

**ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS:
POLICY LEGITIMATION AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY**

A thesis presented by

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ABSTRACT

Despite a growing body of literature on presidential rhetoric, the relative omission of executive planning documents, such as the National Security Strategy, has prevented scholars from fully exploring the foreign policy agendas promoted by U.S. presidential administrations. In doing so, my research asks the following questions: what is the relationship between public policy legitimation and the rhetorical strategies used in the National Security Strategy, and how can those rhetorical strategies help or hurt the White House's ability to advance the president's foreign policy agenda?

To shape public opinion, political leaders rely on words, actions, and rhetorical strategies. These means of influence correspond to the building blocks of policy legitimation: content, context, and technique. My focus on rhetorical technique explores the ways in which presidential tone can guide national consensus and mobilize public support. Effective management of the relationship between content, context, and technique is crucial to the exercise of influential (persuasive) power.

Using critical discourse analysis augmented by descriptive summary statistics, my research indicates that word choice (words), as well as their context (actions), can affect the success of public policy legitimation. This outcome presents an opportunity for political leaders to develop approaches that more effectively support the policy legitimation dynamic. A better understanding of rhetorical effects on policy legitimation may also provide policy makers with the tools to manage America's democratic legitimacy crisis in a more reflective way.

Chapter 1

Introduction

From the fireside chats of President Franklin D. Roosevelt to the Twitter foreign policy of President Donald Trump, America's chief executives have long relied on rhetorical strategy in their efforts to shape public opinion (Asen, 2010). With this in mind, my research asks the following questions: what is the relationship between public policy legitimation and the rhetorical strategies used in the National Security Strategy, and how can those rhetorical strategies help or hurt the White House's ability to advance the president's foreign policy agenda? My research is premised on the idea that effective use of presidential rhetoric can influence the domestic audience, develop a national consensus, and mobilize public support. A mobilized public, in turn, can overcome political constraints on executive policy making to promote the president's policy agenda.

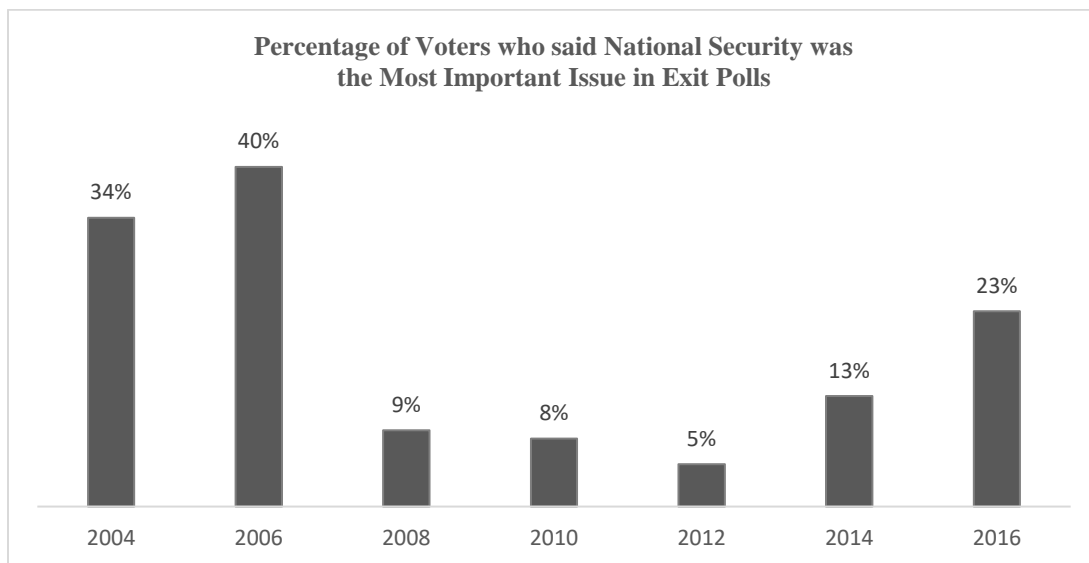
The National Security Strategy is a strategic planning document for U.S. foreign policy. Historically, political leaders and policy makers alike have discounted the consequences of public support in legitimatizing foreign and national security policies. Yet, domestic public support of the president's foreign policy is essential to maintain American credibility and influence among the international community, particularly among foreign governments and international institutions (Haass, 2013).

Political leaders and policy makers on both sides of the aisle recognize that a substantial disconnect between U.S. foreign policy and domestic public opinion can seriously undermine American global leadership. A lack of public support for the president's foreign policy agenda has the potential to limit options for executive action, disrupt policy continuity, and challenge

political stability (Page & Bouton, 2006). These constraints are exacerbated in a national political climate characterized by partisan polarization and congressional gridlock, such as that recently experienced in the United States.

