jamieson, 1992). Audiences also find stories on television "more attention-grabbing, emotional, surprising, and vivid than is the case with print" (Cook, 2000, p. 175).

Multiple reasons exist as to why senators devote extensive time and resources to winning press coverage. Politicians use the media as a way to further their policy goals and strengthen their electoral fortunes (Ansolabehere, Behr, & Iyengar, 1993). They may also use press coverage to improve their reputations (Cook, 1989) and prolong the attention an issue receives (Walker, 1977). Lawmakers can shape news content and influence how Americans think about political issues (Ansolabehere et al., 1993). Senators have an opportunity to publicize an issue, shape the policy debate, and arouse collective action (Sinclair, 1989). The media's coverage of a particular message shifts attention to a favorable reading of the issue and helps legislators gain support for the

policy outcome being advocated (Sellers, 2010). Therefore, the television can be a useful medium for focusing attention on specific issues and solutions (Cook, 2000).

Furthermore, senators will use the news media as a way to bolster their reputations. For instance, a junior legislator may seek out an appearance on a nightly news show because it is a valuable resource for building his or her credibility and translating his or her efforts into news (Cook, 2005). Whereas new members of Congress are interested in hometown news coverage, ranking members of important committees often pursue national media so they can bring nationwide attention to their policy-oriented committee (Loomis, 1988). Senators do this by taking the issue to the public.

Going Public

Modern technology, especially television, has made it possible for politicians to go public. Public relations campaigns enable policymakers to increase their media profile, gain credibility with constituents, and control the conversation (Swers, 2013). Since a journalist's decision to disseminate a politician's message may determine that politician's success, it is important that scholars understand the interaction between politicians and the press (Sellers, 2010). When senators go public, they take the issue to the people and enlist constituents' support while also pressuring their colleagues to act. Consequently, senators summon the public to help them deal with other members of Congress. Although taking an issue public can be merely superfluous, it does provide substance to a political debate.

There are a few reasons why politicians go public. First, political parties mount public campaigns because they want to disseminate a cohesive message that distinguishes them from the other party, activates their party's base, and inspires donations (Malecha &

Reagan, 2012). Second, in going public, elected officials communicate with and pressure

their colleagues to support an initiative (Groeling & Kernell, 2000). Going public

requires the creation of messages that target particular audiences and offers a way for

policymakers to enlist the public's support (Kernell, 2007). For instance, during the

government shutdown, Senator Klobuchar (D-MN) told Rachel Maddow that her

colleagues should support the bipartisan bill because it had "no bells and whistles, no

extraneous legislation" (Maddow, 2013). Likewise, Senator Collins (R-ME) made her

rounds on Sunday morning talk shows to discuss her three-point plan to reopen the

federal government. She stated, "I ask my colleagues to take a close look at the plan we

have put forward. It is a reasonable approach" (Emanuel, 2013, para. 8). Third, senators

go public because they want to stimulate floor activity by encouraging their colleagues to

act (Sinclair, 1989). Politicians may win support for a policy if they use rhetoric,

imagery, and appearance to nurture public support (Ansolabehere et al., 1993).

Examining presidents' promotions of their policies can help researchers

understand how and why senators use the media to persuade the American public and the

political elite to support their legislation. Presidents often begin their initiatives with

public appeals when the opposition controls Congress (Kernell, 2007). The president will

launch a public campaign to build support for a new program, promote policies to the

American people, and/or define the terms of a policy issue (Beasley, 2010; Kernell, 1997;

Sinclair, 1989). While pressuring Congress, presidents will make the topic appeal to

diverse viewpoints to garner support from both parties (Malecha & Reagan, 2012).

Presidents appeal for public support in their public addresses, during their public

appearances, and throughout their domestic and international travels. In addition to their

words, presidents may use visual images to convey information to the audience. For example, the location of the speech and the circumstances all contribute to the message's efficacy (Kernell, 2007). In going public, presidents attempts to register public opinion, appeal to the public, and pressure political actors to support his or her request (Groeling & Kernell, 2000).

Journalists are gatekeepers of the news, because they decide what incidents to cover (Cook, 1989), promote a leader's political agenda, and accelerate the speed of decision-making (Wolfsfeld, 2001). Therefore, politicians structure their public campaigns so that the message meets the guidelines that journalists follow when writing news stories (Sellers, 2010). A politician's public relations campaign "rises and falls with the narratives people notice" (Bennett & Edelman, 1985, p. 161). Political issues are always in flux and are constantly contributing to national conversations, and the frame that a journalist applies to a story is a powerful rhetorical resource.

Media Framing

Media framing refers to the words, presentation styles, phrases, and images that a speaker, such as a politician or journalist, uses when relaying information about an issue or event to an audience (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987). Thus, media framing is "a central organizing idea or storyline that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, p. 143). The frame reveals how a speaker sees the topic and the side he or she favors (Entman, 2007).

First, media framing helps journalists classify and package information that creates our everyday realities; consequently, they offer schemes for interpreting events (Entman, 1993). Since a frame reflects a perceived reality and makes the topic salient,

frames can help reporters offer the audience a schema for interpreting an event (Entman, 1993). According to Crocker, Fiske, and Taylor (1984), "A scheme is an abstract or generic knowledge structure, stored in memory, that specifies the defining features and relevant attributes of some stimulus domain, and the interrelation among those attributes" (p. 197). Schemas influence how we perceive information, remember content, and relate to new and old information. For instance, the news media may leave part of a story open for interpretation and audiences fill in the gap using their existing schemas (Entman, 2004). Moreover, schemas help an audience infer details that a journalist has not discussed (Jamieson, 1992). Frames support journalists' efforts to tell a dramatic story in which politicians are the performers, the reader is the audience, and the resulting storyline encourages the audience to conclude who is fit for governing.

Second, to study the media's framing of an issue, scholars examine the relationship between a specific issue, event, and political actors (Entman, 2004). A politically-driven news story also identifies a problem, describes a narrative of action, identifies the protagonist and juxtaposes him or her against another person, and creates a resolution (Jamieson & Campbell, 1992). In so doing, the news media contrasts policymakers' values and actions and offers details that give texture to politicians' identities. Frames can help journalists define which politicians are involved in the story and guide the public's attributions of responsibility (Cook, 1989). For instance, substantive news frames define effects or conditions as problematic, identify causes, convey a moral judgment of those involved in the framed matter, and endorse remedies or improvements to problematic situation (Entman, 2004). The media assumes a framing responsibility each time a journalist covers a story in a way that blames or praises

someone (Ansolabehere et al., 1993). Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley (1997) find that "the choices journalists make about how to cover a story . . . can result in substantially different portrayals of the very same event and the broader controversy it represents" (p. 572). This is because frames conceptualize a writer's or a speaker's interpretation of an issue (Chong & Druckman, 2007b) and organize his or her reality (Entman, 1993). Given this, framing can be situated within the broader democratic process by linking politicians to the public through the mass media (Chong & Druckman, 2007a).

Third, frames emphasize information about a topic that is the subject of communication, because the device calls attention to and conceals particular aspects of a reality. Frames, therefore, can make a topic noticeable and meaningful (Entman, 1993). Hanggli and Kriesi (2010) suggest that the frame building process is a "reality-constructing activity in which the political elite takes the lead" (p. 144). When issues are discussed in the media, voters allocate responsibility and blame (Ansolabehere et al., 1993). For instance, networks will frame a subject in either "episodic" or "thematic" terms. The episodic frame tells a story in terms of specific events whereas the thematic frame tells the story in general terms (Iyengar & Simon, 1997). During the crisis in the Gulf, for example, viewers received episodic coverage of the turmoil, because the news stories typically provided viewers with the next occurrence in the confrontation (Iyengar & Simon, 1997). Because an audience will attribute responsibility for a problem to a particular individual, policymakers will distance themselves from an unfavorable policy agenda or claim responsibility for a policy that has a satisfactory outcome (Ansolabehere et al., 1993).

Fourth, media framing is a concept that may acquire a different meaning depending on who is employing the term (Entman, 2004). For instance, policymakers may frame their answers to journalists' questions, analyze a topic, or provide information about a policy all in an attempt to control a political debate (Nelson et al., 1997). Politicians may also engage their adversaries in a conversation so they can frame the terms of the debate (Jerit, 2008). In an effort to gain public support, legislators may choose to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of a particular policy (Jerit, 2008).

To summarize, the news media is central to politicians' work, because journalists enable policymakers to talk with each other outside of Capitol Hill. The interactions among policymakers and the news media can affect the quality of the policy debate and the information that the public receives about the topic. After all, the news media renders a particular event as meaningful and defines the issue according to a single perspective. While framing a story, the news media focuses attention on a particular worldview, creates or reinforces the audience's fears and hopes, and endorses an interpretation of an event (Entman, 2004). The construction and impact of media frames is a major area of political communication research, because "frames call attention to some aspects of reality while obscuring other elements, which might lead audiences to have different reactions" (Entman, 1993, p. 55). Consequently, the dynamics of strategic communication in congressional policymaking is significant to study, as is how senators hope to shape news coverage and thereby a policy agenda. In this chapter, I explain how the news media and senators used framing as a rhetorical tool to define issues for the public and emphasize different components of a policy narrative. To do so, I first examine how media framing helped construct the government shutdown narrative, and

second, I situate media framing within the broader democratic process that links

politicians to the public through the mass media.

The Narrative Approach

Rhetoric offers a means for practical reasoning in public decision-making.

Experts become storytellers and the audience participates in the meaning formation of the

stories (Fisher, 1984). Because rival stories are often shared, a story is a form of

rhetorical communication that implies an audience and says something about their world

(Fisher, 1984). Bennett and Edelman (1985) argue, "Stories are among the most universal

means of presenting human events" (p. 156). Narratives offer an interpretation of an

event and "can motivate the belief and action of outsiders toward the actors and events

caught up in its plot" (Bennett & Edelman, 1985, p. 156). Researchers may study a

narrative to understand its "sequence and meaning for those who live, create, or interpret

them" (Fisher, 1984, p. 2). To do so, I analyze two sets of media text: conversations

occurring in the media and women senators' media interviews.

The narrative approach to studying human communication is described as a

paradigm "because of the universal character of narrative" (Rowland, 1987, p. 265). Our

narrative paradigm occurs when symbols, signs of consubstantiality, and good reasons

interact (Fisher, 1984). When all three requirements are in place, scholars can use

narrative theory to "account for *how* people come to adopt stories that guide behavior"

(Fisher, 1985, p. 348, emphasis in original). Specifically, Fisher (1984) offers five

presuppositions that structure the narrative paradigm: humans are storytellers; good

reasons shape human decision-making and communication; the creation and use of good

reasons are found in history; biography, culture, and character; the nation of persons as narrative beings determines rationality; and a set of stories shapes the way we live in the world (p. 8). The narrative paradigm, therefore, "celebrates human beings, and it does this by reaffirming their nature as storytellers" (Fisher, 1989, p. 56). When a compelling story provides a rationale for decision and action, the narrative can constrain and encourage a particular behavior (Fisher, 1985).

Narrative rationality, including narrative probability and narrative fidelity, is of particular importance, because narrative rationality provides the means for assessing a story's merit (Fisher, 1985). An audience culturally acquires the means for evaluating narrative rationality, and narratives help us understand others' actions. "A rhetorical narrative," according to Lucaites and Condit (1985), "must be consistent with itself as well as with the larger discourse of which it is only a part" (p. 95). Therefore, when we hear a narrative, we are aware of narrative probability, or "what constitutes a coherent story," and narrative fidelity, which assesses whether a story rings true with the other stories we know to be true (Fisher, 1984). Since a message's desirability is determined by tests of narrative rationality, some stories are more coherent than others and may ring true in different ways (Fisher, 1985). A text can be described as having good reasons if it contains "elements that give warrants for believing or acting in accord with the message fostered by the text" (Fisher, 1985, p. 357). When we listen to a news story, for instance, our values help us analyze the text in a variety of ways. An internal contradiction can undermine a story's probability, because a rhetorical narrative should be consistent with an audience's worldview and logical expectations (Lucaites & Condit, 1985). According

to Fisher (1984), all people have the ability to be rational in the narrative paradigm and have the option to not participate in creating a narrative.

In sum, the news media creates narratives by weaving together information provided by members of an elite political network. Journalists maintain a powerful position because the questions they ask and the language they use can frame the narrative. CNN's Ashleigh Benfield told Senator Boxer (D-CA), "We're [journalists] the only people out there who have the voice to ask for the people out there who don't and they're livid" (Banfield, 2013). And rightfully so; for the second time in three years, America was on the brink of financial default. According to Entman (2004), frames include issues, political evidences, and actors (e.g., politicians, political leaders, and groups). I subsequently explore these three categories as they relate to the media's framing of the government shutdown. I argue that in highlighting women senators' bipartisanship, the news media transformed the partisan government shutdown debate into a story about relationships and cooperation.

<center>The Issue: The Blame Frame</center>

A narrative's political world features "heroes and villains, deserving and undeserving people, and a set of public politics that are rationalized by the construction of social problems for which they become solutions" (Bennett & Edelman, 1985, p. 159). As a story emerges, the news media looks for characteristics that make a story newsworthy, and once the problem is discovered, news outlets will cover the same issue (Baumgartner, Jones, & Leech, 1997). During the government shutdown, the American public was exposed to the traditional narrative of political gridlock caused by uncompromising politicians. In the following section, I discuss two problems that the

news media and policymakers "discovered" during the government shutdown: tea party

Republicans' efforts to defund the Affordable Care Act and partisanship.

Republicans' Defunding Strategy

Frames diagnose a problem, evaluate it, and prescribe a solution. The news media

and women senators identified the Republicans' defunding strategy as a major cause of

the government shutdown. For instance, Senator Stabenow (D-MI) told reporters that she

attributed the government's closure to "a minority of the minority of the minority in the

House which has said no we want to add to that the repeal of affordable health insurance

for up to 30 million people" (Jones & Cupp, 2013). In identifying the causal agent, the

narrative she constructed included a cost benefit analysis. According to the senator, the

defunding strategy caused the government to shut down. She and some of her colleagues,

such as Senator Mikulski (D-MD), offered an evaluation of the causal agent and its

effects. Senator Mikulski described tea party Republicans' approaches to governing as a

"backward looking approach" because they wanted to defund ObamaCare, which was

yesterday (Bashir, 2013). The senator suggested that Republicans caused the shut down

and were taking America back in time.

The success of the blame frame was contingent upon whether a receiver accepted

the claim and the conclusions that he or she drew. During the framing process,

communicators make judgments about what to add to a conversation and the frame

organizes their belief system. For instance, Senator Heitkamp (D-ND) described the

defunding strategy as a "complete overreach" (Hayes, 2013). Some Republicans, such as

Senator Ayotte (R-NH), disagreed with their party's actions and offered a frame that countered their colleagues' realities. Senator Ayotte admitted to not supporting Obamacare; she publicized, "I didn't think that the defunding strategy was a winning strategy from the beginning" (Morales, 2013). Senator Ayotte described her Republican colleagues' defunding strategy as a "zero-sum strategy, because she believed that legislators "now have a zero-sum response" and was "tired of the politics on both sides" (Schieffer, 2013). As the senator shared her perspective, she made the issue more prominent on the external media's agenda and more salient to the public. If the audience agreed with the frame that she offered—that the Republicans caused the government shutdown—then she successfully put pressure on Congress to address the issue and increased the costs associated with individual members who did not support her argument. In so doing, she contributed to a blame frame narrative that rallied the ideological moderates to engage in further action.

During the shutdown, three other Republican women joined Senator Ayotte (R-NH) as defectors because they disagreed with the Republican Party's "losing strategy." The decision to be a defector is strategic, because a politician can benefit from disagreeing with her or his party's message (Sellers, 2010). For example, Senator Ayotte described the tea party Republicans' tactics as "not a winning strategy" (McAuliff, 2013, para. 1). Also, when asked about the effect Senator Cruz (R-TX) had on the Republican Party, Senator Ayotte admitted to disagreeing with his strategy, for she believed that "the defunding strategy was a failing strategy from the beginning" (Schieffer, 2013). In promoting a message that affirmed her Democratic colleagues' opinions, Senator Ayotte strengthened her reputation as a bipartisan legislator and offered a public judgment.

Hoping to persuade voters and other elected officials to focus on certain issues and arguments, the women of the Senate shared their worldviews and opposed their adversaries' resolve to repeal the Affordable Care Act. For instance, Bay Area reporter Raj Mathai asked Senator Feinstein (D-CA) to place blame. He prompted her by saying:

> It's pretty clear that the tea party has led all of this or at least much of this in terms of what's happened in the last few weeks maybe even the last few months. Is there any blame on President Obama and the Democratic side of this?. (Mathai, 2013)

Senator Feinstein said the shutdown was the result of tea party Republicans in the House not getting their way (Mathai, 2013). The narrative became a powerful means for communicating her interpretation of a complex event, and the resulting frame may have harmed the Republican Party's reputation. Moreover, in identifying the specific group responsible for the shutdown, the news media and women senators appealed for public support.

Framing has important implications for political narratives because a frame illuminates some aspects of a reality. Senator Boxer (D-CA) contributed to the news media's blame frame by focusing the audience's attention on favorable issues and making it more likely that the voters would evaluate her bipartisan group positively. For instance, Senator Boxer told Ashleigh Banfield:

> Because he wrote a healthcare bill along with Republicans and Democrats and it passed three and a half years ago and the Republicans don't like it. They are willing not only to shut down the government but to default, default on America's credit. (Banfield, 2013)

By saying that the defunding strategy caused the shutdown, Senator Boxer shaped the boundaries of the discussion. The senator was not alone; journalists also attributed the first government shutdown in 17 years to Republicans' inabilities to compromise (Peralta, 2013). The news media and the senator called attention to particular aspects of the problem and governed within the news.

In addition to arguing that the defunding strategy caused the government shutdown, the storyline allowed senators to promote their beliefs before the American public. For example, Senator Stabenow (D-MI) stated, "They've [minority in House] decided to hijack the recovery of the economy basically saying we're not gonna allow the government to exist" ("Stabenow weighs in," 2013). She stated that their approach "makes absolutely no sense and it really threatens our democracy" ("Stabenow weighs in," 2013). Politicians frame a story in a particular way to try to define issues to gain political advantage. Also, when the federal government reopened, journalists wrote that "Republicans who had engineered the budget impasse as a way to strip the new healthcare law of funding" conceded defeat (Weisman & Parker, 2013b, para. 8). In terms of strategic communication, the blame frame sought to attract greater support from target audiences, including the political elite, party activists, and voters.

Moreover, when lawmakers initiate a public relations campaign, they create messages that appeal to diverse audiences and may focus the message on issues that support the group's efforts to have a favorable reputation (Sellers, 2010). For instance, Senator Boxer (D-CA) used her past experiences to organize her storyline and offer meaning to the unfolding events. She told the audience that she had served with five presidents and had never seen Republicans or Democrats say "we're gonna take our

marbles and shut down this government and maybe even default because we don't want people to get healthcare" (Banfield, 2013). Her blame frame conceptualized her thoughts on the issue, organized her reality, and affected the audience's interpretation of the cause of the problem. By suggesting that they did not cause the problem, the women senators encouraged the audience to adopt their opinions as standards for evaluating the political elite. In this example, Senator Boxer suggested that the villains were bad policymakers because they let their opinions about the Affordable Care Act delay deliberation.

Politicians possess varying degrees of influence over the legislative agenda, and if senators talk about a particular message frequently, the message is likely to attract attention and coverage from journalists. One way that members of Congress can influence a policy agenda is by anticipating journalists' needs and responding to questions in a way that shapes the news coverage. When a public relations campaign is successful, extensive coverage of a message will encourage proponents to promote the message more frequently (Sellers, 2010). For example, the women senators collectively promoted a blame frame narrative that held the Republicans responsible for the government shutdown. In so doing, the senators distinguished themselves from their opponents and provided cues to other political actors. They also drew attention to the issues and arguments that they considered most relevant to the government shutdown.