The events of September 11, 2001 transformed the way America conducts its foreign policy, perhaps forever. In the first U.S. presidential election following the terrorist attacks, foreign policy issues appeared to significantly influence voters for the first time in decades (Atwood & Jacobs, 2004). A Gallup poll conducted just two months before the 2004 election of President George W. Bush indicated that national security issues outpaced traditional voter concerns, such as the economy, jobs, and unemployment (Carroll & Newport, 2004; Kugler, 2006). The perceived importance of foreign policy rose steeply in the 2006 midterm election, when CNN exit polls indicated that national security was the single most important issue for 40% of all voters. Foreign policy remained salient throughout the 2016 presidential election. Public opinion polling conducted in the months before the election revealed that national security was the second most important issue for all partisan groups, falling only behind the economy (Freeman & Eoyang, 2016).

Renewed interest in foreign policy in the wake of 9/11 speaks to the domestic public's fears of another attack on U.S. soil (Busby & Monten, 2012). Similarly, large numbers of military personnel deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq highlight the personal connections to foreign and national security policies not experienced since the Vietnam era.

Figure 1.1. Voter Ranking of National Security

Source: Freeman and Eoyang, 2016

Increased attention to foreign and national security policies confers greater consequence to public policy legitimization. My focus on rhetorical technique explores the ways in which presidential tone can influence public opinion. Political leaders rely on words, actions, and rhetorical strategies to shape public opinion. These means of influence correspond to the content, context, and technique of political speech, which function as the building blocks of policy legitimization. Understanding and managing the relationship between content, context, and technique is crucial to the effective exercise of influential power. Actions (context) speak just as loudly as words (content) in today's political reality, wherein social networks and electronic media facilitate the instant sharing of digital images and videos.

If public perception is the center of gravity for influential power, then public opinion is an essential tool by which a policy agenda may be advanced. My study examines the effects of national consensus on policy advancement through the lens of public policy legitimization. As an

executive planning document, the National Security Strategy offers a distinct policy-making vehicle through which to consider this dynamic. The National Security Strategy represents a missed opportunity for the executive branch to influence public opinion, mobilize the domestic public, and promote the president's foreign policy agenda. The potential of the National Security Strategy as a foreign policy platform is especially significant in the digital age, where the executive branch can bypass traditional media outlets and take their message directly to the people. The National Security Strategy thereby offers a means by which to define and frame foreign and national security issues, and to rally public support.

A nuanced awareness of how policy legitimacy is influenced by rhetoric may better enable the executive branch to shape national consensus. Indeed, political speech is typically motivated by the pursuit of public support; the aim is to present policy in the ways most likely to garner approval. As an indicator of policy agreement, domestic public opinion can be harnessed by political leaders to promote policy goals and advance a policy agenda. A better understanding of rhetorical effect on policy legitimation may also provide policy makers with tools to manage the American democratic legitimacy crisis in a more reflective way, thereby moderating some of the public's distrust of government and political leaders.

Chapter 2

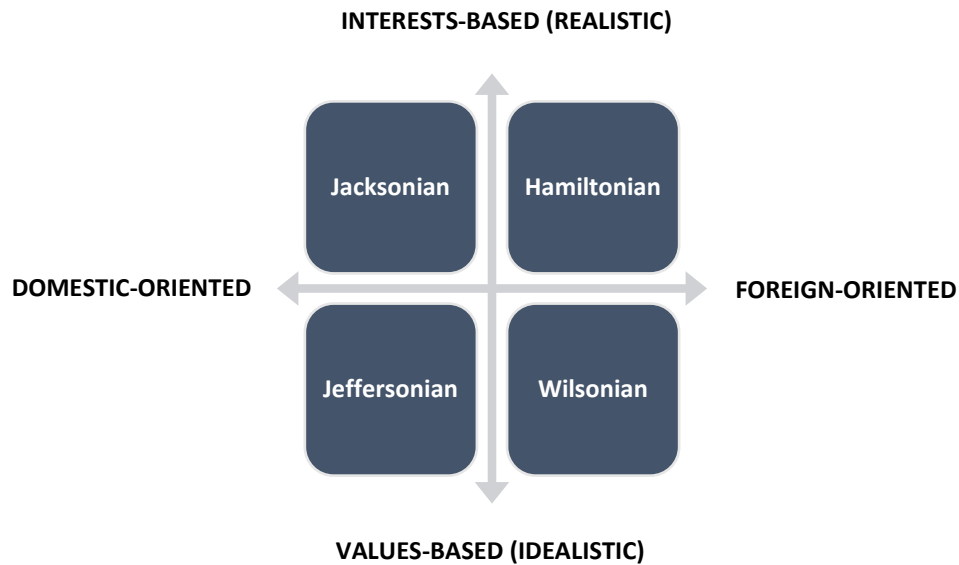
U.S. Foreign Policy Traditions

Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger opined, “America’s journey through international politics has been a triumph of faith over experience ... Torn between nostalgia for a pristine past and yearning for a perfect future, American [foreign policy] has oscillated between isolationism and commitment” (Kissinger, 1994, p. 18). The trajectory of these policies corresponds to changes in international relations based on world order. Foreign policy scholars identify four such periods (Mead, 2002).

In the first era (1776-1823), a newly formed United States struggled to establish a relationship with its former ruler, Great Britain. During the second (1823-1914), the US navigated the world in a *Pax Britannica*, where the British Empire enjoyed global hegemony. The third era (1914-1947) bridged two world wars and saw the end of Britain’s hegemonic status. The fourth (1947-2001) saw the rise of a *Pax Americana* (Mead, 2002). Arguably, the events of September 11, 2001 launched the current era, characterized by a new world order.

Ideological Traditions

From this progression emerged a set of foreign policy traditions organized around four distinct schools of thought. Named for American political leaders: Hamiltonianism, Wilsonianism, Jeffersonianism, and Jacksonianism function on several levels. Their principles reflect regional, economic, cultural, and social interests; affirm political and moral values; and represent both foreign and domestic policies. Foreign policy making is informed by these various approaches and, in turn, these approaches inform the democratic process (Mead, 2002).

Figure 2.1. U.S. Foreign Policy Traditions

Source: Millman, 2007

Significantly, each of these traditions is characterized by a distinct approach to foreign policy, understood as a tendency to use specified instruments of national power to achieve policy objectives. Hard power, including military and economic force (or threats thereof), involves coercive influence. A hard power approach demands action through threat of punishment (“sticks”) or inducement of payment (“carrots”). Soft power, including diplomacy and strategic communication, relies instead upon persuasive influence. A soft power approach prompts action not through coercion, but through co-optive power (Nye, 2004b).

Hamiltonian Realism. The Hamiltonian perspective on foreign policy is commercial and financial in its orientation. Defined by the importance of trade, Hamiltonians seek open commercial relations throughout the international community (Mead, 2002). The belief that the federal government is responsible for national prosperity is fundamental to this approach (Allen,

2004). Prudent and pragmatic, Hamiltonians tend not to “rock the boat” in their relations with foreign states, but when Hamiltonians intervene, they do so with hard power (Nye, 2004a, p. 265).

Hamiltonian policies characterized much of the American political landscape from the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 through the onset of the Great Depression in 1929. During the world wars, Hamiltonians defined American national interests, which were chiefly economic, in global terms. After World War II, Hamiltonians supported multilateral security alliances and international institutions consistent with the understanding of state conflict as an attack on the global balance of power (Mead, 2002).

Wilsonian Idealism. The Wilsonian tradition asserts American responsibility for global leadership. Fundamental to Wilsonian foreign policy is the responsibility to build a world order based upon principles of democracy and the protection of human rights. To that end, Wilsonians support involvement not only in interstate relations, but also in the domestic affairs (intrastate relations) of sovereign states (Mead, 2002).

Driven by soft power, Wilsonian objectives include establishing the rule of law and nation-building (Nye, 2004a). Wilsonians shared a political stage with Hamiltonians from the end of the Cold War in 1990 until the end of the Clinton administration in 2001. Wilsonian foreign policy seeks to promote democracy and peace on a global scale. Interstate conflict is considered to be an assault on international law. Wilsonians understand the responsibility to spread American values throughout the world as both practical and moral (Mead, 2002).

Active interventionism and mission creep characterize Wilsonian foreign policy (Nye, 2004a). While aspects of President Barack Obama’s foreign policy suggest Jeffersonian tendencies, the Wilsonian tradition is clearly represented in his emphasis on human rights at

home and abroad (Mead, 2016). The foreign policy of President George W. Bush likewise integrated elements of Wilsonianism, apparent in his enthusiastic embrace of nation-building and efforts to spread democracy throughout the globe (Mead, 2017).

Jeffersonian Libertarianism. The Jeffersonian tradition developed from a distrust of centralized government. Modern-day libertarians can trace their roots to Jeffersonian ideology (Mead, 2002). In this approach, foreign policy is an extension of domestic policy. Domestic policy, in turn, is required to maximize personal liberty through minimal government intrusion (Allen, 2004). Jeffersonians define U.S. national interests in narrow terms and pursue fiscally responsible strategies to serve them (Mead, 2002).

Informed by negative public perceptions of the Vietnam War and Watergate, Jeffersonian policies shaped the 1970s and 1980s (Mead, 2002). Jeffersonian ideology sought to insulate the US from the taint of foreign entanglement. To Jeffersonians, entanglements abroad destroy liberty at home. The Jeffersonian approach is prudent and pragmatic, but also idealistic in its preservation of republican virtue (Millman, 2007).

Like Wilsonian idealism, the Jeffersonian approach primarily relies on soft power strategies. Jeffersonian prudence, however, is a counterweight to the tendency toward Wilsonian overreach. Jeffersonian conservatism mirrors Hamiltonian reluctance to challenge the status quo (Nye, 2004a). The foreign policy of President Obama, including ambitions to halt nuclear proliferation by way of agreements with Iraq, contains elements of classic Jeffersonian statecraft (Mead, 2010; Mead, 2016).