In summary, storytelling is a way to organize information and transmit understanding, and a narrative's believability hinges on its rationality, probability, and fidelity (Fisher, 1985). The news media and senators constructed a narrative that blamed "everybody in this far extreme, unreasonable, irrational Right" for the government shutdown (Scarborough & Brzezinski, 2013). If the narrative had rationality, then the

audience would be guided in their judgment of Republicans and believe a particular account of human behavior. The senators and news media also blamed the shutdown on partisanship.

Partisanship

A politician's political predisposition can vary along a number of dimensions with party ideology being among the most important (Bond & Fleisher, 2000). Policymakers have experienced a decrease in the likelihood of obtaining cross-party support for any particular measure (Snowe, 2013). In 2013, for instance, no Senate Democrat was more conservative than a Senate Republican and no Senate Republican was more liberal than a Democrat (Killough, 2013b). Polarization, which refers to a separation of politics into liberal and conservative groups, creates a clean way for the news media to organize their coverage of a political event. The media's role in polarization stems from an increase in partisan differences and their coverage of partisan debates. Partisan political discourse, after all, makes for captivating television and an audience may have a difficult time turning away from the incivility (Mutz, 2006). Recently, as partisan extremists jockeyed for political advantage in the policy debate, a group of bipartisan senators launched a public relations campaign that used bipartisanship as a means to reopen the federal government.

When the news media packages content and covers a single perspective regularly, they legitimize a particular view. For instance, the news media quoted senators, such as Senator Shaheen (D-NH), who expressed their disappointment with members of the other party. Senator Shaheen told Andrea Mitchell that she was upset that some members of Congress were willing to put people against each other because the shutdown was hurting

people who did not deserve to be hurt (Mitchell, 2013b). Also, CNN's Erin Burnett told

Senator Heitkamp (D-ND) that political moderates, like her, "have been stymied by

radicals of both parties" (Burnett, 2013). The news media offered a range of acceptable

views to the public such as attributing the shutdown to the parties' lack of ideological

overlap (Schmitt, 2013). As the political elite became more critical of the opposing party,

the audience saw a strong framing alignment between some in the news media and

moderate policymakers.

For the democratic process to work properly, people should express their

opinions, register their disagreements, evaluate alternative options, and select the best

policy (Hollihan & Bassske, 2005). The women senators seemed strongly motivated to

discuss polarization and the impact it was having on the government. During the

government shutdown, they frequently used their media interviews as a time to address

polarization in Congress. For instance, Senator Feinstein (D-CA) told journalists that this

was the worst political climate that she has seen in her career in this country. She said,

"I've never seen a time, when even under the most difficult circumstances people

wouldn't come together and houses couldn't work together" (Mathai, 2013). In so doing,

she painted a picture of a legislative environment that was ideologically distant.

Similarly, Senator Shaheen (D-NH) wanted her colleagues to stop the name-calling and

get on with the business of governing (Mitchell, 2013b). The senators framed the issue in

a way that positively portrayed their endeavors and criticized those who refused to

compromise. As a result, they shaped the policy agenda outside Congress, contributed to

a narrative that supported their collective interests, and guided the blame frame to include

a call for collaboration.

As mentioned previously, some elected officials will deflect from their party and debate same-party colleagues. This discord made a compelling contribution to the government shutdown storyline. For instance, House Republicans called the Republicans in the Senate "the Senate surrender caucus" (Morales, 2013) because they worked with Democrats to create a bipartisan proposal. The senators who supported the bipartisan initiative did not see themselves as conceding. Instead, they supported a bill that did not include "partisan poison pills" (Brzezinski, 2013). In sharing this story, the news media helped the audience know how to feel and think about people who deflected from their respective parties. Although name-calling and other acts of partisanship reflected the adversarial nature of politics, expression of tolerance offered an alternative to the stories that the media typically constructs.

In sum, the news media and a group of bipartisan senators offered a blame frame that attributed the government shutdown to the Republicans' defunding strategy and polarization in Congress. The media decides whether it wants to promote a message and indirectly help policymakers persuade an audience. When choosing issues and arguments to promote outside of Congress, policymakers have to decide whether to endorse their party's stance on the issue or support an alternative endeavor. The bipartisan senators and the news media created a narrative that examined ideological differences. Consequently, their blame frame promoted one group's view on the cause of the government shutdown. In framing the narrative as such, the news media promoted a message that drew attention to an aspect of the issue and lawmakers' positions while also helping a bipartisan group persuade political actors.

The Political Actors

When journalists frame a story, they evaluate a problem and emphasize some aspects of a perceived reality (Entman, 2004). The frame a journalist applies to a story can help the audience process and organize the information quickly. Journalists think strategically when deciding how to frame a story; for example, they strategize the best way to shape their coverage of an issue or what to include in an opinion piece. Although the news media claims to approach subjects objectively, stories often include a slant (Entman, 2007). The government shutdown, for instance, offered a political plot that cast political actors, including the tea party Republicans, a bipartisan group, and women in the Senate.

Tea Party Republicans

During the government shutdown, the Senate's women presented a unified front to the press and voters as they promoted their position publicly. Their public strategy attracted news coverage, and the Republican women senators benefited from undermining their party's collective reputation. The news media created a narrative that included villains and heroes. Specifically, journalists wrote that Americans blamed the "political brawl" on the Republican Party (King, 2013). This narrative shaped the audience's understanding of political actors' rationality, morality, and ideas. For instance, some journalists argued that the government shutdown originated with the Republican Party because tea party Republicans attached conditions to the spending bill that would defund or delay the Affordable Care Act. As a result, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that "participants in the poll gave the Republican Party overall its lowest marks in the

history of Journal polling" (King, 2013, para. 4). Thus, although the collective action helped the Republican women, it harmed their party's collective interests.

Furthermore, according to the narrative paradigm, stories compete with other stories that are constituted by good reasons. If the audience cross-referenced a quote with other testimonials and found that they were consistent, then the listeners may have stored the rhetoric as a believable piece of the story. For example, Senator Mikulski (D-MD) stated, "Mr. Cruz can huff and puff but he cannot blow away the United States government and its talented civil servants" (Blitzer, 2013). In using the three little pigs metaphor, Senator Mikulski used a symbol to communicate a message that gave order to human experience and may have incited the audience to believe the story.

The heroes in the narrative, whom the news media suggested were women senators, tried to move the audience into action by encouraging them to support their bill and reopen the federal government. When Senator McCaskill (D-MO) spoke to Speaker Boehner on Andrea Mitchell Reports she stated, "Allow the elected representatives of the House of Representatives the same courtesy that we have given you. Give them a chance to vote on our proposal" (Mitchell, 2013a). By encouraging the audience to participate in the making of the public narrative, the audience, such as Speaker Boehner, became an active participant in the meaning formation of the story.

In sum, narrative rationality provides the means for judging the merits of a story, and a narrative's form includes good and bad characters in a sequence of events. To assess a narrative's rationality, an audience will use inferences surrounding elements of the narrative. This sense making function can help the audience create meaning from the stories they hear. If one of the characters is deemed better than the other, the result may

be the arousal of action. For example, the news media and women senators created a story that described Republicans as villains. Consequently, the women senators rose to the status of heroes and crafted a narrative that charged the opposition. If the audience believed that the narrative had good reasons, then the story became a tool for persuading the audience to act in accord with the message fostered in the text.

Bipartisan Group

When the government shut down, Gallup announced that Congress's approval rating was 9% (Newport, 2013). As hardline conservative Republicans locked their Democrat colleagues into a fight, a bipartisan group of Senators emerged from the trenches ready to roll up their sleeves and create a bipartisan budget deal. The news media wanted to learn more about the group of "moderate bipartisan senators who laid the groundwork for this deal out" (Burnett, 2013). For instance, Fox News asked Senator Ayotte (R-NH) about her partnership with Senator Collins (R-ME) ("Senator Ayotte: Reid just," 2013), and Chris Cuomo (2013) called the developing bipartisan group "the third way left, right, and reasonable." He continued, "The 12 of you, Democrats and Republicans, seem to be saying what the country wanted to hear all along" (Cuomo, 2013). Cuomo joked that if the bipartisanship continued the participants might be kicked out of their respective parties. The moderate policymakers fought rigid ideology with compromise, moderation, and civility. In so doing, they crafted a bipartisan plan to reopen the federal government.

When people hear a story, they ask themselves if the story makes sense. The American public frequently read and heard stories about polarization, stalemate, and gridlock. Given this, news stories blaming Republicans or emphasizing disagreement

between political actors should have been coherent. Senators, such as Senator Collins (R-ME), offered an alternative story about 12 senators meeting and then having "two more Democrats and a Republican contact me to offer suggestions and say that they wanted to be part of our group" (Crowley, 2013). Members of the bipartisan group became political actors who responded to dominant interests by moving beyond partisan bickering to bipartisan cooperation. As evidence of this, Senator Heitkamp (D-ND) stated, "I think that there is a committed group including the 12, or now 13 that met in Susan Collins's office who know that this needs to be taken care of" (Burnett, 2013). The legislators' efforts were placed within the narrative, and the group claimed to be the heroes working together to end the impasse.

Narratives help humans make sense of their experiences and suggest that our individual stories contribute to the larger "stories of those who have lived, who live now, and who will live in the future" (Fisher, 1984, p. 6). During the government shutdown, the bipartisan group joined other stories about bipartisanship in the Senate. For instance, Senator Klobuchar (D-MN) stated, "You also see a group of Senate moderates that have come together and said enough is enough. We've been saying it for a while but now we're getting some attention for it. And that's what gives me some hope as well" (Cook, 2013). One of the Senate's strengths is its inhabitants' toleration of colleagues who hold contrasting views (Matthews, 1960). The bipartisan group severed the line between partisanship and governing. Senator Heitkamp (D-NH) observed, "I think what you saw with this group of 14 are people who say you know what, our jobs aren't nearly as important as the people. Let's make the tough choices" (Todd, 2013). Unlike the Republican actors who, the narrative suggested, were guided by ideology, the bipartisan

group promoted a message that sought to circumvent the gridlock produced by partisan polarization.

Narratives function to inform and organize our life experiences. Political narratives, in particular, usually discuss unproductive opposition and possible solutions. In the government shutdown narrative, the audience learned about policymakers who promoted relationships across party lines in the Senate. For instance, Senator Collins (R-ME), Senator Murkowski (R-AK), and Senator Ayotte (R-NH) appeared together on NBC's *Today*. While answering questions about the government shutdown, they encouraged their colleagues to join their bipartisan efforts. Senator Collins stated, "I think it's significant that it's led by women, but even more significant is the fact that it's six Republicans and six Democrats and we've come to an agreement" (Morales, 2013). Bipartisanship may not be a creative solution, but it was a productive response to partisanship. Senator Ayotte told CNN that she joined the bipartisan group because she was tired of things not happening and the country deserved better (Killough, 2013a). The senators became political actors who encouraged respect and moderation as an alternative to hostility.

To review, a group of bipartisan senators put aside their individual interests for the betterment of the country and thus became political actors within the government shutdown narrative. Their bipartisan initiative, I argue, told a story that strengthened legislative deliberation. As evidence of this, Senator Heitkamp (D-NH) shared her belief that the senators were "committed to doing what we can to make sure we do not get here again" (Todd, 2013). The political actor's rhetoric supported a narrative plot that encouraged the audience to believe that conflicting realities in the same political situation

could be resolved through bipartisan action. Women in the Senate also became key political actors in the government shutdown narrative.

Women in the Senate

Jamieson (1995) argues, "Women who succeed in politics and public life will be scrutinized under a different lens from that applied to successful men" (p. 16). The government shutdown narrative supports this claim, and I argue that the media offered a gendered frame through which to interpret the women senators' roles in the discussion. For instance, Khimm and Taylor (2013) wrote, "While male leaders of both parties have barely been speaking to each other, much less negotiating, Republican women have never stopped talking to their Democratic counterparts in the Senate" (para. 8). The government shutdown narrative embraced a gendered frame that included a comparison between female and male policymakers and a belief that women legislators belonged to a sisterhood.

First, the news media may take a two-sides approach to reporting a story. In addition to covering the Republican/Democrat dichotomy, journalists explored the male/female sides of the debate. In so doing, the news media used gender stereotypes, such as women being more consensus orientated and reliable, to tell the story of women's roles in the government shutdown. For example, Spillius (2013) reported that the male senators had "set new lows for stubbornness and intransigence" while Senator Collins (R-ME) and her female colleagues "prodded their male colleagues into action" (para. 2). In differentiating between the genders, the news media made judgments concerning the appropriate social roles for persons of both sexes.

Additionally, MSNBC and *The Telegraph* compared male and female legislators'
approaches to ending the government shutdown (Khimm & Taylor, 2013; Spillius, 2013).
The *New York Times* also published an article that praised the women in the Senate's
efforts to find accord (Weisman & Steinhauer, 2013), and *Time* wrote that women were
the only adults left in Washington (Newton-Small, 2013b). These articles sparked
controversy and some journalists responded that it was patronizing to differentiate
between male and female policymakers (Ambinder, 2013; Davidson, 2013). Regardless
of whether one believed that the women were painted as "nursemaids who stepped in to
put a firm but gentle hand on a raving person's shoulder" (Davidson, 2013, para. 2), most
of the political elite agreed that the women in the Senate played an important role in
ending the gridlock. As evidence of this, Koren (2013) discussed the Collins plan and
wrote that what made the plan notable was that more than half of its authors were
women.

Male senators also contributed to the gendered narrative by using gender terms to
frame conversation. Senator Pryor (D-AK), for instance, said, "The truth is, women in the
Senate is a good thing. We're all just glad they allowed us to tag along so we could see
how it's done" (Bassett, 2013, para. 3). Additionally, Senator McCain (R-AZ) told the
New York Times, "The women are taking over," and Senator Manchin (D-WV) stated,
"The gender mix was great. It helped tremendously" (Weisman & Steinhauer, 2013, para.
8-9). By differentiating between the genders, the men constructed a political persona of
the women senators, and their language contributed to a narrative account of women's
roles in politics. Furthermore, when journalists asked Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid
(D-NV) about the negotiations, he stated, "I didn't like it. I've got a couple of tough

women [Patty Murray and Barb Mikulski] to deal with" (Weisman & Parker, 2013a, para. 15). I conceptualize gender as a social construct informed by communication interactions among individuals and their audiences. Given this, the men's quotations implied that the female senators deviated from their male colleagues' expectations. Furthermore, commenting on male senators' responses to questions concerning the women in the Senate, the *National Journal* concluded, "Women make up 20 percent of the Senate. Male senators' recent comments on the work they do there are 100 percent awkward" (Koren, 2013, para. 7).

Additionally, the women senators contributed to the gendered narrative by telling stories about their coalition building skills and sharing first person accounts of women collaborating, compromising, and encouraging conversation. For example, Senator Shaheen (D-NH) stated, "When women are at the table the conversation is different" (K. Hunt, 2013). This statement insinuated that the female senators engaged in a democratic process that encouraged a dialogue and bridged divergent political ideologies. Furthermore, Senator Murkowski (R-AK) shared, "We think that the women in the Senate, the six of us, actually seven women that have been working together do have a good bipartisan solution that works. Let's get to it" (Morales, 2013). As a result, the women combated "the toxic partisan environment in Congress" by promoting "the idea of social mixing across party lines to reduce partisanship and promote civility" (Swers, 2013, p. 242). Also, Senator McCaskill (D-MO) shared her belief that "the women that are in the Senate, by and large are trying to find that place where we can get something done" (Khimm & Taylor, 2013, para. 13). Together, the women legislators discussed the underlying issue of women's approaches to policymaking

Instead of countering the gendered frame, the Senate's women contributed to and embraced the frame as part of the government shutdown narrative. For instance, Senator Collins (R-ME) told journalists, "I don't think it's a coincidence that women were so heavily involved in trying to end this stalemate" because we "are used to working together in a collaborative way" (Weisman & Steinhauer, 2013, para. 11). Not only did the news media view the women foremost as female senators but so did the women themselves. Senator Cantwell (D-WA) told a reporter, "If it were up to the women, this would be over already. There's still a lot of testosterone going around" (Timm, 2013). This logic suggests a specific expectation about what females bring to a Senate debate and may have generated greater public interest in the role gender played during the government shutdown. However, the gendered coverage also offered a narrative that disadvantaged one side of the debate, because the coverage of the government shutdown shifted from a policy discussion to nonpolicy coverage about women.

Gender stereotypes provide expectations that help people process of information. After all, gender "is the first lens through which we form our impressions of people, always will be a force" (Kunin, 2008, p. 71). Gender stereotypes about the characteristics of women and men politicians are distinct and well documented (Dolan, 2010). For example, empirical research indicates that voters believe women politicians are more compassionate and warmer than their male counterparts (Burrell, 1994; Koch, 1999) and more kind and sympathetic (Fridkin, Kenney, & Woodall, 2009). Supporting this line of research, MSNBC's Alex Wagner contributed to the gendered frame by asking Senator Heitkamp (D-ND), "As a woman, I ask you did the presence of strong women change the dynamics of this conversation?" (Wagner, 2013). In responding to gendered questions,

such as this one, the women of the Senate added to the "woman senator" narrative by presenting themselves as possessing traits like cooperation, compassion, and warmth. This stereotyping demonstrates the degree to which gender expectations exist in a contemporary legislating environment. In using a gendered frame, journalists and the political elite reinforced established perceptions about women's legislative behaviors.

Journalists are affected by the culture in which they live, and the stereotypes within society are pervasive (Braden, 1996). Given this, coverage of a particular message encourages legislators to pay more attention to an aspect of the issue and the message. For instance, Charlie Rose asked Senator Klobuchar (D-MN) to comment on the Senate women's leadership during the government shutdown. She stated, "I think we played a constructive role in terms of setting up a framework and some ideas and bringing those ideas to leadership on both sides" (Rose, 2013a). Instead of ignoring the gendered inquiry, the senator encouraged her audience to also consider the gendered implications of the group's collaborative efforts.

Furthermore, the women of the Senate presented themselves as women leaders and offered a frame of women expanding their leadership personas. In so doing, the senators "showed off the increasing power of women" (Weisman & Steinhauer, 2013, para. 5) and became the "driving forces that shaped a negotiated settlement" (Weisman & Steinhauer, 2013, para. 8). For instance, appearing on *The Situation Room,* Senator Mikulski (D-MD) attributed the opening of the government to the energy created by the women in the Senate. Senator Mikulski stated, "I'm so proud of what Senator Sue Collins and Amy Klobuchar did. Patty Murray's the Budget. I'm the Appropriations Committee that puts money in the federal checkbook. We want to be able to go right down the

middle" (Blitzer, 2013). The senator and her female colleagues shaped news coverage and thereby affected policy outcomes by explaining how gender helped them achieve equilibrium between opposing political parties.

Second, journalists employed the sisterhood metaphor while discussing women in the Senate. Sisterhood has been defined as "a nurturant, supportive feeling of attachment and loyalty to other women" (Dill, 1983, p. 132). Historically, women's liberationists evoked sisterhood when discussing oppression, but in the 1980s, the power of sisterhood diminished as feminists stopped using the term as a way to evoke unity (hooks, 1986). It appears that within the government shutdown narrative, sisterhood functioned as a metaphor to describe how female senators bridged differences between themselves and worked to legitimate their actions toward one another. Also, metaphors help journalists "clarify, vivify, simplify, make the abstract concrete, give strength to a point, heighten emotions, and make a subject more interesting" (Jensen, 1977, p. 43). Metaphors are foundational to language, persuasion, and opinion (Anderson & Sheeler, 2005) and are "pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 3).