Jacksonian Populism. Like the Jeffersonians, Jacksonians prefer state and local to federal power. The chief difference between the two is that Jacksonianism is less political in its orientation. Rather, Jacksonian ideology is better understood as an expression of the social,

cultural, and religious values of the American public (Mead, 2002). Fundamental to this approach is the belief that it is the government's responsibility to safeguard physical security and economic well-being, but to do so in a way that minimizes infringement on personal liberty (Mead, 2017).

More so than the other approaches, Jacksonians reject foreign intervention in favor of pursuing domestic national interests (Mead, 2002). However, when attacked, Jacksonian principles demand a hard power response using all available means (Mead, 1999; Nye, 2004a). The spirit of Jacksonianism is evident in Bush's immediate response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The 2016 election of populist Donald Trump signals a resurgence for Jacksonian ideas (Mead, 2017).

Policy Intersections

Traditionally, American foreign policy has been limited to the nation's strategic vision for international relations (Sarkesian, Williams & Cimbala, 2013; Trout, 1975). But conventional lines between domestic and international affairs have become blurred in the contemporary strategic operating environment. Foreign policy scholar, Richard Haass, similarly contends that "the biggest threat to America's security and prosperity comes not from abroad but from within" (Haass, 2013, p. 1). Contemporary notions of U.S. national security, thus consider the protection of national interests from a broad range of threats both at home and abroad (Jablonsky, 2002). Modern national security strategy blends foreign and domestic components into a single policy document.

Reliance on the instruments of national power beyond military force further positions national security within the broader context of foreign policy. The application of diplomatic, informational/intelligence, and economic instruments to pursue national political objectives

inextricably links foreign and national security policy (Jablonsky, 2002). As foreign and national security policies converge, so too does foreign and domestic policy.

Conclusion

The National Security Strategies of the twenty-first century catalogue the risks, threats, and concerns to American national security prompted by the contemporary strategic operating environment. The emerging challenges identified therein broadly include terrorist, insurgent, and criminal networks; failed, rogue, and adversary states; corrupt and unstable governments; the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; cyber-attacks and cases of cyber espionage; pandemic diseases; economic upheaval; the availability of energy and natural resources; and climate change (Jentleson, 2014).

Overcoming these hurdles to national security prompts renewed emphasis on coherent and consistent American foreign policy, whether Hamiltonian, Wilsonian, Jeffersonian, Jacksonian, or otherwise. My research recognizes the convergence of foreign and domestic policy apparent in the National Security Strategies of the two most recent presidential administrations. My primary focus on the National Security Strategy and its role in U.S. foreign policy acknowledges the heightened importance of national security in the contemporary strategic operating environment.

Chapter 3

Origins and Development of the National Security Strategy

In 1947, George Kennan drafted the containment doctrine that embodied the Cold War consensus (Frazier, 2009; Mayers, 1986). Containment theory and its complement, nuclear deterrence, was grounded upon widely held beliefs that the Soviet Union posed a serious threat to the American way of life, if not to world peace and global stability. This perspective was so prevalent in its time that it was shared by political leaders and policy makers from both major political parties, as well as by the domestic public (Bolton, 2008).

To counter the Soviet menace, which surfaced after World War II, U.S. foreign policy shifted from isolationism to interventionism. The Truman Doctrine (1947) marked this paradigm shift, and pledged diplomatic, military, and economic assistance to those democratic nations threatened by totalitarian regimes and Soviet expansionism (Frazier, 2009). The same year, the *National Security Act* provided the robust government infrastructure essential to support this promise (Bolton, 2008).

National Security Act of 1947

The *National Security Act* provided the legislative foundation for modern foreign and national security policy (Dale, 2008). Enacted midway between the cessation of hostilities in World War II in 1945 and the peace treaty that followed in 1952, the *National Security Act* formally established key executive agencies for military and intelligence operations. Among other agencies, the *National Security Act* created the modern-day Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Department of the Air Force, Central Intelligence Agency, and National Security Council (Bartolotto, 2004; Betts, 2004; Hansen, 2008).

The many political compromises necessary to pass the *National Security Act* resulted in a weak Secretary of Defense, a leaderless Joint Chiefs of Staff, and a service-dominated military establishment. Further attempts to organize the Department of Defense resulted in the *National Security Act's* legislative reforms of 1949, 1953, and 1958 (Locher, 2001). As the strategic operating environment evolved, executive orders were also used to address perceived inadequacies in America's national security bureaucracy (Bolton, 2008).

Operational limitations revealed in World War II served as the original impetus for the *National Security Act*. Inefficiencies in the coordination of U.S. defenses disrupted land, sea, and air operations. This inability to synchronize logistics recurred in major military operations of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, such as the capture of the *USS Pueblo* by North Korea in 1968, the seizure of the *SS Mayaguez* by the Khmer Rouge in 1975, the inability to rescue American diplomats held hostage in Iran in 1980, and inadequate protection against the bombing of U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983 (Hansen, 2008; Locher, 2001; Lofgren, 2002; Lovelace, 1996). The common denominators of these events were the absence of a unified command and joint interoperability among individual military services.