When reporting that women senators had bipartisan bonds, some journalists used the metaphor sisterhood. For instance, one headline read, "Collins leads Senate sisters in shaping deal," and the author described two of Senator Collins's (R-ME) "sister senators" as the first to join the effort (Camia, 2013, para. 7). The essence of sisterhood is a bond with other women based on shared resources and strength. Metaphors, such as describing non-related women as sisters, are a rhetorical construction that can constrain or assist a woman in politics (Anderson & Sheeler, 2005). American subcultures, such as women,

have defining characteristics and share certain values and priorities. Each culture adapts to its environment, and "since our conception of the physical world is partly metaphorical, metaphor plays a very significant role in determining what is real for us" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 146). Metaphors play a role in the presentation of issues to the public; thus, the sisterhood metaphor created a reality that made women senators a chief political actor in the government shutdown narrative.

Historically, feminists have drawn on notions of sisterhood to create solidarity. The sisterhood metaphor offered a terministic screen that, according to Burke (1968), filtered a person's reality and directed "attention into some channels rather than others" (p. 45). Terministic screens include language that conveys particular meaning, conjures images that induce opinions and action, and offers a representation of our culture and beliefs. Whatever language we choose constitutes a corresponding kind of screen that directs attention and shapes our observations (Burke, 1968). For example, Senator Collins (R-MA) observed that her female colleagues possessed a sisterhood, and *Time* concluded that the sisterhood offered "a deep sense that more unites them personally than divides them politically" (Newton-Small, 2013b, para. 6). Sisterhood can be a metaphor of kin that describes women's unconditional bond and encourages women to unite. The women's construction of their sisterhood and the media's use of the term offered a set of blinders through which the audience could observe, describe, and assess the women.

Although the meaning of sisterhood varies, for the women in the Senate it appears to mean a bond between friends. Senator Heitkamp (D-ND) described the women as part of a group who:

share common life experiences and automatically that puts you in a spot where

you probably maybe look at things as you would if you were a mom. And so you

know that I'm thinking probably what Amy's thinking . . . . our life experiences

bond us in a way that maybe we're not bonded to someone who's had a

completely different life experience. (K. Hunt, 2013)

This family metaphor implied a deep relationship that included intimate knowledge and an emotional commitment. This thread of common experience became an indispensible force for cohesion.

To summarize, the news media is known for framing a story so that it favors one side over another (Entman, 2007). In this narrative, the news media made the Republicans villains, praised the bipartisan group, and emphasized the role of gender in the policy discussion. The news media and the women senators also constructed a gendered frame that became part of the government shutdown narrative. For instance, CNN's Jake Tapper began his interview with Senator Klobuchar (D-MN) by stating, "The women of the Senate, Democrats and Republicans, are getting a lot of credit for putting together a bipartisan deal that's currently on hold" (Tapper, 2013). Instead of confronting public conceptions of women being different from men in politics, the "Senate sisters" contributed to the narrative by using gendered terms to describe their approaches to governing. Senator Klobuchar, for instance, told *Morning Joe* that the "group of 12, which you know is half women, which is great. We really got some good ideas going and some common ground that I think helped Senator Reid and Senator McConnell as they reached their agreements" (Brzezinski, 2013). The story's political actors also offered solutions that would end the manufactured crisis.

The Solutions

When politicians face a clear strategic advantage, they are likely to persuade other legislators to promote their message and take action to effectively win media coverage. The coordinated efforts result in promotional events and news coverage that can arouse strong opposition or support (Sellers, 2010). How the news media frames a politician's solution can determine the public's interpretations of the action. Recently, senators used the news media to propose their visions for a functional Congress. They offered relationship building and bipartisanship as means for solving the government shutdown.

Relationship Building

Civilly working with other senators is an important skill to possess while navigating the legislative process. Elected officials build relationships within their parties, but they may also associate with people from the opposing party who have similar backgrounds and beliefs (Lipinski, 2009). Friendship in the Senate is complex, political, and personal, because the relationships that senators build help them accomplish their policy objectives (Baker, 1999). During the government shutdown, the public learned that the women senators' professional relationships grew into friendships that helped them achieve their policy objectives. For example, Senator Klobuchar (D-MN) told *Time*, "The women are an incredibly positive force because we like each other. We work together well, and we look for common ground" (Newton-Small, 2013b, para. 4). The role of friendship in policymaking became a rhetorical construct that proposed a solution.

The news media, in conjunction with the women senators, expanded the focus of the government shutdown debate to include a conversation about legislators' relationship

building efforts. For instance, NBC News' Kasie Hunt asked Senator Heitkamp (D-ND),

Senator Klobuchar (D-MN), and Senator Shaheen (D-NH) to talk about women's roles in

the government shutdown. Senator Klobuchar responded that Senator Collins brought the

group together and "the women of the Senate, the 20 of us, are friends. There is trust

there" (K. Hunt, 2013). Their language implied the existence of a pure friendship that

involved an emotional commitment and a concern for each other's welfare. Although

pure friendships usually involve senators who share the same political views (Baker,

1999), their rhetoric suggested the development of friendships across parties. The pure

friendship survives various degrees of policy disagreement and, I argue, helps senators

overcome partisan differences. As evidence of this, a host of *Morning Joe* asked Senator

Klobuchar, "Why did it take a group of predominately women to open the government?"

(Brzezinski, 2013). Senator Klobuchar responded:

> I think that the women the 20 women in the Senate have formed such strong
>
> friendships of trust even though we come from different places that I'm very
>
> hopeful that as we go forward . . . that those relationships are going to make a
>
> difference as we get into what really matters which is the long-term budget.
>
> (Brzezinski, 2013)

While some political actors may see bipartisan personal friendships as negative, the

senators' stories of relationships provided evidence of the need for friends across the

aisle.

Although the Senate is individualistic, popularity is an essential ingredient to a

policymaker's political success. Senators foster relationships through "mutual respect,

empathy, and consideration" and these ingredients "are the essentials of an enduring and

continuous institution" (Baker, 1999, p. 27). Relationship building can reap political

dividends. For instance, Senator Collins (R-ME), a moderate Republican who had a

reputation for being well liked, encouraged her colleagues to support her three-point plan.

Unlike some of her colleagues, "she refrained from partisan blame and proposed a plan to

end the crisis" (Newton-Small, 2013b). Shortly thereafter three women senators grabbed

a microphone and expressed their support for Collins's plan. Senator Collins's

relationship building efforts may have helped her attract support for her policy and

perform the legislative tasks required of senators.

Senators will evoke their bipartisan alliances when the need arises. For instance,

Senator Shaheen (D-NH) called upon her colleagues to create a bipartisan plan. She

stated, "I also think women like to build consensus. We like to listen to everybody's

input. We like to try to reach an agreement and we often have less ego involved" (K.

Hunt, 2013). Also, senators' stories about the government shutdown included accounts of

their bipartisan friendships. As evidence of this, Senator Klobuchar (D-MN) told

MSNBC, "Well, I think one of the best things about this group, led by Senator Susan

Collins Republican of Maine, was that we were able to come together and find common

ground without those kinds of insults" (Brzezinski, 2013). In using phrases like "building

consensus," "common ground," and "coming together," the senators may have shaped

public perceptions and evaluations of the group's relationship building solution.

Additionally, senators' media interviews indicated that the women saw

compromise as a way to build relationships. For instance, Senator Hirono (D-HI) stated,

"If there are areas of disagreements we need to hash those out" and the best way is to use

compromise ("Hirono discusses government," 2013). "Compromise" has many

meanings. Some in politics may say that compromise means to "cheapen yourself" or to "sell your soul" (Tannen, 1998, p. 98). Senator Hirono, however, used "compromise" in a positive way and considered her ability to compromise as a strength. Similarly, speaking from her experiences as a mom, Senator Klobuchar (D-MN) used a metaphor while discussing compromise in Congress. The senator told NBC News' *Today* that sometimes she has one cookie that her kids can eat. How does she split it up when she has three kids that want to eat it? She and her kids make a compromise (K. Hunt, 2013).

Furthermore, while promoting their preferred policy positions, the senators aimed their messages at colleagues who were unable to collaborate and offered relationship building as a way to solve the problem. For example, MSNBC's Chris Hayes asked Senator Heitkamp (D-ND) to explain how women senators brokered the deal to reopen the federal government (Hayes, 2013). She responded, "We have great relationships and I think that we've had a lot of discussions over the months about things we'd love to do in a bipartisan way and this was basically stopping a lot of that progress" (Hayes, 2013). Additionally, Senator Ayotte (R-NH) stated, "What we need is problem solving. That's why I'm proud to be here with Susan and Lisa to get this resolved for the country" (Morales, 2013). Together they created "a bipartisan group whose negotiating framework formed the centerpiece of a tentative Senate deal nearing completion" (Weisman & Steinhauer, 2013, para. 3). The result was a bipartisan budget proposal that would "give the House a serious option to consider" since "their first strategy was clearly a very flawed one" ("Senate taking lead," 2013, para. 1).

In short, close agreement among policymakers requires that they deemphasize their personal differences in order to achieve their policy goals (Baker, 1999). The budget

is a controversial piece of legislation and politicians need allies to win the political debate. The women senators offered bipartisanship and relationship building as solutions. According to testimonies relayed by the news media, women senators' common backgrounds, trust, and collaboration provided the foundation for their friendships. By evoking the word "friend" to describe their colleagues, the Senate's women suggested that friendship was a catalyst for their bipartisan efforts. Chavez (2013) wrote an op-ed in the *Huffington Post* arguing, "The practical, collaborative approach women often bring to problem solving is restoring balance to the legislative process" (para. 4). Political stakes were high during the tough policy battle, and relationship building fostered bipartisan relations that helped reopen the federal government.

Bipartisanship

Budgetary politics give both parties opportunities to promote their priorities, issues, and arguments. Recently, congressional parties exacerbated Congress's polarization problem by creating a government that failed to achieve its constitutional responsibility of funding the government. As tensions grew and the debate lingered, one journalist described the Senate as having previously been "a body of government known for its collegiality" (Scarborough & Brzezinski, 2013). Responding to this problem, a bipartisan group put their partisan alignment aside to argue for a common solution. Consequently, women senators won news coverage and promoted their message of bipartisanship. The evidence suggests that the news media mirrored politicians' statements while producing stories that offered collaboration as the solution to the government shutdown.

Throughout the policy debate, the Senate's women expressed increasing concern about polarization in the Senate, and senators argued for the importance of holding a moderate political ideology. For example, MSNBC's Alex Wagner asked Senator Heitkamp (D-ND) if the women of the Senate changed the dynamics of the discussion. Senator Heitkamp responded, "Well that's been a lot of the talk here. But I think the bottom line is . . . moderates really came together and said we cannot tolerate continuing to cost this economy $24 billion dollars" (Wagner, 2013). In suggesting a moderate political view as an alternative to polarization, the senator appeared to be disinterested in achieving partisan advantage. Instead, she wanted to keep the Senate functioning by encouraging people to work together to end the government shutdown. Senator Mikulski (D-MD) echoed her colleague's sentiment by claiming, "America is a middle-of-the-road country and it wants its elected officials to be middle of the road. To find and think about the middle class" (Blitzer, 2013). The narrative suggested that by stepping out of their respective partisan corners, senators could position themselves to best represent American's interests.

Politicians shape public policy by crafting a message that appeals to the public, other legislators, and the news media (Sellers, 2010). Individual senators benefit from having others promote their message, thus making collective promotion a useful tool. Within the government shutdown narrative, women senators crafted a uniform message that encouraged their colleagues to join their bipartisan collective action. For instance, a journalist asked Senator Klobuchar (D-MN) to comment on Senator Ted Cruz's (R-TX) effects on the budget negotiations. Senator Klobuchar responded, "I think it's brought it all to a head. It has actually called out some moderate Republicans that have had to stand

up to him, including some of the women in our group" (K. Hunt, 2013). Similarly,

Senator McCaskill (D-MO) encouraged the moderates to "muscle up here" (Scarborough

& Brzezinski, 2013). Their promotion of bipartisanship and the news media's coverage of

their actions painted a picture of senators working together to end the impasse. The

senators thus created a message that focused on a favorable solution.

In today's polarized Congress, senators who maintain a moderate political

approach to consensus building face significant political risks. Despite this threat, women

senators promoted a message of collaboration and did not seem to fear retribution. For

instance, *NBC News* journalist Martin Bashir shared a striking observation with viewers

about the "no" votes in the Senate to end the shutdown–not a single woman voted no

(Bashir, 2013). Typically, voting blocs in the Senate reflect the wants of the two major

parties and shared considerations outweigh individual ones. Senator Mikulski (D-MD)

attributed the all women voting bloc to a "forward looking agenda" and claimed that "this

is why I think the women really represent the middle road and are speaking for the

middle class" (Bashir, 2013). Senator Mikulski continued, "We want to know what is the

policy going to do to affect the American family, their lives, and the American middle

class pocketbook" (Bashir, 2013). In focusing her response on the women representing

moderate interests, Senator Mikulski made the issue salient to the public and encouraged

her colleagues to focus with "mutual respect, do what the middle road Americans want us

to do, we can get the job done" (Blitzer, 2013).

In addition to urging a moderate political ideology, the senators also offered

bipartisanship as a solution. For instance, during an interview with CNN's Wolf Blitzer,

Senator Mikulski (D-MD) said that as the Chair of the Appropriations Committee, she

looked "forward to working across the aisle and meeting their deadlines and really joining the middle of the roaders here in the Senate to help our middle class Americans" (Blitzer, 2013). Sometimes policymakers focus public attention on issues that unite their colleagues around a publicly popular solution. Therefore, when legislators share their legislating approaches with the media, they hope to influence the borders and consequences of ensuing policy debates (Sellers, 2010). Senator Mikulski, thus, let her colleagues know that she would seek productive conflict and collaboration moving forward. Her call for bipartisanship reflected former Senator Snowe's (R-ME) conception of the term. Senator Snowe wrote that "genuine bipartisanship is achieved when members of both parties are involved in making legislation from the beginning . . . and collaborating to ensure its passage" (Snowe, 2013, p. 230). The news media enabled the senators to introduce their own solutions to the problem while also promoting and defending their proposals. They did so while swiftly responding to new developments and critiquing others' messages.

American's dissatisfaction with Congress's inability to get along presented a rhetorical opportunity for moderate senators. The bipartisan group took advantage of the tea party Republicans' vulnerability by drawing comparisons between those willing to work together and those who were not. For instance, Senator Baldwin (D-WI) told a journalist that unlike her Republican counterpart, she supported the bipartisan deal (Lowe, 2013). In order to stop "governing by crisis," Senator Baldwin said that she and her colleagues "have to be able to negotiate over things like the budget resolution" (Lowe, 2013). While constructing the terms of the debate, the senator used language that chastised those individuals who would not join the group in the center. Furthermore, the

news media contributed to the bipartisan solution narrative by describing the women senators as showing "pragmatism as negotiators in the midst of fierce partisanship" (Weisman & Steinhauer, 2013, para. 12). The women senators' logical approach to governing drew the media's attention and enabled the senators to shape the news coverage and promote their messages more frequently.

Moreover, the women senators achieved greater coverage of their bipartisan message, which in turn may have secured collective benefits for the bipartisan group. As evidence of this, the news media reported that women senators advocated "moving forward beyond a partisan debate, saying though none of them [Republican women senators] support Obamacare, neither did any of them support the strategy to defund it that led to the shutdown" (Kopan, 2013). Bipartisanship requires that politicians take a position that may be at odds with their party. Senator Klobuchar (D-MN) recognized this and told NBC's *Today*, "I think courage is being willing to stand next to someone you don't always agree with for the betterment of this country" (K. Hunt, 2013). Bipartisanship's principle ingredient, common ground through compromise, generates an egalitarian culture of cooperation and encourages deliberation (Keremidchieva, 2012). Senator Klobuchar described bipartisan compromise as being void of "partisan pills" (Rose, 2013a), which was a framed message that emphasized a simple, brief, and catchy phrase. The expression may have helped voters evaluate the policymakers' priorities and policies.

Furthermore, the women in the Senate discussed the importance of a conversation culture instead of politics' typical debate culture. For instance, Senator Shaheen (D-NH) argued:

The underlying issue is that we need to get everybody who is involved in government, who needs the programs and services that are provided, who are working for the government, they need to get back to work. We need to get this country moving again. (Mitchell, 2013b)

The senator advised that the best way to reopen the government was "to work together to get the government up and running and to stop making accusations" (Mitchell, 2013b). Her message included a short-term consideration that could help voters evaluate politicians' priorities and policies. The senator's plea, coupled with other calls for collaboration, may have led to greater public involvement in the policy debate and an understanding of the need for dialogue on common issues. In creating a conversation culture, the senator shaped a legislative environment that fostered "trust, freedom from power imbalances, understanding, fairness, and openness" and supported "ideal democratic processes by emphasizing respect in relationships and promoting consensus" (Lawrence, 2007, p. 39). This hopefully encouraged politicians to deliberate instead of using partisan means to maneuver for political advantage.

In sum, public relations campaigns can shape policy debates and help voters evaluate politicians' solutions. In this case, by coordinating their campaign, the women worked together to further their collective goal of increasing bipartisanship in the Senate. Torn between party loyalty and issue positions, some women senators had to balance their desire to promote an agreeable message with the collective cost of defecting from their party. Resolving this tension, the Senate's Republican women joined their Democrat colleagues and promoted a bipartisan message. When asked if anything positive came out of the government shutdown, Senator Shaheen (D-NH) responded:

> The bipartisan effort to try and come up with a framework to move forward was positive. Because the more we can do to get people working together the more likely we are to be able to solve this kind of manufactured crisis and keep it from happening again. (K. Hunt, 2013)

By focusing their collective agenda on prompting bipartisanship, the women of the Senate endorsed a specific approach to governing. Moreover, in asking the women senators to comment on the best solution to the problem, the news media created a bipartisan solution frame. In so doing, they promoted a solution that allowed political actors to extend the policy debate beyond the confines of Congress and thus encouraged deliberation.

<div align="center">Implications and Conclusion</div>

Stories offer a means of understanding and representing human events, and during the government shutdown, Americans were bombarded with tales about Congress's dysfunctional behaviors. As the ideologically polarized parties vied for control over the federal budget, a group of senators urged their colleagues to "get out of the trenches and resolve this" (Schieffer, 2013). In the Senate, six Democrats and six Republicans worked out an agreement and found common ground. More specifically, the women senators maintained a highly visible role during the government shutdown debate and began a dialogue about the importance of bipartisanship. Their deliberative activities began by reflecting on a problem, gathering information, and offering an appropriate solution. As a result, the senators educated other political actors and shaped their views in an attempt to mobilize support. Their collaboration may have helped the women attract more media coverage. This increased visibility likely gave them the chance to shape policy decisions,

claim credit, and distinguish themselves from their partisan opponents. Senators thus shaped the coverage of the government shutdown, and their promotional efforts countered the public's belief that politicians were unable to get along.

In taking their plan public, the women in the Senate helped the news media frame the government shutdown debate and thus offered a politically consequential narrative. In so doing, they contributed to a media frame that encouraged democratic decision-making and influenced how the public interpreted the narrative's political issues, actors, and solutions. When studying narratives, we should judge discourses "according to how useful they are in enhancing critical awareness of human interaction" (Lucaites & Condit, 1985, p. 105). During the government shutdown, senators increased their promotional efforts and appeared united in their support for bipartisanship. While exposing women senators' bipartisanship, the news media transformed the partisan government shutdown debate into a story about relationships and cooperation.