Despite continuing calls for reform, no changes to defense organization were realized in the period from 1958 to 1983. The four-year political battle to pass the *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act* began in 1982 with a closed session statement to the House Armed Services Committee (HASC). In this venue, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General David Jones, reported: "The system is broken. I have tried to reform it from inside, but I cannot. Congress is going to have to mandate necessary reforms" (Locher, 2001).

Political Battle for Defense Reform

Chairman of the Senate Arms Services Committee (SASC) John Tower (R-Texas) opened a major investigation concerning Department of Defense reorganization in 1983. With all of the Joint Chiefs opposed to reform, Congress faced an uphill battle against the president and the Pentagon. In 1985, however, the balance of power shifted in favor of reform (Locher, 2001).

In the legislative branch, Senator Barry Goldwater (R-Arizona) assumed leadership of the SASC in 1985. His appointment turned the tide of Senate resistance to reform offered by Senator Tower and former Secretary of the Navy, Senator John Warner (R-Virginia). As a retired Air Force two-star general and the voice of modern conservatism, Goldwater's credentials pushed the reform movement forward (Lofgren, 2002). Goldwater's alliance with the SASC's senior Democrat, Senator Sam Nunn (D-Georgia), enabled defense reform to assume priority on the congressional agenda (Locher, 2001). That same year, Representative Les Aspin (D-Wisconsin) was appointed chair of the HASC (Locher, 2001). Aspin capitalized on the change in Senate leadership and focused on hearing testimony obtained by the investigation subcommittee chair, Representative William Nichols (D-Alabama) (Lofgren, 2002).

In the executive branch, President Ronald Reagan appointed the Blue-Ribbon Commission on Defense Management ("Packard Commission") in 1985. National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane persuaded Reagan of the importance of an executive inquiry into defense reform (Locher, 2001). McFarlane's advice followed a legislative budget amendment calling for a bipartisan study of defense procurement, prompted by allegations of, among other purchases, a \$1200 toilet seat. The commission's stated focus on procurement practices assuaged the concerns of Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger (Lofgren, 2002).

The struggle for authority over the nation's military was ultimately settled by the legislative and executive's shared vision for greater civilian control of the armed forces (Bartolotto, 2004; Hansen, 2008). Subordination to civilian authority purported to improve national policy and defense strategy. For better or worse, civilian control of America's defense establishment was an objective upon which both the executive and legislative branches could agree. With executive acquiescence, the bipartisan *Goldwater-Nichols Act* established a multidimensional structure of organizations and processes for planning, budgeting, and executing national security decisions (Dale, 2008). President Reagan signed the bill into law on the first day of the fiscal year, October 1, 1986.

Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986

The fundamental objectives of the *Goldwater-Nichols Act* were organization within, and balance among, the armed forces (Bolton, 2008). To achieve those objectives, the legislation promulgated nine well-defined policy goals: (a) strengthen civilian authority, (b) improve military advice to political leaders, (c) assign clear responsibility for mission accomplishment to unified commanders, (d) align unified commander responsibility with authority, (e) focus efforts on strategy and planning, (f) facilitate efficient resource management, (g) develop joint operations, (h) enhance the effectiveness of military operations, and (i) improve Department of Defense administration and management (Locher, 2001).

Congressional Mandate. Among its many provisions, the *Goldwater-Nichols Act* prescribed an annual comprehensive report on national security strategy (Annual National Security Strategy Report, 2011). This requirement proposed to enhance strategic-level planning across the executive branch. As articulated by Congress, the National Security Strategy facilitated the development of an integrated and coherent long-term strategy to preserve and

advance America's core national interests (Bartolotto, 2004; Snider, 1995). The annual basis ensures that national security interests are continually monitored and emerging threats are frequently assessed.

The first such document was published in 1987 by President Reagan, entitled "The National Security Strategy of the United States." Reagan published a second National Security Strategy in 1988, the final year of his presidency. President George H. W. Bush published two National Security Strategies in his four years in office in 1990, 1991, and 1993; President William Clinton, seven in eight years – 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000, and 2001 (Stolberg, 2010).

In recent practice, the executive branch has published only one per presidential term (Dale, 2008). Since September 11, 2001, former President George W. Bush published National Security Strategies in 2002 and 2006; President Barack Obama, in 2010 and 2015. A total of 15 National Security Strategies have been published since the inception of this requirement (Stolberg, 2010). The executive branch's failure to keep pace with the annual requirement has occurred without congressional repercussion, likely due to the heightened tempo of national security operations since 9/11. Moreover, there does not appear to be adverse strategic or operational impacts to this trend.