Politics is adversarial by nature, and members of Congress are motivated to say and do things for their own political survival. After all, "democratic politics is all about convincing others to see things as you do, so that they will support your goals" (Entman, 2004, p. 147). The news media frequently covers conflict in politics, and the 113th Congress gave journalists plenty of material. Entman (2004) argues that "frames in the news are typically a part of the reporting process for three different classes of objects: political events, issues, and actors" (p. 23). This chapter offered an understanding of how a group of senators used the news media to achieve their political goals. In analyzing news stories, broadcasts, and interviews, I discovered that news stories featured similar issues, actors, and solutions. Politicians framed their side of the story so that it painted

their solutions in a positive light. Although articles about the gridlock and partisanship filled various news outlets, some journalists offered a hopeful story that showed what can happen when bipartisanship rises.

The media and women senators constructed a coherent argument that linked their preferred course of action with an identified problem, and together they created a bipartisan narrative that offered an alternative reality. This strategy included women senators' appeals to the public and pressuring political actors whose support they needed. "Some stories," according to Fisher (1984), "are better than others, more coherent, more true to the way people and the world are" (p. 10). Audience members frequently hear stories about partisanship, so the bipartisan narrative may not "ring true with the stories they know to be true in their lives" (Fisher, 1984, p. 8). Therefore, the audience may have been skeptical about the alternative narrative's rationality. The American public and members of Congress became active participants in the meaning formation of the new narrative. As the women senators interacted with the media, they remained on message and offered consistent details about their bipartisan efforts. The group, I argue, created a sound narrative; consequently, they offered a different account of the government shutdown and suggested a new course of human action. Because an issue can be seen from multiple perspectives and can be construed as having various implications, framing is an inescapable yet powerful rhetorical tool (Chong & Druckman, 2007a).

Additionally, gender played a dominant role in the construction of the government shutdown narrative. Stereotypes function to help people make sense of a culture's complexities, and the "mass media play an important role in strengthening the stability and pervasiveness of stereotypes" (Robson, 2000, p. 207). A significant body of literature

argues that gender stereotypes influence various aspects of American politics including female and male political candidates (Anderson, 2002; Books, 2011; Burns, Eberhardt, & Merolla, 2013; Carlin & Winfrey, 2009; Curnalia & Mermer, 2014; Fridkin et al., 2009; Fulton, 2012; Sanbonmatsu & Dolan, 2009), voter choice (Dolan, 2010; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a, 1993b), and citizens' impressions of candidates' ideological orientations (Dolan, 2005; Koch, 1999, 2000, 2002). This chapter contributed to the discussion of gendered stereotypes in politics by revealing how the news media and male and female senators constructed a gendered frame that emphasized the differences between male and female legislators. For instance, Werner and LaRussa (1985) identified sincerity, cooperation, and optimism as gender specific characteristics for women. These characteristics, along with expectations that women are supposed to be "more humane, available, and responsive to serving human needs" (Mandel, 1981, p. 61), are consistent with the creation of a nurturing environment. Incidentally, the senators and news media used phrases and works such as "collaborative approach" and "friendship" to give substance to claims of bipartisanship. In choosing these terms to describe their approaches to governing, the senators not only contributed to a gendered frame but they also used terms that may have hindered others' abilities to perceive them as leaders. Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern (1997) argue that "the ability to seek compromise and consensual solutions to problems is often less associated with leadership than is the willingness or ability to exert power" (p. 99). Within the gendered narrative, the female senators carefully negotiated a complex set of stereotypes by embracing them as a means for achieving legislation that would reopen the federal government.

The budgetary politics in 2013 offered the political parties many opportunities to promote a partisan message. Despite coverage of tea party Republicans' defunding strategy and party leadership's failures, news coverage indicated that the moderate members of the Senate seized control of the conversation. The bipartisan group won coverage and promoted their message to a large audience. Specifically, while discussing the budget debate, the women in the Senate emphasized the need for collaboration and relationship building. As evidence of this, Senator Klobuchar (D-MN) told CNN, "You have in the Senate a group that's come together under Senator Susan Collins's leadership, and there's a few good men in there too" (Tapper, 2013). Additionally, some news coverage of the government shutdown echoed the bipartisan group's claims that Republicans caused the government shutdown and the bipartisan group helped end the manufactured crisis. Their bipartisan narrative was politically consequential because "the origins of public opinion—the sacred icon of democracy—lay in elite discourse" (Simon & Xenos, 2000, p. 363).

In closing, policymakers take an issue public in an attempt to control how the news media frames a story. Recently, the women in the Senate mounted a coordinated publicity campaign that molded the conversation surrounding the government shutdown debate. During the government shutdown, senators worked proactively to shape media frames by promoting news that would stimulate public support. By asking particular questions and including certain quotes, the news media created a narrative that framed the women in gendered terms, emphasized the importance of bipartisanship, and blamed tea party Republicans for causing the government shutdown. In addition to their media interviews, the women used their time on the Senate floor to urge civility and persuade

their colleagues to join their cross-party efforts. The next chapter moves beyond a

discussion of polarization and uncovers accessible rhetorical strategies that, when

utilized, facilitate bipartisanship in the Senate chamber.

CHAPTER IV

ADOPTING FEMININE STYLE AS A MEANS FOR ENCOURAGING

CIVILITY IN THE U.S. SENATE

The United States Senate is arguably the most prestigious elected body in America, and its institutional structure offers a framework within which speakers' rhetorical potentialities and styles operate. Our democratic system is structured for the construction, continuation, and resolution of disagreement (Benson, 2011). The folkways of the Senate, including norms of conduct and approved manners of behavior, contribute to the dominant chamber's cardinal rule of courtesy which helps competitors cooperate during disagreements (Matthews, 1959). Some argue that the folkways contribute to senators' beliefs that "they belong to the greatest legislative body and deliberative body in the world" (Matthews, 1959, p. 101). For instance, Senator Feinstein (D-CA) expressed:

> I have always felt that this body was sort of the prime of political officeholders . . . and has always known a willingness as to how this democratic process can work, by people sitting down together, understanding that our two-party system demands compromise to be able to make any progress at all. (USS, 2013q, p. S7508)

The Senate is an intimate legislative body whose rules favor individual members and protect the rights of those in the political minority (Matthews, 1959). Given this, Senate leaders often turn to alternative strategies to achieve their policy goals (Malecha & Reagan, 2012).

The Senate's formal rules guide senatorial decorum to reduce spontaneous

hostility and instill a sense of civility in the chamber. Darr (2011) describes civility as "a

set of standards for conducting public argument" (p. 604). Scholars generally agree that

civility is an important characteristic of public deliberation in our democracy (Ivie, 2008).

Deliberation is "an activity aimed at resolution of disputes or conflicts" (Herbst, 2010, p.

p. 22). Senators should embrace civility as a norm, because courteous rhetorical

exchanges between policymakers help them address problems as a community (Jamieson,

2000). Senators frequently boast about their abilities to work with others, and therefore

suggest that they are above the bashing that typically occurs among House members.

During the government shutdown, Senator Mikulski (D-MD), for instance, thanked her

colleagues for the "cooperation we have received from the other side of the aisle in our

committee" (USS, 2013e, p. S7122). While disputing funding levels, Senator Mikulski

acknowledged that she "had an open amendment process. Everybody had their say.

Everybody had their day" (USS, 2013e, p. S7122). A senator's tolerance for her or his

colleagues has been one of the institution's strengths (Baker, 1999).

Democracy thrives when legislators compromise but in recent years, compromise

has acquired a negative connotation in American politics (Hall, 2014). This consequently

harms the quality of the Senate's deliberations whether it is senators exchanging

information on the floor, during committee meetings, or throughout personal

conversations. Deliberation refers to giving thoughtful consideration to a choice,

discussing issues with others in order to reach a decision, and carefully considering a

matter and weighing alternatives (Mann & Ornstein, 2008). During the Senate's

deliberation on the budget bill, for example, some senators, including Senator McCaskill

(D-MO), acknowledged that they were "willing to listen to all sides and negotiate around the budget" (USS, 2013c, p. S7014). Deliberation is at the root of lawmaking in Congress, because decisions are reached through debate and give-and-take (Mann & Ornstein, 2008). Deliberation can help senators become more open, accountable, and knowledgeable.

Civility is a necessary standard for public deliberation. Civility requires us to discipline our passions while seeing the other person as an opponent and not an enemy. For example, during the shutdown debate, Senator Collins (R-ME) and Senator Mikulski (D-MD) led the charge to create a bipartisan agreement and many of their female colleagues joined their efforts to create a zone of civility. The women in the U.S. Senate consequently won Allegheny College's third annual Prize for Civility in Public Life. While accepting the award on behalf of the Senate's women, Senator Mikulski stated, "Why can't we as women establish a zone of civility where we come together out of friendship?" (Mauriello, 2014, para. 14). The women in the Senate may not be less partisan than their male counterparts, but their personal friendships help them work out differences, become allies, trust one another, and foster civility (Bash, 2012). In fact, Carlson (2012) claims that the women of the Senate take time to get to know each other and this creates a level of civility that is in short supply in today's Congress.

I argue that the women senators encouraged civility by using rhetoric that was personal, anecdotal, and sought identification based on lived experiences. Campbell's (1989) model of feminine style helps develop this claim. Campbell's model of rhetoric emerged from her studies of women's rhetorical choices and describes "feminine style" as rhetoric that has a personal tone, uses personal experiences, is structured inductively,

emphasizes audience participation, and encourages identification between speaker and audience. Scholars have since used feminine style to study political discourse and discovered that feminine style is not limited to women and appears to be less combative than other styles of communication (Jamieson, 1988). This study examines senators' floor speeches through the lens of feminine style. I suggest that senators relied on certain aspects of feminine style to persuade their audience to collaborate, negotiate, and "to come up with a plan to fund the government, to move forward, to find common ground" (USS, 2013e, p. S7131). Scholars should continue building on Campbell's original theory because "testing the implications of feminine style beyond its original context" allows us to "realize the transformative potential of its use in a variety of situations" (Dow & Tonn, 1993, p. 298). Bone, Griffin, and Scholz (2008), for example, linked civility to invitational rhetoric in public deliberations. I build on this idea by connecting feminine style to civility in Senate debates.

Senators' communication has changed over the decades and "civility as a behavior is fundamentally about communication" (Benson, 2011, p. 23). Therefore, this chapter seeks to answer the question: How do senators rhetorically construct a zone of civility during the Senate's deliberation on the budget bill? I expand the communication literature on congressional debate by examining the rhetorical strategies that women senators used while debating in a polarized political environment. In doing so, I offer an understanding of how civility works with feminine style to encourage a productive debate. What follows is an overview of the rhetorical setting, an explanation of civility, and a summary of feminine style literature. While analyzing the Senate's deliberations, I offer an understanding of the rhetorical construction of civility by illustrating the ways

senators use three characteristics of feminine style (audience as peers, claims of personal experience, and inviting audience participation) to advance their argument. I conclude the chapter with an explanation of implications.

Rhetorical Setting

Darr (2005) maintains that in order to understand how civility is violated during Senate proceedings, critics should study debates in which incivility is likely. For example, the debate over how to direct the federal budget is tense and usually sparks disagreement, because Democrats and Republicans can rarely agree on policy issues and federal spending (Raju Chebium, 2013). During budget negotiations, there is never enough money available to satisfy everyone's demands and conflict usually occurs between the two parties and Congress and the President (Schick & LoStracco, 2000). During the recent shutdown, for instance, senators portrayed the opposition as ideological extremists, marginalized other points of view, and engaged in name-calling and other acts of incivility. Some senators, however, encouraged their colleagues to "rise above zero sum politics," "live up to the legacy of our Nation as the world's indispensable Nation," and show other countries that America's "political process can withstand grave disagreements" (USS, 2013j, p. S7345). The 2013 budget debate represents an intriguing moment of political judgment that poses questions about the Senate's ability to collaborate for the betterment of society.

During a rare Saturday Senate session, Senator Collins (R-ME) assumed her position on the Senate floor and urged her colleagues to collaborate, compromise, and support her plan for reopening the government. Senator Murkowski (R-AK) and Senator Klobuchar (D-MN) were the first to support Senator Collins's bipartisan effort to change

the tone of the conversation and do something to end the government shutdown. Shortly

thereafter, fourteen senators, seven Republican, six Democrats, and one Independent,

answered her call and formed a bipartisan group that negotiated a cross-party solution

(Abraham, 2013). The 2013 bipartisan group was able to do something that the Senate

rarely sees happen: senators from both sides came out of their partisan corners, stopped

fighting, and started legislating (USS, 2013q). Senator Feinstein (CA-D) shared:

> In the time I have been here, the Senate has become a very different body, and
>
> maybe now is not a bad time to say that. We used to be able to do much more
>
> along the lines of what the group of 14 has gone. But I think scar tissue has built
>
> up in this house. (USS, 2013q, p. S7508)

During the shutdown, Senator Collins (R-ME) told her colleagues that the

bipartisan group's unity was the result of their determination to compromise, govern, and

work together to bring an end to the impasse (USS, 2013q). During their meetings, the

group discussed "plan B" and "presented ideas that would, in fact, find their way toward

compromise" (USS, 2013q, p. 7506). For example, their proposal identified common

ground in reforming the Affordable Care Act in order to attract the necessary votes in the

House (USS, 2013q). These middle-of-the-road legislators advanced a bipartisan deal that

was a voice of moderation. After Senator Collins argued the group's bill on the floor, her

colleagues acknowledged that "when things breakdown here, there are many of us who

desire to solve the problems facing the Nation" (USS, 2013q, p. S7511). In the end,

"Bipartisanship here in the Senate," Senator Boxer (D-CA) stated, "is leading America

out of this painful, partisan, self-inflicted crisis" (USS, 2013q, p. S7525). Others shared

their hope that the bipartisan deal was the "beginning of a new era of cooperation and

civility and problem solving" (House, 2014, para. 2). Although Senate Majority Leader Reid (D-NV) rejected the senators' bipartisan plan, Senator Collins's framework helped reopen the federal government (Killough, 2013b; Koren, 2013).

A senator joining a bipartisan group is not a unique phenomenon. For instance, Senator McCain (R-AZ) and Senator Feingold (D-WI) created a law aimed at reforming the campaign finance system. More recently, Senator Flake (R-AZ) and Senator Heinrich (D-NM) broke bread and encouraged their colleagues to join their bipartisan lunches (Hall, 2014). Additionally, throughout American congressional history, we have witnessed the "Gang of Six" in 2009 who negotiated a compromise on the healthcare reform bill and the "Gang of Fourteen" in 2005 who united to defuse a historical blowup known as the "nuclear option," which would have curtailed the minority's ability to filibuster (Baker, 2015).

What is unique about the recent collaborative group is that 50% of the Senate's women joined forces and provided leadership. Senator McCain (R-AZ) told his colleagues, "Leadership, I must fully admit, was provided primarily by women in the Senate. I won't comment further on that. Seriously, 14 of us got together and came up with a plan after very spirited discussion" (USS, 2013q p. S7504). Although rivalries may exist among some of the women senators, they generally seek "to combat the toxic partisan environment in Congress" by promoting "the idea of social mixing across party lines to reduce partisanship and promote civility" (Swers, 2013, p. 242). For instance, some women senators met informally in Senator Shaheen's (D-NH) office and, over pizza and wine, developed a bipartisan plan to reopen the federal government (Newton-Small, 2013b). This informal gathering allowed the senators to establish relationships

outside the institution that helped them be effective senators (Lawrence, 2013). Although ideological moderates have diminished from the Senate, many of the women senators continue to hold moderate views (Roberts, 2013).

After Senator Collins (R-ME) delivered a speech urging her colleagues to support their plan, Senator Mikulski (D-MD) and Senator Murkowski (R-AK) voiced their support of the sensible policy that came from a group of senators who supported civility above all else (Newton-Small, 2013b). Also, Senator Landrieu (D-LA) wanted her colleagues to know that she was part of the bipartisan effort and thanked "Leader Reid and Leader McConnell for blessing that effort and trying to find a way forward because, as the senator from Hawaii said, this is a very dangerous situation" (USS, 2013n, p. S7438). The 14 men and women created a sensible solution that they hoped would put "an end to a very unfortunate chapter in America's history" (USS, 2013q, p. 7506). The group, who worked collegially and collaboratively, recognized that policymakers could not work together as individuals but instead needed to work together to help their constituents and people around the country (USS, 2013q). In the end, elements of the group's bipartisan plan were found in the Senate leadership's compromise. Shortly after the government reopened, Sens. Heitkamp (D-ND), Klobuchar (D-MN), and Shaheen (D-NH) appeared on the *Today Show.* When asked if anything valuable came out of the shutdown, Senator Shaheen stated, "The more we can do to get people working together the more likely they are to solve this kind of manufactured crisis and keep it from happening again" (K. Hunt, 2013).

Although men were part of the bipartisan group, women played a major role in reopening the federal government. After Senator Collins (R-ME) delivered her floor

speech, women colleagues from both parties were the first to lend their support and

shortly thereafter men joined the bipartisan group (Chang, 2014). Also, many credited the

Senate's women with shaping the package that reopened the federal government (Camia,

2013). For instance, Senator Pryor (D-AK) told his colleagues:

> Some have kind of joked about the process and the women of the Senate. The
>
> truth is that women in the Senate is a good thing, and we see leadership. We are
>
> all glad they allowed us to tag along so we could see how it is done. Isn't that
>
> right?. (USS, 2013q, p. S7507)

Many news outlets also featured stories about the Senate women's roles in ending the

government shutdown; Senator Collins told a *USA Today* reporter, "I know my

colleagues are tired of hearing about women in the Senate" (Camia, 2013, para. 7). This

chapter studies women senators' rhetoric in order to understand the rhetorical strategies

they used to encourage civility.

Darr (2011) urges those studying civility in the Senate to "look to the context of

the debate and to the issues under consideration before judging a particular tactic to be

uncivil" (p. 612). The debate surrounding the government shutdown included partisan

jabs that caused people to question the body's decorum and civility. In particular, Senate

Rule 19, the right to debate, was called into question. Rule 19 "is probably most pivotal

for shaping what does and does not occur on the Senate floor" because the rule governs

debate (Heitshusen, 2014, p. 2). Recognizing the decline of civility, Senate Majority

Leader Reid (D-NV) reminded his colleagues about "the rules that help keep debate

among senators civil, even when we are discussing matters in which Senators completely

disagree" (USS, 2013g, p. S7171). The centuries old rules he referred to included

senators not using their colleagues' first names and addressing senators in the third

person through the presiding officer. This courtesy norm "serves as a psychological

barrier between antagonists" (Matthews, 1960, p. 97). Senator Reid suggested that the

"rules preserve distance" and help senators "debate ideas" instead of "personalities" to

"maintain a more civil decorum" (USS, 2013g, p. S7171).

Along with a lack of civility, the 113th Congress experienced historically low

approval ratings (Newport, 2013). Acknowledging their "pretty low approval ratings,"

Senator Murkowski (R-AK) told her colleagues, "It is going to take a while for us to

rebuild any credibility" (USS, 2013q, p. 7505). The senator offered honesty and

collaboration as ways to begin rebuilding trust. Senator Heitkamp (D-ND) also

acknowledged that the American people had little confidence in the U.S. Congress, and

she hoped that "fulfilling the promise and commitment of this agreement" would get

Congress back to regular order and instill a sense of confidence in policymakers' abilities

to do their jobs (USS, 2013q, p. S7507). Like her colleague, Senator Heitkamp expressed

her optimism that conversations across the aisle would continue and help the Senate

flourish. Civility, after all, is a rhetorical tool that can help senators deliberate and

encourage bipartisanship.

The Case for Civility

Today's Senate climate breeds incivility, including heated debates and scathing

attacks. In turn, that discourtesy cheapens our policymaking process and diminishes the

quality of political discourse (Darr, 2013). Incivility is described as the antithesis of

productive debate, because incivility stifles dialogue (Carter, 1998; Meyer, 2000;

Sinopoli, 1995), discourages participation, and reduces the occurrence of quality of

deliberation in Congress (Uslaner, 2000). Scholars allege that increasing levels of incivility in the legislative branches of the United States government are associated with partisanship (Evans & Oleszek, 1998; Ornstein, 1997; Uslaner, 1991) and have harmful effects on the policymaking process (Evans & Oleszek, 1998; Loomis, 2000; Uslaner, 1993, 2000). A fuller understanding of civility requires attention to Senate argumentation, including floor debates. In the following section, I discuss standards for civility broadly and civility in the Senate particularly.

Standards for Civility

Civility requires that people are open to compromise, pursue consensus, are respectful both verbally and nonverbally (Uslaner, 1993) and maintain a sense of commonality or shared experience (Carter, 1998). People can create civility by acknowledging other points of view (Sinopoli, 1995), expressing a belief in bipartisanship (Uslaner, 1991), and maintaining a willingness to meet with others on equal terms (Meyer, 2000). Civility requires a dialogue that encourages criticism of ideas in a constructive fashion (Carter, 1998). Although there is no single definition of civility, most agree that civility is needed for our democracy to survive. Some conceptualize civility as a proper standard for moral conduct that encourages mutual understanding (Darr, 2013). Others think of civility as manners (Carter, 1998). As opposed to uncivil language that is associated with "unproductive personal and partisan attaches" (Evans & Oleszek, 1998, p. 27), "civil language makes compromise across partisan and ideological lines possible" (Uslaner, 2000, p. 35). Civility can be conceptualized "as a set of standards for conducting public argument" (Darr, 2011, p. 604). With this in mind, I

describe civility as a rhetorical act that encourages others to share their viewpoints and involves reciprocity, courtesy, and a belief in bipartisanship.

Civility is a folkway that denotes a normative rule that motivates senators to perform important duties, rewards behavior, and helps senators grapple with conflicts while maintaining comity (Matthews, 1960). Civility has many side effects. For instance, speakers enacting civil language encourage cooperation (Ornstein, 1997) and foster friendships that make comprise across party lines possible (Uslaner, 2000). Friendships among senators are political and personal, and some senators' friendships transcend professional boundaries to include an exchange of personal confidences and emotional commitment (Baker, 1999). Uslaner (2000) suggests that friendship across party lines signifies a legislature marked by trust. The friendships that develop encourage civility and generate comity. Comity is "a more general syndrome of treating others with respect both in language and in deed" (Uslaner, 2000, p. 34). "Comity," according to Uslaner (2000), "involves reciprocity, which simply means that people must respect their promises and obligations to others. They must also recognize that another point of view is legitimate" (p. 35). Uslaner (1993) argues that reciprocity is central to comity because "comity becomes sincere only when it is founded on mutual respect and obligations" (p. 9). Comity, which refers to courtesy and considerate behavior, can enhance cooperative decision-making (Uslaner, 1993). For instance, Senator McCaskill (D-MO) told a reporter that the women of the Senate trust each other and that trust makes compromise possible (Thomas, 2013).

Conversely, incivility is "unproductive personal and partisan attacks" (Evans & Oleszek, 1998, p. 27) and hinders policymaking (Evans & Oleszek, 1998; Loomis, 2000;

Uslaner, 2000). Unlike civil discourse that relies on reasoned debate and rational

dialogue, uncivil discourse ends debate and stifles discussion (Darr, 2007, 2011). Uncivil

discourse is disrespectful, and the speaker may be rude (Meyer, 2000), utter disparaging

remarks (Pell, 1997), and attack people instead of their arguments. Incivility also includes

verbal confrontation (Uslaner, 1991), unwillingness to compromise (Meyer, 2000), and

self-promotion (Loomis, 2000). When refusing to work with others, people will

sometimes have a rancorous tone and this tone is characteristic of incivility (Pell, 1997).

The increasing incivility in Congress makes negotiations difficult and senators end up

spending too much time and energy on unproductive partisan attacks (Evans & Oleszek,

1998). Ultimately, senators' lack of cooperation appears to weaken the legislative body.

Democracy requires passionate disagreement and America's two party system

creates an oppositional setting that is not necessarily bad. Yet, for all senators to have a

voice, there is a need for civility that encourages consensus building and provides the

minority with speaking opportunities (Kraushaar, 2014). In analyzing how policymakers

promote civility within a policy debate, I offer an understanding of how the U.S. Senate

uses rhetoric in the performance of their government functions.

Civility in the U.S. Senate

The Senate has a reputation for being civil because members have historically

created bipartisan friendships that encourage courtesy and agreement (Uslaner, 2000).

The Senate is also known for its civil deliberations, traditions of courtesy, and bipartisan

friendships (Uslaner, 2000). Some attribute the Senate's civility to the normative rules of

conduct that guide senators' communication and behaviors and offer cultural values that

provide order in everyday life (Uslaner, 1991). These rules provide "motivation for the

performance of legislative duties that, perhaps, would not otherwise be performed"

(Matthews, 1959, p. 1074). For instance, the Senate's rules and procedures for debate

encourage senators to become compromisers and bargainers (Matthews, 1959). The

Senate's rules include behavior guidelines, standards of assessment, and emotive

commitments. Moreover, the cumbersome rules offer a variety of tools that lawmakers

can use to delay legislation (Evans & Oleszek, 2000).

Debates on the Senate floor are framed by procedures, which encompass the

formal rules of the Senate (Evans & Oleszek, 2000) and seek to balance discourse for the

one side against discourse for the other side (Sheckels, 2000). To successfully pass

legislation, senators must get to know one another, forge consensus before they go to the

floor, and work with adversaries while maintaining flexible relationships (Smith &

Smith, 1990). These relationships encourage senators to value bipartisanship because

when senators see the other as a person, they are more likely to understand opposing

viewpoints and not see others as their adversaries (Smith & Smith, 1990).

According to the rules, senators should refer to themselves in the third person and

offer remarks that are addressed to the presiding officer instead of the other senators

(Matthews, 1959). For instance, while taking turns speaking on the floor on October 16,

2013, Senator Ayotte (R-NH) and Senator Shaheen (D-NH) had an awkward third person

exchange. Senator Shaheen stated, "I very much appreciate my fellow Senator from New

Hampshire Ms. Ayotte for her remarks" and "I ask my colleague . . . if this kind of

bipartisanship we tried to exhibit for New Hampshire would be important for all of us to

think about as we try to solve those challenges long term" (USS, 2013q, p. S7511).

Senator Ayotte responded, "Let me say to my colleague from New Hampshire, the senior senator from New Hampshire, I agree with that" (USS, 2013q, p. S7511).

Additionally, senators refer to one another as "the distinguished senator from," my "friends across the aisle," the "able Senator from," or "the gentle lady from" a particular state as a way to show public praise (Matthews, 1959, p. 1069; 1960, p. 97). This courtesy norm can sometimes interfere with senators' abilities to communicate. Some senators explicitly praise their colleagues; for instance Senator Ayotte (R-NH) stated, "I wish to praise my colleague, the senior Senator from Maine Senator Collins, who came to the floor earlier today with an idea she has drawn not only form Members in this Chamber but in the House of Representatives" (USS, 2013i, p. S7299).

For the Senate to function successfully, legislators must enact some restraint and cooperate with other senators (Sinclair, 2000). Therefore, another Senate folkway is comity. Scholars disagree about when comity began to erode because the 104th Congress was the first to record what happened on the floor and the roll call can be amended to make the public believe that policymakers preserve decorum during floor debates (Jamieson, 2000). However, we do know that in the early years of the Republic brawls and duels frequently occurred, and during the antebellum period policymakers, experienced violent verbal attacks (Uslaner, 1991). Comity was restored in the late nineteenth century when policymakers became friendlier (Uslaner, 1991). Then, at the start of the twentieth century, the two parties were divided in Congress and observers identified legislators' sharp tongues as the cause of a hostile Congress (Uslaner, 1991).

During the 1960s and 1970s, Congress experienced a transformation that resulted in major changes in the Senate (Sinclair, 1989). For instance, in the mid-1950s, senators,

on average, offered one amendment per congressional session, exercised restraint in their

floor behavior, freshmen legislators rarely participated on the floor, and amendments

were typically brought to the floor by members of committees (Sinclair, 1989). In the

1970s, however, senators regularly offered three or more amendments and a group of

hyperactive senators emerged who offered upwards of twenty-two amendments per

Congress (Sinclair, 1989). Also, freshmen were active on the floor, and senators who did

not sit on the coinciding committee offered amendments (Sinclair, 1989). This changed

the dynamics on the floor and "almost all senators, regardless of party, region, seniority,

or ideology, are now floor activists" (Sinclair, 1989, p. 85). By the end of the 1970s,

Congress had become a less civil deliberative body (Uslaner, 2000).

Throughout the 1980s, the Senate experienced an increased level of tension and

incivility rose (Mann & Ornstein, 2008). Uslaner (2000) proposes that the "collapse of

the congressional party system and the increased polarization between Republicans and

Democrats" is a reason incivility has risen (p. 42). Whereas senators in the 1950s wielded

their incivility behind closed doors and specialized in policy areas, policymakers in the

1980s used the Senate floor, media, and other public arenas to influence their colleagues

and became generalists with broad knowledge (Sinclair, 1989).

In 1996, for the first time in American history, 14 members of the Senate retired

citing increased levels of partisanship and a decline of a spirit of compromise.

Throughout their farewell speeches, the senators offered "a plea to move from partisan

bickering to bipartisan cooperation" (Ornstein, 1997, p. xii). During their tenure in the

Senate, the 14 men and women set themselves apart from their colleagues by being the

"middle of the roaders" who were thoughtful, fair, and moderate (Tannen, 1998). Despite

urging Congress to be less partisan and more civil, American politics remains paralyzed. American policymakers grapple with conflicts inside and outside the chamber, and the Senate experiences a decline in comity. For instance, in 2009 as President Obama outlined his healthcare reform proposal in the State of the Union address, Rep. Wilson (R-SC) yelled, "You lie!". Shortly thereafter, the House passed the first resolution in history condemning a policymaker's interruption as an act of incivility (Hulse, 2009).

During the government shutdown debate, policymakers were barely seen speaking to members of the other party, much less negotiating a budget deal. Despite policymakers being malevolent, some senators remained civil while attempting to persuade their audience to come out of their partisan corners and offer a solution to the government shutdown. Following the Senate folkways, the women of the Senate engaged in cross-aisle discussions and spoke formally and informally about the best way to end the impasse. As they spoke on the Senate floor, the rhetors modeled a feminine style of rhetoric while urging their colleagues to join them in having productive conversations.

<div align="center">Feminine Style</div>

When women spoke outside the home during the nineteenth century, they adapted their speaking styles to the experiences of their female audiences (Campbell, 1989) and adopted a speaking style that was consistent with their femininity (Reiser, 2009). This involved creating a peer relationship with the audience and speaking as experts of their own experiences (Campbell, 1989). A feminine style discourse relies on personal experiences, uses inductive reasoning, and identifies with the audiences (Campbell, 1989). A speaker who employs feminine style creates a peer relationship with her or his

audience (Campbell, 1989) and suggests, invites, and requests action instead of demanding it (Hayden, 1999).

Speakers can use feminine style discourse to help an audience participate in the persuasive process (Campbell, 1989). For instance, Hayden (1999) finds that Jeannette Rankin created identification with her audience based on their common experiences and used inclusive language to create a personal relationship with her audience. Similarly, when the wives of political candidates deliver speeches at nominating conventions, they frequently have used their speaking time to highlight points of commonality between the average citizen and their husbands (Vigil, 2014). For example, during her 2000 convention speech, Laura Bush created "a peer-based perspective and encouraged identification building by emphasizing both her and her husband's shared experiences with "average" Americans" (Vigil, 2014, p. 338). Furthermore, Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel delivered speeches that encouraged coalition building by incorporating descriptions of common values that defined the people of Germany (Sheeler & Anderson, 2014).

Many scholars have advanced Campbell's perspective of feminine style to include mainstream political discourse (Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Blakenship & Robson, 1995; Dow & Tonn, 1993; Johnson, 2005; Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 1996). Dow and Tonn (1993), Blakenship and Robson (1995), and Johnson (2005) study the argument structures used in presidential debate discourse by paying particular attention to candidates' uses of feminine style. Dow and Tonn suggest that former Governor Ann Richards's (D-TX) discourse was a "manifestation of contemporary feminine style" (p. 289), and they explain how feminine style functioned as an alternative mode of political

reasoning. They conclude that Richards's use of examples "reflects a philosophy stressing the utility of practical wisdom in judging truth." Also, her use of self-disclosure "promotes a political philosophy governed by the fostering of connections and affective relationships" and creates a "rhetor/audience relationship based on nurturing principles" (p. 298). In other words, they determine that feminine style is present in mainstream political discourse and promotes empowerment through blending the form and content of a message.

Although Campbell's (1989) original model reflected the experiences of women and examined a rhetoric that was less confrontational, scholars acknowledge that the word "feminine" is not grounded in biological difference; consequently, men can successfully employ feminine style and feminine style is not equated with woman (Blakenship & Robson, 1995; Jamieson, 1995). For instance, Banwart and McKinney (2005) find that during debates, female and male political candidates adopt a strategy of gendered adaptiveness as they meet face-to-face on the debate stage and are thus mindful of gendered stereotypes. In addition, Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles (1996) apply feminine style to presidential candidates' campaign films and determine that although the pictures relied on personal and inductive messages, the candidates packaged masculine themes in the garb of feminine style. In marginalizing the feminine, according to Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles, the presidential candidates continued the hegemony of patriarchal images. Johnson (2005) confirms these findings and suggests that feminine style functions "to promote tradition rather than to empower and create an alternative means for political judgment" (p. 14).

Campbell's (1989) original theory was a model for rhetorical criticism yet scholars have adapted variable coding for feminine style for content analysis (Banwart & McKinney, 2005) and public policy discourse (Blakenship & Robson, 1995). Furthermore, Blakenship and Robson (1995) expand Campbell's theory by advancing five features of feminine style and conclude that feminine style is "comprised of the dimensions of discourse which may reveal or point to epistemic stances" (Blakenship and Robson, 1995, p. 357). Furthermore, Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles (1996) define "feminine style as personal, organized in inductive or non-linear patterns, stylized and ornamental, reliant on anecdotes and examples, and likely to encourage identification between a speaker and audience" (p. 339). From their research, we learn that feminine style rhetoric can be used for non-feminist ends that bolster the hegemonic masculinity of America's political arena.

The first characteristic of feminine style that Blakenship and Robson (1995) propose is "basing political judgments on concrete, lived experience" (p. 359). Lived experience involves relying on personal examples to identify with the audience (Campbell, 1989). References to lived or personal experience have been defined as "disclosing personal information or otherwise including personal feelings or experiences" (Johnson, 2005, p. 11). For instance, during her presidential campaign, Elizabeth Dole enacted feminine style when she revealed a desire to work with people, addressed her audience as peers, and based her authority on their shared experiences together (Reiser, 2009). When speakers discuss lived experience, they use narratives and examples to reference their personal understandings (Johnson, 2005). Additionally, Dow and Tonn (1993) find that Ann Richards's (R-TX) gubernatorial speeches contained traces of

narrative, concrete examples, analogies, and anecdotes. Also, male and female candidates alike use personal disclosure, anecdotes, and examples to create relationships with their audience (Dow & Tonn, 1993; Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 1996). Thus, candidates, regardless of their sex, may use their lived experience to reach their audience.

Additional characteristics of feminine style that Blakenship and Robson (1995) discuss include valuing inclusivity and the relational nature of being. By enacting discourse that shows that they value inclusivity, a speaker acknowledges that she or he sees public service as an opportunity to serve people regardless of their demographics. Third, feminine style includes "conceptualizing the power of public office as a capacity to 'get things done' and to empower others" (Blakenship & Robson, 1995, p. 361). This includes having a desire to give power to a group rather than having power over individuals. The fourth characteristic is a holistic approach to policy formation that occurs when rhetors recognize the greater system from which a particular problem arises. The fifth characteristic studies how women's issues move to the forefront of the public arena (Blakenship & Robson, 1995).

Although male senators may also use feminine style, there are several reasons why I chose to focus on women senators' discourse to understand how policymakers encourage civility. First, the media outlets produced numerous stories about the women in the Senate uniting to overcome partisanship and led the way to reopening the government (Camia, 2013; K. Hunt, 2013; Newton-Small, 2013a, 2013b; Timm, 2013; Weisman & Steinhauer, 2013). The media frequently compared the women and men's approaches to policymaking by highlighting women's collaborative efforts. Second, it is unique that of the 14 senators who joined the bipartisan committee, six were women and

many of the remaining women senators delivered at least one floor speech that

encouraged their colleagues to collaborate and compromise. Also, the senators'

colleagues, such as Senator McCain (R-AZ) and Senator Pryor (D-AK), recognized that

women in the Senate led the way during the budget talks (Bassett, 2013). Third,

Allegheny College awarded the women in the Senate the third annual Prize for Civility in

Public Life. Allegheny College President Jim Mullen suggested that the 20 women in the

Senate refrained from personal attacks and made an effort to be civil. Others argued that

during the government shutdown, the "20 women in the Senate at a very difficult and

challenging moment in American politics, a time when incivility was reigning, got

together and said enough and set a wonderful example for us and particularly for young

people" (Newton-Small, 2014, para. 3). Therefore, the women's discourse provides a

means for studying how senators encourage civility.

　　　　When employing the feminine style lens, researchers have typically looked for

themes consistent with the elements of feminine style discovered within the discourse

(Campbell, 1989; Dow & Tonn, 1993; Hayden, 1999; Vigil, 2014). Similarly, the purpose

of this chapter is to draw attention to how senators can use a model of feminine style

rhetoric to encourage civility and collective action. Understanding how senators relate to

colleagues is important because, as Uslaner (1991) recommends, "When people agree on

values, they have a greater sense of community and are more likely to trust each other. In

turn, they adhere to norms such as courtesy and reciprocity, the fundamental basis of

comity" (p. 13). The senators addressed their audiences as peers/valued inclusivity, used

claims of personal experience to achieve identification, and invited the audience to join

their bipartisan discussion. These three characteristics of feminine style structure the following rhetorical analysis.

<center>Characteristic I: Audience as Peers and Valuing Inclusivity</center>

The United States Senate follows its own unwritten rules, norms of conduct, and manners of behavior. In fact, a cardinal rule of Senate behavior is "that political disagreements should not influence personal feelings" (Matthews, 1960, p. 97). Senators can follow these standards by forging connections with their audience. For example, in order to end the government shutdown, some senators sought to persuade their audience to support a long-term bipartisan budget that the American people expected and to "stop allowing our families and communities to be hurt while we negotiate" (USS, 2013e, p. 7125). Her use of common ground was consistent with Campbell's (1989) conception of feminine style, because in referring to her audience as equals, Senator Murray (D-WA) showed that she valued inclusivity. I subsequently discuss how senators' speeches maintained a participatory peer tone.

First, when the women senators spoke to their audience as peers, they used points of common ground to emphasize the need to pass bipartisan legislation. For instance, Senator Ayotte (R-NH) stated, "What we need is results. We need both sides of the aisle working together to negotiate, to come up with a plan to fight the government, to move forward, to find common ground" (USS, 2013e, p. S7131). Similarly, Senator Hirono (D-HI) urged, "What we need to always keep in mind is that these dollars and these terms impact real people, real lives" (USS, 2013h, p. S7227). In so doing, the senators established relationships with their audiences and presented their ideas as representative of others in the Senate. Their statements supported a form of governing that valued

inclusivity beyond a particular constituency, and Senator Hirono along with her Senate colleagues, used language that included everyone who was affected by legislative decisions.