Legislative Intent. The *Goldwater-Nichols Act* established a new model for U.S. foreign policy making (Bolton, 2008). Congress intended for the National Security Strategy not only to guide national security strategy and related foreign policy, but also to inform executive budget requests and resource allocation (Dale, 2008; Doyle, 2007; Locher, 2001). Thorough consideration of the use of resources was expected to encourage more judicious use (Snider, 1995). Congress hoped the comprehensive nature of the National Security Strategy would more

closely align American grand strategy with the president's annual budget request (Bartolotto, 2004).

Within the National Security Strategy, the identification of strategic ways and means offers "top-down" guidance to executive agencies for use in budgeting, planning, training, organizing, and executing foreign and national security policy (Doyle, 2007). At the same time, linking strategic ways and means provides "bottom-up" justification to Congress for requested budget items (Dale, 2008; Stolberg, 2010). For this reason, the National Security Strategy is due on an annual basis in early February, on the day that the president submits the budget for the following fiscal year. Newly elected presidents are also obligated to publish a National Security Strategy within 150 days of assuming office (GNA, 1986).

Development of the National Security Strategy

Statutorily prescribed National Security Strategy content includes: (a) identification of U.S. interests, goals, and objectives vital to national security; (b) articulation of foreign policy necessary to implement U.S. national security strategy; (c) prioritization of instruments of national power to achieve national security goals and objectives; and (d) assessment of U.S. capabilities and risks associated with implementation of these policies and strategies (GNA, 1986). The National Security Strategy thus communicates the president's plan for the coordinated use of diplomatic, informational/intelligence, military, and economic (DIME) instruments of national power to pursue national political objectives (Doyle, 2007; Stolberg, 2010).

The development of the National Security Strategy is an intensely political process (Stolberg, 2010). The many government agencies encompassed by DIME use the National Security Strategy to assert their "piece of the national pie," as well as to protect their agency's

priorities and programs (Bartolotto, 2004, p. 9; Gates, 2014). Particularly since 9/11, the Departments of Defense and State have contended for primacy of national security budgets among executive agencies. Although the Department of State remains a key player in setting policy for foreign military assistance, implementation planning and actual execution typically falls to the Department of Defense (Adams, 2007). A premium is placed on achieving consensus among executive agencies prior to publication of the National Security Strategy (Gates, 2014).

In addition, every presidential transition brings high staff turnover and renewal, often burdened by policy predispositions (strategic coding), steep learning curves, and strong organizational cultures. Finally, each new administration endeavors to create a distinctive identity and place their own spin on the National Security Strategy (Bartolotto, 2004).

Notwithstanding these limitations, the national security strategy and related foreign policy contained within the National Security Strategy reflects the opinions of executive branch leaders within their respective administrations. The estimated eight-month process is forged almost exclusively by the executive branch for a statutorily defined audience: the U.S. Congress (Stolberg, 2010). A full range of National Security Strategy consumers, however, can include citizens of the United States and of the world, as well as their governments (Dale, 2008; Snider, 1995; Stolberg, 2010).

Central to National Security Strategy development are executive branch officials, including leadership and staff from the White House, Pentagon, National Security Council, and Department of State (Doyle, 2007). But at least five other executive agencies (Treasury, Commerce, Energy, Transportation, and Homeland Security), plus the cabinet-level U.S. Trade Representative, play substantial roles in National Security Strategy formulation and implementation (Mead, 2002; Snider, 1995). The intelligence community is likewise represented,

including the Director of National Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Drug Enforcement Administration (Stolberg, 2010).

Foreign policy elites, including scholars and experts from academic institutions, think tanks, and special interest groups, also shape National Security Strategy development (Brooks & Manza, 2013). The capacity for these “outsiders” to shape executive policy parallels the influence of corporate lobbyists on the legislative agenda. American foreign policy, however, typically reveals very limited public participation. Despite this traditional disregard, the family members of 9/11 victims became influential sources of national security policy change (Bolton, 2008; Hoffman & Kasupski, 2007). Once organized as a political action committee of sorts, 9/11 families joined the ranks of the foreign policy elite.

Finally, the news media continues to influence foreign policy and related national security strategy through the digital revolution and beyond. Mainstream news analysis and commentary focused on the 2002, 2006, 2010, and 2015 publications seemed to surpass that of the previous 11 National Security Strategies. This shift in media attention was likely prompted by increased coverage of foreign policy issues following the terrorist attacks of September 11th and preceding the U.S. invasion of Iraq on March 20, 2003.

Significantly for political leaders, the way in which an issue is framed by the news media can elicit a specific understanding or perception by the audience – particularly when public policy is uncertain or unclear (Robinson, 2001). Media framing can supersede and overwhelm the policy narrative presented by political officials.

Conclusion

The president and executive branch derive formal authority for specific foreign policy matters from Article II of the U.S. Constitution (Mead, 2002). In 1936, the Supreme Court

heightened executive authority in foreign affairs by providing the president with substantial discretion and broad latitude in achieving U.S. foreign policy objectives. The 7-1 majority in *United States v. Curtiss-Wright Export Corporation* recognized the “plenary and exclusive power of the president as the sole organ of the federal government in the field of international relations.” The executive branch thus effectively trumped the legislature’s claims to be the federal government’s principal foreign policy maker. In the years since the *Goldwater-Nichols Act*, the American national security bureaucracy has been adjusted by National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD), Presidential Policy Directive (PPD), and other executive orders.