Supporting her colleague's opinion, Senator Murray (D-WA) professed, "We can work together toward a long-term deal. This is common sense. It is the responsible thing to do" (USS, 2013e, p. S7125). This type of consensus building and compromise is essential to civility (Uslander, 1993). In suggesting a willingness to get along with members of opposing parties, Senator Murray's claim also supported the cooperative dimension of bipartisanship. Additionally, Senator Mikulski (D-MD) acknowledged that Americans wanted action and expected them to resolve the situation by acting "swiftly to get the government up and running again" (USS, 2013d, p. S7079). Rather than highlighting their differences, the senators attempted to redefine how the federal government should operate and demonstrated "understanding, equality, support, closeness, and inclusivity" (Banwart & McKinney, 2005, p. 354). Their outlooks exhibited a willingness to meet others half way and on equal terms; therefore, in addition to being characteristics of civility, their viewpoints contained features of feminine style language.

Second, some senators' remarks illustrated an appreciation of multiple perspectives, especially those of the American people. For example, Senator Shaheen (D-NH) advised her colleagues:

I think we need to work together. We need to try and avoid any further harm to people who depend not only on the jobs . . . but also those people who benefit from the services the Federal Government provides. (USS, 2013d, p. S7096)

Civility is grounded in the "free exchange of ideas" (Loomis, 2000, pp. 2-3), and for the

Senate to function successfully, legislators must understand opposing viewpoints and use

respectful language. Because the senator's remarks were relational in nature, her rhetoric

functioned as a way to connect Senator Shaheen to her audience.

> Additionally, Senator Murray (D-WA) professed:
>
> There are innumerable problems across our country—families who have been
>
> challenged, sad stories that should be taken care of in every part of our country, in
>
> each of our States, with families we know who are hurting because of this
>
> government shutdown. (USS, 2013i, p. S7287).

Senator Murray acknowledged that legislative decisions extended beyond two senators'

constituents to include all Americans. Consequently, the senator's rhetoric achieved the

norm of civility, because in recognizing other points of view as legitimate, she created a

respectful atmosphere that was free of personal attacks. While speaking in a personal

tone, Senator Murray offered a leadership style that emphasized family and cross-party

deliberation, and she urged her colleagues to keep the channels of communication open.

In addition to encouraging other viewpoints, the women senators also urged their

audiences to work together to pass legislation. For example, Senator Murray (D-WA)

directed her peers to look at both sides of the argument and be responsible adults who

meet around a table and "work out our disagreements between each other" (USS, 2013e,

p. S7110). Senator Murray and her colleagues frequently spoke to their audiences as

peers while arguing that they all had to work together. Used in such a way, their rhetoric

met the norm of courtesy (Matthews, 1959). Senator Mikulski (D-MD) added that even

though members of the Appropriations Committee have disputes and disagreements on

matters of policy and funding levels, "there has been a great sense of cooperation" and "everyone has their day and everybody has their say" (USS, 2013e, p. S7122). Senator Ayotte (R-NH) also prompted policymakers to "give up the blame game on both sides" and "come out of that meeting [leadership and the President] with results. Yes, results mean that both sides are going to have to negotiate" (USS, 2013e, p. S7132). By encouraging diverse viewpoints and stressing the importance of negotiations, the senators pressed for a constructive debate on policy issues and strengthened the Senate's integrity.

Third, a speaker using feminine style will attempt to achieve identification by creating a personal connection between the speaker and the audience (Campbell, 1989). Demonstrating this point, senators used their involvements as legislators a means for relating to their audiences. For instance, Senator Heitkamp's (D-ND) experiences with tough votes gave her a way to relate to the audience. The senator disclosed:

> I want to say I know what it is like to take a tough vote that your party doesn't agree with. I know what it is like to feel as though you have let people down who are part of a group that is helping and moving things along and that represents, kind of, your team to some degree. (USS, 2013g, p. S7203)

Likewise, Senator Landrieu (D-LA) affirmed, "I know it is hard when you make a mistake to admit you are wrong. It is very difficult to do. But this would be a time to do it and then move on to negotiations" (USS, 2013h, p. S7236). Similar to their colleagues, these women have made mistakes and taken tough votes, and the audience could draw conclusions from the speakers' self-disclosures. Also, Senator Stabenow (D-MI) reminded policymakers that they negotiated a bipartisan farm bill and are therefore able

to compromise (USS, 2013l). Senators' experiences offered a means for encouraging collective action and nurturing relationships.

In short, civility is necessary for creating a productive deliberative space because civil language makes compromise between people across the aisles possible (Uslaner, 2000). Analyzed through the lens of feminine style, senators' discourse encouraged civility by using a peer tone, urging cross-party interactions, and expressing an appreciation of multiple perspectives. As they incorporated personal anecdotes and inspired audience participation, the senators assumed a peer-based relationship; in so doing, senators' feminine style of discourse helped them make personal connections with their audiences. Claims of personal experience, I argue below, also contributed to the creation of a civil legislating environment.

<div align="center">Characteristic II: Claims of Personal Experience</div>

Uslaner (1993) proposes that comity's chief components are courtesy and reciprocity, and these norms foster a respectful legislative environment that encourages senators to get to know one another. During the debate, senators shared stories about how the government shutdown affected all Americans and explained how their bipartisan endeavors would end the impasse. Claims of personal experience, which are characteristics of feminine style discourse, include language that is personal in tone and validates speakers and their audiences (Campbell, 1989). In examining their rhetoric, we learn how senators can "create a climate and a tone where people," show they want "to be patriotic, which is to make sure that the esteem of the U.S. government continues to take hold both among our own people and around the world" (USS, 2013q, p. S7517). For instance, Senator Boxer (D-CA) shared her personal experiences while arguing for a way

to end the government shutdown; she admitted to having served with five different presidents and although she did not agree with them all the time, she knew that they could "work to change things in a democratic way, try to pass legislation on those issues" (USS, 2013l, p. S7406). Her rhetoric fostered a civil Senate debate that urged her colleagues to collaborate. In the following section, I examine senators' claims of personal experience, including their professional commitments and friendships, to understand how feminine style and civility functioned as rhetorical resources.

Senators' Involvements

The government shutdown's effects were far-reaching and severe, and as the federal government's closure continued, policymakers struggled to collaborate and do the job that Americans elected them to do. Americans, after all, wanted legislators "to put forth constructive ideas to solve problems" (USS, 2013j, p. S7342). Senators shared their experiences while urging their colleagues to work together to reopen the federal government. These stories included narratives about how the shutdown affected lawmakers' abilities to govern, how the closure harmed their constituents, and explained how their personal experiences equipped them with the skills they needed to negotiate a major deal.

First, throughout their floor speeches, senators shared brief examples that described how the manufactured crisis harmed their positions as legislators. With a heavy heart, Senator Mikulski (D-MD) stated that she was "the longest serving woman in Senate history" and in her 25 years in the Senate, she had only closed down her office in 1995 and in 2013 (USS, 2013d, p. S7079). Similarly, Senator Feinstein (D-CA) told her colleagues that she had "helped make a lot of tough choices on which programs to fund,

which not to fund, et cetera, but never have things been as bad as they are today" (USS, 2013d, p. S7081). Sens. Mikulski and Feinstein were well-established senators who, in 2013, chaired Senate committees tasked with ensuring Americans' safety domestically and abroad. By sharing their stories, their colleagues learned that the shutdown made it difficult for the government to keep citizens safe. Furthermore, reminding her colleagues that they passed a bipartisan farm bill, Senator Stabenow (D-MI) announced that the ranchers were not only unable to get the help they needed from their FSA office, but they did not have "long-term certainty of agriculture policy and a safety net when there is a catastrophe" (USS, 2013l, p. S7396). Senators' involvements remained an instrumental part of their rhetorical strategy and offered them an opportunity to define the terms of the debate.

Second, during the dispute, senators shared their constituents' accounts of the shutdown and expressed voters' frustrations with the political games being played in Washington. Broadly, senators shared stories about the "many people who were caught in the middle between this unnecessary inflicted crisis" (USS, 2013j, p. S7318) and the impact that the shutdown had on families, small businesses, the economy, and America. These stories included content from constituents' letters, local newspapers, and interpersonal interactions. Some senators, such as Senator Collins (R-ME), recounted tales about how the government shutdown impacted constituents, including disabled veterans who were "waiting to have their claims handled," and explained why the shutdown represented a failure to govern (USS, 2013i, p. S7290). Senator Collins admitted that her constituents' stories were the reason she worked with Senator Murkowski (R-AK) to create "a three-point plan to bring this impasse to a speedy end"

(USS, 2013i, p. S7290). As the senators worked on the plan, they embarked on a collaborative effort that facilitated a cooperative decision-making process.

Civility requires that people maintain a sense of shared experience, and senators' uses of others' disclosures invited identification with the audience, all of whom shared similar constituent stories. Senator Hagan (D-NC), for instance, told her audience that veterans' claims were not being processed because the offices were closed and restaurant owners in western North Carolina were unable to make payroll while the national parks were closed (USS, 2013i). Senators peppered these anecdotes throughout their speeches and doing so helped them personalize the government shutdown.

Additionally, in relaying their constituents' stories, senators created a nurturing persona and showed that they were in touch with average Americans' needs. For instance, Senator Landrieu (D-LA) organized a Small Business Committee hearing, and Senator Shaheen (D-NH) relayed people's stories as a reminder that Americans had "been suffering as a result of the shutdown" (USS, 2013q, p. S7509). Senator Fischer (R-NE) read letters from constituents, including farmers and federal employees, which explained how the government shutdown hurt Nebraskans (USS, 2013j). By articulating people's grievances, the senators confirmed what their peers already knew as true; the government shutdown was harming all Americans, and the stories may have encouraged the audience to participate in solving the problem.

Likewise, Senator Mikulski (D-MD) shared stories about the effect the shutdown had on Maryland, which had one of the largest concentrations of federal agencies (USS, 2013k). As Senator Stabenow (D-MI) told tales about cattle ranchers and "the men and women who are working hard to bring in the harvest," she reminded her colleagues that

they came together to pass the Farm Bill and suggested that a similar bipartisan effort

could end the government shutdown (USS, 2013l, p. S7397). By divulging this

information, the senators provided concrete examples and offered a rhetoric that was

personal in tone. Used in such a way, rhetoric may have helped the senators identify with

their audiences and promoted a rational public dialogue that was grounded in logic and

reason, not personal attacks and emotion.

   Third, throughout their floor speeches, the senators communicated anecdotes that

explained how their experiences made them well suited for solving the problem.

Specifically, policymakers' stories explained how they collaborated with their colleagues

in the past and in doing so, the senators described their actions in terms of producing an

inclusive environment and enhancing civility. For instance, Senator Mikulski (D-MD)

often referenced her bipartisan endeavors. She recounted how she had extended her

"hand to the other side of the aisle, as I have done repeatedly during the year I have

chaired this Committee on Appropriations. I have negotiated, I have comprised, and I will

continue to do the same" (USS, 2013g, p. S7189). In reciting this story, Senator Mikulski

demonstrated her belief that an open exchange of ideas was important to creating a

functional legislating environment.

   Additionally, Senator Mikulski (D-MD) urged the creation of a bipartisan

coalition by calling upon her "friends on the other side of the aisle" who, in the past, have

"come together out of mutual respect to solve mutual problems, being of help to each

other mutually, that we have been able to keep the government functioning and doing it

in a way that is smart and affordable" (USS, 2013k p. S7361). She continued, "We

actually like doing it [working together], for us pragmatists to get into a room, solve

problems, give and take, and actually learn from each other" (USS, 2013k, p. S7361). Even though ideological splits are frequent, the senator explained how she had achieved bipartisan deals and consensus decision-making. Civility is grounded in concern with other points of view; in sharing these stories, the senator exhibited her dedication to cooperation, adherence to norms of civility, and willingness to take criticism. Her personal experiences, therefore, indicated that she was well suited to solve the crisis as chairwoman, because Senator Mikulski had a reputation for seeking out opposing viewpoints and encouraging an open exchange of ideas.

Moreover, Senator Murray (D-WA) frequently used her experiences as the Senate Budget Committee Chair to explain what she had done to prevent the government shutdown. She shared, "I have been out here 19 times since last March saying: Let's go to conference committee and resolve our differences" (USS, 2013f, p. S7150). According to Uslaner (1993), civility requires compromise and actively seeking other perspectives. In sharing this personal experience, Senator Murray explained how she had enacted civility, expressed a belief in bipartisanship, and exhibited a willingness to meet others on equal terms. Likewise, Senator McCaskill (D-MO) stated, "I am really hopeful about my colleagues across the aisle in the Senate, many of whom I have worked with on many different issues and a lot of whom I have worked with on bringing down spending" (USS, 2013n, p. S7453). Similar to her colleagues, Senator McCaskill's story revealed that she respected others' opinions, encouraged interaction, and participation. These actions suggested that she followed the Senate norm of civility and helped foster a productive legislative environment.

Additionally, other senators told their colleagues about their experiences with collaboration and cooperation. A principle ingredient to civility is respect for others and senators' stories showed how they had historically achieved compromise. After all, "Civility," according to Herbst (2010), "demands arguing, listening, and respect for the deliberative process" (p. 13). Senators' civil discourse enhanced Senate deliberation by encouraging proper democratic debate. For instance, Senator Boxer (D-CA) served with five presidents since she arrived in Washington. She did not "agree with these Presidents all the time"; however, she claimed that she "acted like a grownup" and worked "to change things in a democratic way" (USS, 2013l p. S7406). Although Senator Boxer disagreed with conservative Republicans, her story insinuated that she encouraged deliberation and constructive conversation, which are defining characteristics of civility. Furthermore, these examples suggest that civility helped the policymakers empower their audiences to become agents of change.

Fourth, during their floor speeches, the senators divulged information about their families. For example, Senator Mikulski (D-MD) used her grandmother's and father's experiences as small business owners to explain how the shutdown affected mom-and-pop stores (USS, 2013f). Also, as Senator Heitkamp (D-ND) admitted that what was going on in Congress made no sense, she summoned her father's question "how darn dumb are you?" (USS, 2013n, p. S7442). She employed a feminine style of rhetoric that was personal in tone and described the government shutdown as a tragedy that harmed every American. Additionally, after thanking senators on both sides of the aisle for working together with their leadership, Senator Ayotte (R-NH) related the government shutdown to lessons that parents teach their children; the senator disclosed that she told

her daughter, "You are right Kate, we have to work together; otherwise, we are not going to get this solved" (USS, 2013q, p. 7511). By using this example, Senator Ayotte created a personal tone that invited the audience to consider how their policymaking efforts affected their families. Senator Ayotte's rhetoric also reflected what Dow and Tonn (1993) describe as "feminine ideals of care, nurturance, and family relationships" (p. 289).

These instances showed how the women of the Senate used a maternal voice, including empathy and caregiving, during their floor activism. The maternal rhetorical approach is anchored by the values of interconnection and nurturance (Hayden, 2003) and the senators' common experiences provided a force for cohesion. For instance, the lawmakers used their relational experiences as mothers or daughters to address the need for civility. The senators appeared to use feminine style and maternal appeals to strengthen Senate deliberation.

In short, by sharing their involvements and others' experiences, senators displayed signs of feminine style rhetoric that helped them create a zone of civility in the Senate. While disclosing stories about their families and political endeavors, the Senate's women attempted to persuade their audiences to join their efforts to end the government shutdown. As the lawmakers shared their personal experiences, their audiences learned that some policymakers recognized others' viewpoints as legitimate. This rhetorical technique should have helped senators get to know one another and create relationships that cross party lines (Ornstien, 2000). After all, a senator's civility enhances cooperative decision-making and makes bipartisan friendships possible.

Senators' Friendships

In light of our current era of distrust and individualism, it is important to examine instances where senators' rhetoric creates a civil policymaking environment. A decline in trust, heightened partisanship, and more individualism makes it difficult to forge relationships. "Trust," Uslaner (1993) argues, "is the basis of cooperation in collective action" (p. 3). During the government shutdown debate, senators shared their personal experiences with other senators as evidence for why they supported the bipartisan effort to end the impasse. Senator Klobuchar (D-MN), for example, described her colleagues as showing courage while crossing the aisle and thanked them "for their amazing work, for their good humor during a very difficult time, and for the fact that we are finally moving forward and ending the brinkmanship" (USS, 2013q, p. S7505). Senators can foster a civil environment by building friendships, because senators' friendships signal a legislature marked by trust. Senator Klobuchar described courage in the Senate as standing "next to someone you do not always agree with for the betterment of this country" (USS, 2013q, p. S7505). I subsequently argue that senators' friendships became a rhetorical tool for inciting collective action.

First, during the government shutdown, senators shared stories of friendship that spanned both party and ideology; in so doing, they revealed their lived experiences. For instance, Senator Mikulski (D-MD) told her colleagues about her bipartisan relationship with Senator Shelby (R-AL), whom she described as a real "rock-ribbed fiscal conservative" (USS, 2013p, p. S7487). To achieve the objectives of the Appropriations Committee, the two have maintained "an atmosphere of civility, candor, and an interest in the good of the country" (USS, 2013p, p. S7487). As senators grappled with conflicting ideologies, they employed a discourse encouraged comity and bipartisan friendships. For

example, Senator Murkowski (R-AK) disclosed the experiences she had with "a nucleus of folks who would come together as the need arose, or perhaps just for a little moral support, and continued the effort to try to find common ground" (USS, 2013q, p. S7505). Likewise, Senator McCaskill (D-MO) stated, "So I will continue to talk to my friends across the aisle. Even today, on Sunday, all of us are having these conversations" (USS, 2013n, p. S7454). In sharing these examples, senators admitted to seeing other viewpoints as legitimate and encouraged their colleagues to follow their lead and create friendships that sparked collaboration.

Senators routinely used the term "friend" to refer to colleagues. For example, Senator Collins (R-ME) described the men and women that she worked with as a group "united by our determination to demonstrate that we could compromise, we could govern, we could bring an end to this impasse and do it in a way that was worthy of this great country and our constituents" (USS, 2013q, p. S7506). Courteous and considerate language, along with the friendships that developed through these acts of civility, created a Senate environment that nurtured comity. This is important, because as Senator Murkowski (R-AK) identified, "We cannot work together as individuals and expect to accomplish the work that is needed" (USS, 2013q, p. S7505). Also, Matthews (1960) suggests that the Senate's folkways restrain toxic debate and may yield friendships. Trust is essential for reciprocity and maintaining social cohesion; therefore, senators may seek out opportunities, such as bipartisan endeavors, that help them develop reputations as dependable policymakers.

Moreover, when people agree on values, such as compromise and collaboration, they create a sense of community, trust, and are likely to adhere to Senate norms

(Uslaner, 1993). This could be why Senator Landrieu (D-LA) wanted her Senate colleagues to recognize her role in the efforts "underway by Senator Collins from Maine and Senator Klobuchar from Minnesota, Senator Pryor from Arkansas, and others on both sides of the aisle who have been working . . . trying to find a way forward" (USS, 2013n, p. S7438). In this example, Senator Landrieu indirectly shared her values and suggested that she, along with the other people involved in creating the compromise, had a sense of community. The audience therefore learned that the senators valued cooperation instead of individualism.

Second, senators may use their experiences as a source of praise. During the shutdown, senators offered their bipartisan accomplishments as evidence for the good that resulted from mutual problem solving. Senator Murkowski (R-AK) applauded the senator from Maine for being "remarkable in her persistence and insistence that we continue this effort to work collegially, to work collaboratively on these very difficult issues that we have been facing these past several weeks" (USS, 2013q, p. S7505). In another exhibit of civility and Senate folkways, Senator Ayotte (R-NH) wanted the Chair to recognize Senator Shaheen (D-NH) so that she could thank her even though they came "from opposite sides of the aisle, we have been able to find ways to work together on behalf of our State and on behalf of the country" (USS, 2013q, p. S7511). Although Senator Ayotte remained strong in her Republicans principles and desire to defund Affordable Care Act, she willingly put aside her ideological positions to be part of a group that created a bipartisan agreement to reopen the federal government. In praising the values and accomplishments of the bipartisan group, she demonstrated civility and explained the sacrifices she made to encourage compromise between parties.

In sum, U.S. senators' tolerance has historically been one of the institution's strengths, and the Senate folkway of courtesy may yield friendship (Matthews, 1960). As senators shared their experiences, they highlighted their personalities, commonality, accomplishments, and perspectives. Senators' rhetoric and the Senate folkways worked to reconcile the differences between the two parties' approaches to governing. As they relayed stories of friendship, the senators suggested that they had an appreciation for the Senate norms and welcomed conversations with colleagues who held contrasting views. In an effort to get senators out of their partisan corners, some senators hoped that their colleagues would join them in working honestly and collegially in the future. Feminine style helped senators reveal how they created a sense of community by adhering to norms, such as courtesy and reciprocity, which are important ingredients for comity.

Characteristic III: Inviting Policymakers to Participate

During the 16 day shutdown, senators delivered passionate speeches that advocated which course of action was the best way to end the event that was, Senator Hirono (D-HI) argued, "undermining a commitment to public service for many people" (USS, 2013h, p. S7227). Some senators claimed that Congress failed the American people when the government shut down and, adhering to the feminine style model, invited their audience to participate "as a means of testing the speaker's conclusions and creating identification with the speaker" (Campbell, 1989, p. 13). Despite their differences, senators shared two similarities: daily happenings and a mutual respect for the office. I argue that senators created identification by inviting the audience (consisting of policymakers) to participate in the creation of arguments through referencing senators' daily activities and shared beliefs. In order for senators to sit down, negotiate, and "work

toward the balanced and bipartisan long-term budget deal that our constituents are expecting" (USS, 2013e, p. S7125), they needed to persuade their colleagues to partake in the policymaking process.

Daily Activities

Broadly, senators spoke in terms of needing to fulfill their constitutional responsibilities. Senator Ayotte (R-NH) candidly advised, "We simply have to get our act together and work together to get the government funded again" (USS, 2013e, p. S7131). Numerous senators encouraged their peers to work together to find a way forward to negotiations and resolve the crisis. Historically, senators had worked together and Senator Landrieu (D-LA) encouraged her colleagues to "get back to work, solve real problems, and negotiate in good faith without taking innocent hostages" (USS, 2013l, p. S7393). Failure to do so, Senator Feinstein (D-CA) argued, meant the government remained closed and this was "an abdication of congressional responsibility" (USS, 2013d, p. S7081).

First, senators' responsibilities became a rhetorical tool for inviting their colleagues to participate in the policymaking process. Senate rules require 60 votes to do anything that is controversial, and since it is rare to find a party with more than 60 seats in the Senate, senators frequently have to work with members on either side of the aisle. Senator Mikulski (D-MD), for instance, reminded her colleagues of their constitutional responsibility and hoped that the Senate would soon "return to a regular order, where using the parliamentary tools, tactics, and even tricks cannot delay bringing a bill to the floor" (USS, 2013e, p. S7122). Senator Collins (R-ME) also encouraged her colleagues to

"proceed with governing rather than continuing to embrace a strategy that will lead us only to a dead-end and whose consequences will be increasingly felt by our economy and by the American people" (USS, 2013i, p. S7291). Senator Mikulski respectfully stated that those in the Senate "have to do what our constituents elected us to do and what the Constitution requires us to do: Keep the United States Government open and make sure the United States of America pays its bills" (USS, 2013i, p. S7291). These senators invited the audience to fulfill their constitutional responsibilities and pass a budget bill.

Second, senators' lack of cooperation weakens legislative deliberation and during the government shutdown, numerous senators urged their colleagues to cooperate and see the other side of the aisle's position. For instance, Senator Mikulski (D-MD) advised her colleagues, "So let's do what we have pledged to do. Let's do what we have signed up to do, which is to work together" (USS, 2013i, p. S7292-S7293). Also, Senator Landrieu (D-LA) confided:

> I am praying and hoping that my colleagues in the Senate will live up to the great hope of the Senate, which was at times such as these to walk back from the ledge, reason together and find a way forward. (USS, 2013n, p. 7438)

Doing so would have helped the Senate reach a decision and fulfill its constitutional responsibility.

Civility is an important norm in the Senate, and by emphasizing the benefits of cooperation, senators encouraged the audience to join them in creating a cooperative policymaking environment. Senator Murray (D-WA) acknowledged that "Democrats and Republicans may not agree on much," but they can agree to work together "to resolve our differences in a way that works for the American people and our economy" (USS, 2013j,

p. S7336). Senator Murray reminded her colleagues that they had "an obligation and a responsibility to solve the problems in front of us" and instead of refusing to conference, she suggested that policymakers end the shutdown by "going to conference and we do it by working together" (USS, 2013f, p. S7150). Comity implies an inclination toward compromise, so by encouraging their colleagues to join them in resolving differences, the senators offered civility, reciprocity, and courtesy as a way to resolve the conflict.

Moreover, cooperation became a rhetorical tool that allowed the Senate to legislate despite the chamber's permissive rules. All senators benefit from contributing to a workable chamber; therefore, senators invited the audience to come together to solve the crisis as friends. For example, Senator Heitkamp (D-ND) urged, "We need to come together. We need to lead form the Senate" (USS, 2013n, p. S7442). Senator Shaheen (D-NH) concurred, "I hope that we are all going to come together to get this done in the next couple of days and save this country from even more disastrous consequences" (USS, 2013n, p. S7445).

Senators frequently used words like "friends" when explaining how policymakers could help solve the problem and in so doing, they encouraged their audience to enact restraint and cooperate by putting partisan affiliation side. Senator Boxer (D-CA) thanked her "Republican friends who voted to allow us to vote on that bill" (USS, 2013l, p. S7409). Similarly, Senator Warren (D-MA) asserted, "Our country succeeds because we have all come together to put public institutions and infrastructure together" (USS, 2013f, p. S7163). Senator Murray (D-WA) commented, "We all know we need to come to the table and solve that–that is, the differences we as leaders of this Nation need to address" (USS, 2013g, p. S7176). Unwillingness to compromise can result in uncooperative

behavior and bad policymaking, and by encouraging personal interactions, the senators

urged their colleagues to resolve the rising tensions.

Third, during floor speeches, senators invited fellow senators to work out their

differences on behalf of the American people. Senator Warren (D-MA) warned:

> You can do your best to make government look like it does not work when you
>
> stop it from working . . . but sooner or later the government will reopen because
>
> this is a democracy and this democracy has already rejected your views. (USS,
>
> 2013f, p. S7164)

After all, when the senators took their oath of office they agreed to work together to

resolve issues. Compared to the House, the Senate body is more deliberate in its actions,

more personal, and senators tend to see each other regularly (Ornstien, 2000). This should

help Senate deliberations be constructive, however, some senators needed to be reminded

of their constitutional obligations. Senator Mikulski suggested that everybody, including

Republicans, Democrats, and the President, lost "when we cannot come together with a

plan, with the resolve to do the job we are tasked to do, which is basic governing, and

keeping the government open is basic governing" (USS, 2013i, p. S7292).

Additionally, civility within one's daily activities involves a willingness to

participate in conversations with others. Senator Mikulski (D-MD) urged her colleagues

to join her in enacting "bipartisan, fiscally responsible legislation to keep our government

going" and tackle the looming fiscal challenges (USS, 2013q, p. S7517). Senator Shaheen

(D-NH) also advised her colleagues to work together and to try to avoid any additional

harm to people who depended on the Federal government for their services, financial

stability, and benefits (USS, 2013d). By encouraging collaboration, the senators invited

their audiences to understand the differences that divided them. Senator Murray (D-WA) told her colleagues that they would solve the shutdown by going to conference and working together (USS, 2013f). She explained that as the Budget Committee Chairwoman, she had tried to fulfill her constitutional duty to get the Congress to agree on a budget compromise so that they could create a path that creates a strong country (USS, 2013g). The senators offered bipartisanship and civility as alternatives to the Senate's threatening rhetorical atmosphere.

In short, civility, which encourages people to debate with dignity, requires a dialogue that spurs criticism of ideas in a productive manner. Phrases like "common ground" and "bipartisanship" create a civil deliberative space because the rhetoric demonstrates a willingness to meet with others on equal terms. Civility is fundamentally a communicative act and is an ongoing mutually beneficial process. While enacting civility, senators invited their audiences to join them in accomplishing their constitutional responsibility of funding the federal governments. The senators also used their colleagues' commonly held beliefs to summon their audiences to deliberate.

Senators' Beliefs

During the government shutdown, senators disapproved of others' attempts to stifle deliberation and harm the Senate's reputation. Senators, after all, "are fiercely protective of and highly patriotic in regard to the Senate" (Matthews, 1960, p. 102) and are also "expected to *believe* that they belong to the greatest legislative and deliberative body in the world" (Matthews, 1959, p. 1073, emphasis in original). When they take their oath of office, senators agree to follow rules that serve as a standard for conducting

public argument. I subsequently discuss how senators' beliefs in the Senate became a rhetorical tool for inviting the audience to participate in the funding bill negotiations.

Etiquette governs floor debate in the Senate by helping the policymakers deliberate and follow the rules for decorum. As senators, such as Senator Murray (D-WA), called upon their audiences to participate, they spoke in terms of "our government," and urged their colleagues to help them get "us" out of the mess, and a desire to "open a path to negotiations so we can avoid the next one" (USS, 2013j, p. S7320). For this to happen, Senator Hirono (D-HI) told her colleagues that they could "find a way forward so we can all agree on the path" (USS, 2013j, p. S7345). Civility is about being willing to compromise. Senator Fisher (R-NE) displayed civility by inviting her audience to work with her to find common ground; she told her audience that she was willing to work with any of her "colleagues to find a reasonable solution" (USS, 2013j, p. S7343). Similarly, Senator Murray reminded her colleagues that "our system was designed to push both sides toward negotiations in a divided government, to encourage negotiation and movement toward common ground" (USS, 2013j, p. S7320). While inviting their audience to reconcile their differences, the senators accepted the responsibility of getting their colleagues to agree on a solution and encouraged a balanced approach to governing.

Regardless of partisan affiliation, all senators have an obligation to fulfill their constitutional responsibilities. However, partisanship may cause Congress to be dysfunctional, weaken America's virtues, and make it hard to conform to the folkways (Snowe, 2013). Senator Hirono (D-HI) maintained that when lawmakers forget that they were elected to serve "the people, families, and communities that sent them to the

Senate," they were "unable to move forward and find consensus" (USS, 2013h, p. S7227). The Senate exists to solve problems, and during deliberations, senators should follow the folkways by engaging a rhetoric that is courteous, respectful, and civil. Senator Heitkamp (D-ND) admitted that it was a sad day when instead of deliberating and reaching a solution that would reopen the government, policymakers were arguing over who was winning and losing politically (USS, 2013l).

References to patriotism, America, and Founding Fathers also appeared within the discourse. Senator Stabenow (D-MI), for instance, described America as being "the greatest country in the world and in the greatest democracy in the world" (USS, 2013k, p. S7371). Senator Landrieu (D-LA) stated, "I am most certainly hopeful and remain cautiously optimistic that the Senate will step up to the job at hand and fulfill the promise and hopes of our Founders, who created the Senate to operate at times just like these" (USS, 2013m, p. 7429). Our Founding Fathers believed that in order for America to succeed lawmakers had to embrace compromise and other characteristics of civility (Snowe, 2013). Senator Fischer (R-NE) concluded:

> We are the single greatest nation the world has ever known. We have stood as a sentinel of liberty and economic prosperity for over 200 years, yet we find ourselves no longer able to perform even the most basic functions of government. That is unacceptable. (USS, 2013j, p. S7343)

Legislators' inabilities to compromise was disheartening, especially because the Founding Fathers envisioned the Senate to be the top echelon of Americans who would work with their colleagues to build a great nation.

In sum, the senators invited their audiences to participate in the discussion about the best way to reopen the federal government. To be influential, senators needed their colleagues' respect and confidence. As the women of the Senate urged their audiences to join them in resolving the government shutdown, the senators appeared united and open to compromise. Senator McCaskill (D-MO), for instance, told her colleagues that the "saddest part of this whole thing, that we are actually playing around with the essence of what makes our country great, and that is our democracy, our ability to compromise, our ability to negotiate" (USS, 2013n, p. S7453). If all senators followed the rules of normative behavior, they could create a highly functional Senate that enabled senators to perform their constitutional duties.

Implications and Conclusion

As Democrats and Republicans played the blame game, their approval ratings fell to 11% (Newport, 2013). Polling data indicated that Congress's low approval ratings reflected the "rancorous partisanship and bickering that characterized the shutdown–the top reasons given by those who disapprove of Congress" (Newport, 2013, para. 8, emphasis in original). Women in the Senate rose above the partisan fray and forged a plan to end the government shutdown. The senators frequently used the word "compromise" as a way to describe their style of governing and encouraged their colleagues to find common ground solutions to get federal workers back on the job (Steenland, 2013). Some argued that women's life experiences helped them cross party lines; however, my findings indicated those senators' commitments to the Senate folkways and Rule 19 gave them the means needed to reach across partisan divides and solve our nation's problems.

This chapter examined the connection between feminine style and civility. In so doing, I suggested that feminine style offered a means for creating civil exchanges between policymakers. I argued that the senators' rhetorical strategy was grounded in the Senate folkways and three components of feminine style (viewing the audience as peers, claims of personal experience, and inviting audience participation) helped the Senate achieve civility. As more senators recommit to following the Senate's folkways, hopefully a new era of deliberation will ensue and acts of incivility will be replaced with rhetoric that encourages bipartisanship.

First, this study offered insight into the rhetorical construction of civility in the Senate. In an era where bipartisanship is absent and civility seems rare, we should refocus our efforts to understanding how legislators encourage their colleagues to cooperate. By evaluating senators' floor speeches, we learn that conversations about bipartisanship coincide with the Senate folkways and a feminine style model of rhetoric. Although civility assumes a variety of forms, this study suggests that feminine style is rhetorical resource for encouraging civility. Furthermore, the women senators demonstrated the norm of courtesy by persuading their colleagues to cooperate, temper their demands, and compromise. The government shutdown debate suggested that some senators remained committed to Senate folkways, understood the vital role the civility played in creating bipartisan legislation, and valued cross-party friendships. Civility is important because civil language makes friendships possible and friendships make compromise across partisan lines achievable (Uslaner, 2000).

Policymakers often debate high stake issues, including the federal budget, and sometimes they approach deliberation as a partisan battle instead of a collaborative

discussion. This, coupled with senators' egos and personal stakes in the outcomes, can create a chamber that lacks decorum and hinders deliberation. During the budget bill negotiation, we saw a group of senators who chose civility and bipartisanship instead of letting their personal feeling influence political disagreement. As the government shutdown wore on, the women in the Senate spoke about the importance of appreciating multiple perspectives, Senate friendships, and collaboration. Putting their ideological differences aside, the senators negotiated a bipartisan plan to reopen the federal government. I do not suggest that we eliminate difference, because reasonable hostility serves an important function in civil society such as contributing to the success of public deliberation (Tracy, 2010). However, as Senate norms that protect decorum give way to personal attacks and other unpleasantness we need to study instances where senators encourage their colleagues to forego partisan blame and engage in civil deliberations.

Second, Campbell's (1989) exploration of feminine style has made a significant contribution to the field of communication studies, and its usefulness is reflected in the frequency with which it has been applied to various contexts. This study expanded Campbell's original work to include contemporary policymakers' rhetoric. Although senators' floor speeches varied in content and structure, the discourse appeared to share essential characteristics of feminine style including viewing the audience as peers, using personal experiences, and inviting the audience to participate. The senators' feminine style of rhetoric helped the senators persuade their colleagues to work across the aisle and solve the contentious issue civilly. For instance, Senator Mikulski (D-MD) reminded her colleagues that no matter who was in the majority, "in order to make it work for the country we have to be working together" (USS, 2013q, p. S7505). In so doing, the

senator's communicative actions encouraged bipartisanship as a means for resolving the divisive budget bill.

In closing, Sens. Collins (R-ME), Ayotte (R-NH), and Murkowski (R-AK) forged an alliance that would ultimately lead to a negotiated framework that was the centerpiece of a deal to reopen the federal government. Eleven additional women and men took to the Senate floor to encourage their colleagues to put aside their political party alliances and engage in a civil debate. Despite elite polarization, bipartisanship occasionally happens in today's Congress and helps policymakers make decisions. Bipartisanship is an important aspect of civility, because bipartisanship indicates that legislators get along with members of the opposite political party (Newport, 2013). In addition to creating a productive atmosphere in the Senate, the women senators showed what happens when policymakers leave their partisan corners and join their colleagues in the center. I conclude in the next chapter that close attention to senators' discourse reveals a comprehension of how policymakers can rhetorically construct a bipartisan legislative body by urging civility, relationship building, and rhetoric of polarization. As more people take notice of bipartisan relationships and policy outcomes, Americans may become more optimistic that bipartisanship is not lost in today's divisive political climate.

CHAPTER V

A CONCLUSION: USING RHETORIC TO ACHIEVE BIPARTISANSHIP

On October 16, 2013, Senator McConnell (R-KY) announced the budget deal on the Senate floor while Senator Cruz (R-TX) breached Senate courtesy by holding a press conference. While speaking with reporters, Senator Cruz chastised Senate Republicans for conceding to Democrats' demands and for not using the budget bill as a means for gutting the Affordable Care Act (Mascaro, Memoli, & Bennett, 2013). After the Senate approved the leadership's budget bill, the stench of partisan politics lingered within the halls of the "greatest deliberative body in the world." Although today's lawmakers govern in an era where divergent viewpoints and distrust of rivals permeates politics, senators may choose to leave their partisan camps to find middle ground and produce bipartisan legislation. Therefore, to deter extremists and party polarization from causing future stalemate, policymakers must enact rhetoric that helps them legislate within the confines of a polarized environment. Scholars should continue studying how policymakers rhetorically construct a bipartisan chamber because doing so examines how legislators' rhetoric ameliorates a partisan atmosphere.

A main theme of this dissertation concerned how senators, working within the confines of a partisan environment, encourage their colleagues to remain principled in prudence and mutual respect. Given the intensity of political disagreement, "the notion that warring factions might sit down together, talk through their disagreements, and arrive at a common understanding is quite attractive" (Gastil, Black, & Moscovitz, 2008, p. 23). Senators should continue these efforts because maintaining a collegial relationship built on trust can help policymakers cross the partisan divide to elicit agreement (Gutman &

Thompson, 2012). Contrarily, uncivil language can deter compromising and negatively influence the policymaking process. In studying a bipartisan group, this dissertation also uncovered the rhetorical strategies that senators can use to persuade others to join their cross-party efforts. Relationship building is important to the success of deliberation because as Baker (2015) argues, "connections across party lines that arise . . . enable conversation to take place that can prime senators for future bipartisan cooperation" (p. 103).