The almost absolute executive power conferred by *Curtiss-Wright* however, is frequently constrained by congressional authority (Kozinski, 2006). Legislative power to advise and consent is reinforced by the “power of the purse” (Johnson, 2013; Mead, 2002). Congressional funding – or not – of the ends, ways, and means identified in the National Security Strategy can effectively sculpt executive policy in ways more palatable to the legislative branch. Less efficient, but still effective, is the influence of congressional committees. Oversight tools used by these committees include hearings, briefings, and reporting requirements (King, 2010).

Chapter 4

U.S. Grand Strategy in a New World Order

In essence, the National Security Strategy is a congressional mandate for an American grand strategy on national security and related foreign policy (Hooker, 2015). As a policy document, the National Security Strategy is both U.S. grand strategy and the president's policy agenda. The internal structure of the National Security Strategy itself provides a detailed understanding of the president's foreign policy, from policy objectives to strategies to tactics (Smoke, 1994). The National Security Strategy bridges a gap between strategy and policy, establishing it as a distinct policy-making vehicle previously overlooked in the study of foreign policy.

Grand Strategy

The modern use of strategy as an operational concept bridges both tactics and policy. Strategy, thus, is not policy in and of itself. Rather, strategy is a nation's plan for the deployment of capabilities to achieve specific political objectives (Betts, 2004; Fuerth, 2013). It is the relationship among ways, means, and ends (Bartholomees, 2004; Betts, 2004; Fontaine & Lord, 2012). Contemporary strategic planning thus considers: what do I want to accomplish, what resources are available, and how can I use them? (Biddle, 2015; Dorff, 2001).

Not surprisingly, much of the literature associates grand strategy with military force, but strategy is much broader in scope than its military application. A whole-of-government approach considers the relationships between and among all instruments of national power (Betts, 2004; Biddle, 2015; Hooker, 2015). Those resources are typically described as diplomatic, informational/intelligence, military, and economic (DIME) capabilities.

The diplomatic instrument relies on the exercise of political power, frequently

implemented through formal and informal negotiation. Public affairs and intelligence merge to shape informational power. The former includes strategic communication and the latter, the collection and analysis of information. The military instrument consists of the capabilities represented by the nation's armed forces – the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and occasionally, the Coast Guard. Finally, economic power leverages the nation's wealth to influence others. It encompasses economic sanctions, foreign aid, and trade policies (Krenson, 2012).

Grand strategy is ordinary strategy extended in time and perspective, and expanded in scope and purpose (Abshire, 2015; Kugler, 2006). Indeed, the essence of grand strategy is its integrative character. The critical challenge for national strategic planners is thus to prioritize, integrate, and coordinate the instruments of national power (Bartholomees, 2004). In doing so, national strategic planners acknowledge the impact of public opinion on the availability of resources. Greater public support for a particular policy or program suggests that more government resources are made available for its implementation. Such acceptance facilitates pragmatic choices among limited sources and enhances synchronization of their use (Biddle, 2015; Kugler, 2006).

At the grand strategic level, ways reflect the national strategic vision of America's role in the world. These consist of various approaches to foreign policy, comprising of courses of action to achieve national political objectives. Means encompass the instruments of national power and include personnel, equipment, funding, and political will. Ends are national political objectives, consisting of both perceived needs and desired outcomes (Biddle, 2015).

Within the ways-means-ends framework, the desired outcome (ends) of the National Security Strategy is national security. The resources and capabilities available to pursue that end

(means) represent the president's plan for the coordinated use of the DIME elements of national power (Bartolotto, 2004). The approaches used to achieve those ends (ways) are expressed by the president's foreign and national security policy.

While grand strategy is not policy per se, military theorist Liddell Hart asserted that "grand strategy is policy in execution" (Sayle, 2011). Rather than provide a fixed plan, grand strategy offers a set of guidelines and options for acknowledged risks, threats, and concerns (Bartolotto, 2004; Fontaine & Lord, 2012; Kugler, 2006). Each National Security Strategy is thus embedded with the strategic code of the administration that developed it. This strategic coding, shaped by ideology and world view, contains the context in which American national interests, as well as risks, threats, and concerns are understood (Gaddis, 2005).

Strategic Operating Environment

The goal of grand strategy is to influence the geopolitical landscape, or strategic operating environment. Its success is dependent upon the strategy's suitability for the strategic operating environment of the time (Abshire, 2015). The four most recent National Security Strategies (2002, 2006, 2010, 2015) were published against the backdrop of globalization and transnationalism – distinct phenomena that, when combined, made real the threat of terrorist attacks on U.S. soil.