To review, this dissertation argued for the importance of paying close attention to senators' discourse because their rhetoric reveals how policymakers can rhetorically construct a bipartisan legislative body. The women in the 113th Senate provided a case study for understanding senators' efforts to shape a legislative agenda inside and outside the chamber. In studying their floor speeches and media interviews, I exposed the rhetorical strategies that are available to senators who want to encourage bipartisan legislative deliberation. As I moved through each chapter, I advanced the argument and concluded that civility, relationship building, and rhetoric of polarization helped senators bolster legislative deliberation. In this chapter, I overview legislative deliberation and elucidate how civility, relationship building, and the rhetoric of polarization can assist lawmakers with rhetorically constructing civility. Consequently, this dissertation contributes to a developing body of literature that addresses (in)civility in Congress and begins a dialogue about how senators can rhetorically construct a bipartisanship legislating environment.

Legislative Deliberation

From the beginning, this dissertation consisted of numerous examples of senators' rhetorical attempts to increase bipartisanship and thereby gain support for a budget bill. Legislative deliberation involves public officials working on behalf of others to achieve policy goals. Formal rules and norms shape deliberation in a representative body. Deliberation guides legislative decision-making and is crucial to determining if a decision is reasonable (Bohman, 2000). Despite having a direct impact on all Americans, "literature on deliberation in government is relatively thin" (Gastil, 2008, p. 129). Senators enjoy exercising their right to speak, especially on issues that are salient and distressing, and the government shutdown offered a rhetorical opportunity. It was under such circumstances that senators spoke passionately about the need for bipartisanship. This dissertation examined the intersection of deliberation and political communication by studying Senate floor debate and media texts.

First, the U.S. Senate's internal deliberative processes can cause difficulties for those looking to pass a policy. The Senate's broad consensus requirement, for instance, gives power to the minority and creates an environment where routine obstruction weakens the Senate's deliberative process. Although some senators, such as Senator Cruz (R-TX), worked within the confines of Senate norms and rules to halt the FY 2014 budget bill, a group of bipartisan senators stood firm in their belief that compromise was possible. The deeper the political disagreement the greater the need for compromise, because governing in a democracy can be difficult if everyone holds an uncompromising mindset. In this case, the bipartisan group consisted of partisans who were often polarized in their politics; however, they put aside their partisanship for the betterment of the

country. Previous chapters supported this idea and illustrated the ways in which senators promoted relationships across party lines in the Senate. Specifically, I argued that the women in the 113th Senate coordinated a rhetorical strategy that sought to improve the chamber's partisan environment.

From a deliberative perspective, legislators should bring different voices, values, and concerns to a discussion. Deliberation, after all, requires equality in that all participants have a chance to speak and can foster mutual understanding by encouraging people to consider different viewpoints when making decisions (Gutman & Thompson, 2012). Floor speeches, in particular, offer a valuable form of communication, because they provide a public space for legislators to deliberate and communicate with the other legislative body and the public. This project found that the Senate's women strengthened legislative deliberation by first urging their colleagues to give up the partisan games. As they persuaded their colleagues to pass a bipartisan bill, the senators called a common, collective identity into existence. They did so by calling upon their colleagues who supported democratic principles, bipartisan negations, and collaboration to back their responsible bill.

Second, the news media contributes to deliberation by providing the public with the information they need to create a set of beliefs and attitudes about a political topic (Simon & Xenos, 2000). Deliberative activities begin when people reflect on a problem, gain information to construct a coherent argument, and use diverse viewpoints to arrive at an appropriate solution (Malecha & Reagan, 2012). While politicians use the media to advance their policy goals, the news media may facilitate deliberation by creating a narrative that organizes evidence and relays a story that facilitates message processing.

The government shutdown provides a reasonable context for understanding the role media and public relations activities play in governance.

In short, although legislative deliberation encourages policymakers to make logical arguments and stifle partisan malice, contemporary policy debates feature unreasonable claims and personal attacks. This partisan rancor remains commonplace in Congress and will likely shape forthcoming elections and make stalemate in Congress unavoidable. The success of our democracy depends on lawmakers' abilities to build coalitions, find middle ground, and produce political consensus. Given this, it is important that scholars understand how policymakers encourage their colleagues to deliberate in a partisan political environment. In this chapter, I argue that by using rhetoric that urges civility, relationship building, and the rhetoric of polarization, senators can strengthen legislative deliberation

Achieving Bipartisanship: Civility

Party polarization is widespread in the Senate. Although this claim is not shocking, what is surprising is that the Senate is almost as partisan as the House (McCarty, Poole, & Rosenthal, 2006; Theriault & Rohde, 2011). Unlike the House, the Senate has prided itself as maintaining the norms of collegiality, deference, and civility (Matthews, 1960). Today, however, senators play partisan games that stifle their colleagues' abilities to mediate societal conflicts and address policy concerns. Unfortunately, the Senate's rules and traditions are unable to stop politicians from achieving low levels of civility. Sinclair (2000) argues, "The greater intensity of partisan conflict has led to some hot words and occasionally some lapses of civility" (p. 71). Incivility is detrimental to Senate deliberation because it makes decision-making by

compromise difficult (Uslaner, 2000), produces negative emotions, and makes it tough for politicians to reach a consensus through discussion (Borah, 2014).

To function properly, the Senate requires civility, comity, and courtesy because deliberation necessitates respect for others and oneself (Gastil, 2008). Political scientists have concluded that civility, which is closely related to compromise and comity, is essential for creating a productive deliberative space (Uslaner, 2000). In this dissertation, I conceptualized civility as a rhetorical act that involves reciprocity and courtesy; further, I argued that senators soothe conflict and temper partisan rancor by using a rhetoric that encourages civility. Although political scientists have studied civility broadly and communication scholars have studied civility in the House, civility in the Senate has been an underdeveloped idea and its role in encouraging bipartisanship has been understudied. This dissertation's findings offer a steppingstone for developing our familiarity with senators' rhetorical construction of civility.

Although much has been written about the decline of comity in Congress, scholars should study instances were comity manifests itself in civil language. This is especially important since we have entered a political era in which the political parties are further divided than any other point in modern American history. We can study Senate floor speeches, for example, because they enable policymakers to deliver speeches that address substantive policy issues. When doing so, senators can use characteristics of civility to encourage compromise and engage in deliberation. During the government shutdown, for example, some senators used a feminine style of rhetoric to encourage civility. Throughout their floor activism, the senators stressed the importance of cooperation and urged their colleagues to cross the aisle and negotiate as friends and

colleagues. As they invited their audience to participate in the bipartisan talks, relationship building became a catalyst for civility. In stressing the importance of cross-party cooperation, they deterred partisan polarization by encouraging participation of both parties. Furthermore, as the senators refrained from personal attacks and remained civil in their dialogue, comity helped them urge collective action and rhetorically construct a "zone of civility."

Recognizing the importance of civility to deliberation, our Founding Fathers created a system of governing that established norms and rules for the legislating bodies. Despite their efforts, mudslinging has become engrained in American politics and hard-hitting political rhetoric causes incivility. Because of partisanship, moderate senators have retired and partisan ideologues have taken their seats (Snowe, 2013). Although it would be nice if all politicians muffled their partisan rancor and legislated in good faith, today's partisan environment makes that an unrealistic expectation, and the prospect of bipartisanship appears grim. This has scary consequences for legislative deliberation because bipartisanship is crucial to teamwork in the Senate, and civility can help senators achieve cross-party support for their collective goals. Senators, therefore, should enact a rhetorical style that incites civility.

For instance, female and male senators can use a feminine style of rhetoric to encourage their colleagues to work together and build consensus. Rather than highlighting differences, senators can find points of identification, including claims of personal experience, to urge their colleagues to collaborate. As senators relay stories about their common experiences inside and outside of the chamber, legislators can create an inclusive legislating environment. By encouraging a productive exchange of ideas and

emphasizing benefits of cooperation, senators are able to use civility and a rhetorical tool for achieving bipartisanship.

In short, incivility undermines the goals of democracy, and as a discipline, we need to understand how senators rhetorically construct a zone of civility despite the adversarial nature of American politics. In so doing, we can uncover a framework for developing a greater understanding of this communication phenomenon. This dissertation's findings suggest that senators can use a feminine rhetorical style to create a zone of civility in the Senate. In so doing, senators can ameliorate the Senate's partisan environment and facilitate relationship building and trust, which are vital to legislative deliberation.

<div align="center">Achieving Bipartisanship: Relationship Building</div>

Representative politics emphasizes the importance of coalition building and negotiating. Friendships among senators, therefore, have political consequences for the organization and legislative process (Baker, 1999; Matthews, 1960). In fact, the social capital tied to relationships can encourage legislators to meet others on behalf of a common cause, share their knowledge, and engage in decision-making. Also, pairs of friends often have higher voting agreement than those who are not friends (Arnold, Deen, & Patterson, 2000). When cross-party friendships flourish, the Senate becomes a body that encourages the fruitful exchange of ideas and makes deliberation possible. "Friendship," after all, "entails interpersonal ties or bonds that are characterized by affection or esteem" (Arnold et al., 2000, p. 142). Senators can call upon friendships to strengthen the Senate's sense of community. Friendship, therefore, offers a rhetorical means for achieving the deliberative ideal: "A community of individuals reaching, if not

political consensus, then at least political compromise through dialogue" (Ryfe, 2002, p. p. 371). Conversely, when personal relationships deteriorate, civility and comity suffer (Thurber, 2000). Aristotle frequently discussed the importance of friendship and community in politics, and his ponderings are a useful means for discussing how the rhetoric of friendship promotes deliberation.

Aristotle believed that *philia,* or friendship, held the state together and was a forming principle of Greek life (Valk, 2009). We see this at work today, for when the Senate discusses a controversial issue, lawmakers rely on networks of friends to process the issues in a civil manner (Caldeira & Patterson, 1987). Friendships provide channels for communication, influence, and exchange of information. "Friends," according to Valk (2009), "do not act selfishly . . . but rather seek the good for their friends" (p. 128). Since bipartisan friendships permit senators to reach agreement, senators and journalists attribute the chamber's civil deliberations partially to friendships (Uslaner, 2000). Baker (1999) observed, "Friendship in day-to-day practice of the political world is far most subtle and complex" (p. 20). It is significant, then, when senators who are ideologically opposite openly forge cross-party relationships and use those relationships to promote bipartisanship.

Senators can use a friendship, particularly a bipartisan relationship, as an instrument for goal attainment (Baker, 1999). As senators spark "the emotions that accompany friendship in the proper sense" (Rapp, 2013, p. 29), their thoughtful acts and self-disclosures can bring people closer and encourage communal actions. According to Aristotle, friendship must be fostered or cultivated (Rapp, 2013), and public speaking opportunities provide situations in which senators can arouse friendly feelings. While

sharing stories of friendship, senators may communicate the relationship's details as a rhetorical means for achieving bipartisanship. As evidence of this, the dissertation's findings indicate that friendship can function rhetorically by calling into being a group of people, compelling them to gather, and using the relationship as a means for discussing complex issues.

While sharing stories of friendship, senators suggest that they welcome conversations with colleagues who hold contrasting views and demonstrate their abilities to see other viewpoints as legitimate. These characteristics also describe bipartisanship. According to the *Lysis,* vocal commitments of friendship are responsive to the world and can be used to persuade (Garver, 2006). Therefore, friendship can be a means for persuading legislators to come out of their partisan corners and join bipartisan legislative efforts. Plato argued that if we cannot talk about our friendships, then the relationship is "arbitrary and unworthy of the name of friendship" (Garver, 2006, p. 130). For example, during the government shutdown, the women senators vocalized their commitments to friendship and shared their conceptualization of the term. While discussing their bipartisan associations, friendship became a rhetorical tool for persuasion; in particular, the women senators implied that they maintained reciprocal relationships, put their self-interests aside, and overcame contemporary political practices that undermined basic principles of democracy.

Friendship implies likeness and a reduction of differences that cause strife and lead to conflict (Garver, 2006). Dialogue and contemplation make friendships possible because those communicative acts enable people to discover their similarities. In cultivating friendships and forming new ones, senators can create fresh channels of

communication and locate new sources of information. When discussing friendships,

rhetors can disclose something unique about the other person and be understood only

because the participants understand one another (Garver, 2006). Specifically, as they

share stories of common experience, camaraderie, trust, and mutuality, senators can use

relationship building as a rhetorical tool for persuading others to join a bipartisan

alliance. These points of identification can affect senators' rhetorical attempts to

construct a bipartisan legislating environment.

Friendship, or maintaining the appearance of being friendly, involves a familiarity

with others and enables people to gain something, whether it is perspective, pleasure, or

support. Conversely, disagreement can cause anger and hatred and stifle a friendship's

development (Garver, 2006). The dissertation's findings suggest that senators can use

identification as a means for encouraging bipartisan friendships. Although this discovery

is not surprising, how senators identify with members of the other party is curious. The

case study proposes that senators' uses patriotic language, lived experiences, and civility

to bridge divisions between the parties, invite dialogue, and create conditions for a

deliberation.

Additionally, speakers can also use "the Senate" as a rhetorical device for

achieving identification and encouraging cross-party relationships. Matthews (1960)

argues that senators "are expected to revere the Senate's personnel, organization, and

folkways and to champion them to the outside world" (p. 102). Thus, senators share a

mutual respect for the office, and rhetors can use senators' loyalty to the Senate as a point

of identification. By reminding their colleagues what makes the Senate great, the senators

can invite their audience to participate in finding a way forward. Bipartisan relationships

formed from this act of identification could be mutually beneficial. Friendships, therefore, have institutional consequences and senators may use different points of identification to grow their network of relationships.

In closing, senators strengthen legislative deliberation by fostering bipartisan conversations among friendly participants. In using friendship as a rhetorical device, senators can encourage their colleagues to become acquainted with one another and work together to achieve consensus. A proper friendship requires an engagement with others and is rare in today's political environment; therefore, even if Senate friendships are based on utility and convenience, the camaraderie can promote cross-party relationships. In addition to using relationship building as a tool for encouraging bipartisanship, senators can also use polarization as a rhetorical strategy for attaining bipartisanship.

Achieving Bipartisanship: Rhetoric of Polarization

This dissertation established early on that the political elite has become more polarized, and politicians eagerly maintain their positions on political teams. However, this does not mean that lawmakers are unwilling to budge or act in ways that are inconsistent with their party's positions. Instead, in an effort to identify common ground, legislators will "advance principles they believe others share" (Gutman & Thompson, 2012, p. 126). Through rhetorical analysis, this project discovered that senators can seize control of a partisan conversation and urge bipartisanship by subdividing members of the opposing party and chastising legislators who do not join their group in the center. In the following section, I discuss polarization as a rhetorical phenomenon and explain how senators can use polarization to attain bipartisanship.

First, senators may attain bipartisanship by using identification by antithesis. When employing this rhetorical strategy, legislators vilify uncompromising legislators and urge their colleagues to counter their respective party's positions. Although polarization may not seem like a bipartisan rhetorical strategy, the subdivision of a political party will likely bring more policymakers into a cross-party discussion. When using this rhetorical approach, senators identify a common enemy and suggest what course of action should be taken against their adversary. Consequently, identification by antithesis can build cross-party relationships. For example, during the government shutdown, legislators depicted the opposition, tea party Republicans, as being an anarchy gang who held America hostage. As the women senators called for unification against a common adversary, the legislators portrayed outsiders as antagonists and stressed identification with insiders. The dissertation's findings suggest that the dichotomous nature of identification by antithesis can help groups achieve unity and collective action.

A bipartisan alliance can use polarization to solve the nation's problems by supporting cross-party legislative deliberation. During legislative discussions, identification offers a means for creating a bond between a speaker and audience. Cross-party discussions are important to legislative deliberation because deliberation begins when a group has a grasp on the diverse viewpoints. The discussion continues when people prioritize the values at stake, identify a variety of solutions, and weigh the pros and cons of the solution (Gastil, 2008). Although scholars describe polarization as "the obverse of unity and compromise" (Harpine, 2001, p. 295), this case study suggests that polarization may actually help politicians encourage deliberation. While deliberating, people will examine a problem, include and respect diverse viewpoints, and arrive at an

agreed upon solution (Burkhalter, Gastil, & Kelshaw, 2002). Deliberation, therefore, generally includes people who have distinct perspectives and interests (Bohman, 2000). The dissertation's findings suggest that during deliberation, polarization is a resource for identification, because rhetoric of polarization shows how the speaker is similar to the audience.

Second, in an effort to achieve bipartisanship, senators can construct a narrative that harms the other party's reputation. Although this is an example of partisan discourse, the narrative can function rhetorically by subdividing members of the other party and reconstituting their identities as bipartisan legislators. Senators can urge others to join their efforts by calling a common collective identity into existence and creating an in-group versus out-group distinction. For example, during the government shutdown, some Republican senators became party defectors and used polarizing language to encourage their Republican colleagues to join them at the negotiation table. Together with their Democrat colleagues, the senators constructed a narrative that rallied their party's ideological moderates to support a bipartisan policy. The discourse enabled the group to reshape individual legislators' identities by inviting Republicans to share in a rhetorical creation that connected the policymakers to the group's larger political goals. Additionally, as they engaged in a cross-party discussion, some Republicans and Democrats confronted the destructive asymmetry occurring between the parties and, at least in this context, worked to modify the Senate's partisan culture.

Furthermore, the case study supports previous research claiming that constitutive rhetoric finds common ground and forms conditions for group identity. Identification refers to people recognizing shared values and opinions (Burke, 1969), and senators'

shared experiences became a resource for identification. Burke (1969) contends that it is "a matter of rhetoric to persuade a man by identifying your cause with his interests" (p. 24), and at different historical moments, groups can gain a new identity that warrants a different form of collective life (Charland, 1987). Claims of personal experience, including examples of past bipartisan action, draw from cultural references and help a speaker establish his or her similarities to the audience. Regarding bipartisanship, if an audience agrees that cooperation is important and that a common foe harms legislative efforts, then the audience's shared identity should be so robust that agreement is more important than conflict.

In sum, senators can act as polarizing agents by splitting members of a party into two groups and urging them to join their efforts. Although on the surface a senator's rhetoric may appear partisan, polarizing rhetoric can establish a group, encourage action, and identify interest that the rhetoric can appeal to. In using identification techniques, senators create a cross-party message that encourages bipartisan collaboration. As a result, senators increase legislative deliberation by inviting members of both parties to debate and construct a bipartisan plan.

Concluding Thoughts

Today's politicians seem less interested in deliberation and more interested in achieving partisan advantage. The rising polarization has become a defining element of a dysfunctional Senate (Snowe, 2013). The democratic process depends on contestation, and partisanship is vital to its sustainment (Gutman & Thompson, 2012). However, increasing polarization causes stalemate in Congress and harms the progression of our country. Despite the doom and gloom, this case study suggests that a group of

heterogeneous policymakers are willing to unite around their shared belief in bipartisanship. The Senate's women showed the electorate and their colleagues that bipartisanship is surviving in the Senate and can help legislators create an open deliberative space. As a result of analyzing their discourse, I propose that the Senate's women conceptualized bipartisanship as having cross-party relationships, sharing a common opponent, and remaining committed to civility.

Although heated debate is a staple of American politics, the hostility and incivility we see in today's Senate is undemocratic. Bipartisanship, which requires that senators take positions that may be at odds with their political party, is difficult to execute in an era where there is little tolerance for consensus building. Yet, for our democracy to thrive, senators, whatever their individual perspectives or party affiliations, should opt for civility, relationship building, and polarization to achieve bipartisanship. These rhetorical tools encourage members of both parties to get involved in making legislation and collaborating to ensure the bill's passage. As more legislators agree to put their partisan affiliation aside and legislate in good faith, I hope that our political institutions' profound dysfunction will decrease, and that legislators, along with their constituents, can to restore the U.S. Senate to its status as the "greatest deliberative body in the world."

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