The globalization boom of the late 1990s was distinguished by worldwide assimilation of wealth, labor, trade, and technology (Mead, 2002). As with the first age of globalization (1870-1914), the geopolitical landscape at the turn of this century was characterized by low inflation, relatively free trade, and limited constraints on the flow of capital (Ferguson, 2005). Both waves of globalization were accompanied by technological innovation, with passenger planes, personal computers, and mobile phones replacing railroads, steamships, and the telegraph

(Frankel, 2000; Naim, 2009; Peterson, 2014). The development of these newer technologies was branded the “digital revolution.” It marks the establishment of a complex system of information access and distribution in which global networking is almost instantaneous and virtually free of cost. Political scientist David Held described this phenomenon as the “widening, deepening, and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness” (Naim, 2009).

One impact of this interdependence is that change or crisis in one location has significant potential to impact the rest of the world (Mead, 2002). The spillover effects of international crises, particularly those economic in nature, can be as perilous as the initial crisis itself (Ferguson, 2009). The worldwide financial collapse of 2008 illustrated the global effects triggered by relatively local events that spread to distant points around the world (OECD, 2011).

Globalization enabled transnationalism and the proliferation of influential non-state actors (Bolton, 2008). Within international relations, the primacy of nation-states has been seriously challenged by the rise of non-state entities – independent actors with influential impact (Haass, 2017a). Prominent non-state actors include international institutions, nongovernmental organizations, multinational corporations, and ideological institutions, as well as terrorist networks and crime syndicates with global reach (Haass, 2013; Schweller, 2014).

Both globalization and transnationalism prompted the disruption of traditional great power politics (Haass, 2017a; Naim, 2009). For all its flaws, great power politics demonstrated compliance with the defining pillars of international relations: state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and domestic noninterference. The balance of power representative of great power politics has, as a rule, promoted a world order characterized by global peace and stability (Mearsheimer, 2001).

Central to the notion of “international order” are three criteria. First, the international

community must enjoy a common understanding of the principles and rules by which the world will operate. Second, a broadly accepted process to establish, modify, and apply these principles and rules must exist. Finally, there must be a balance of power among sovereign nations (Haass, 2017a). The end of the Cold War shattered these conditions, leaving a delicate world order in its wake.

The “new world order” articulated by President George H. W. Bush at the close of the first Gulf War in 1991 never materialized (Haass, 2017a). During the Cold War (1947-1991), global power was concentrated in two superpowers, the United States and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, creating a bipolar system. The much-expected period of sustained peace following the fall of the Berlin Wall, however, failed to emerge. Instead, global power was diluted and diffused among many sovereign nations, international institutions, nongovernmental organizations, multinational corporations, and ideological institutions (Haass, 2017a; Schweller, 2014).

The ensuing world order challenged U.S. national security in ways never experienced before. Distribution of global power was frequently demonstrated by intrastate conflict, often fought by proxy, particularly within developing nations (Haass, 2013; Naim, 2009). The digital revolution provided individuals with the technology and power to affect, disrupt, and obstruct political agendas with which they disagree (Schweller, 2014). In the geopolitical landscape of the twenty-first century, large-scale terrorist acts are committed by those with global capabilities and de facto sovereign status.

Conclusion

World order is the neutral, descriptive term used to reflect the nature of international relations at a given time. “World Order 1.0” existed from the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648,

which concluded the Thirty Years War in Europe, until the end of the Cold War in 1991. It revolved around sovereign autonomy, the concepts of state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and domestic noninterference. “World Order 2.0” has tested those notions, with its evolving ideals of sovereign obligation, the idea that sovereign states have, not just rights, but also obligations (Haass, 2017b).

America’s “unipolar moment” is better characterized as a primacy of sorts (Hansen, 2011). From the end of the Cold War through the turn of the twenty-first century, no other international actor possessed both the means and will to counter, or to balance, the United States (Haass, 2017a). That moment came to an abrupt halt on September 11, 2001. The rise of the non-state actor, empowered through technology and global interconnectedness, enabled the disastrous terrorist attacks on U.S. soil.

While great power politics once reserved international relations to nation-states, global power in this new world order is divided among state and non-state actors. This shift in power is reflected in U.S. foreign and national security policies. The rhetoric which appeared in the National Security Strategy published after 9/11 shaped a global war against terrorist organizations, advanced the concept of terrorist safe havens, and launched counterterrorism as a national security priority. The United States, like the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and other Western powers, is now vulnerable to dangerous non-state actors with global reach. Its foreign and national security policies, as well as the language used to articulate those policies, must be configured as a new global operating system; that is, a National Security Strategy for World Order 2.0 (Haass, 2017a).

Chapter 5

Literature Review

My research explores the relationship between public policy legitimation and the rhetorical strategies used in the National Security Strategy. Policy developed through democratic institutions and processes is typically assumed to be legitimate (Smoke, 1994). Yet, the public distrust of government and politicians apparent throughout the 2016 presidential election reflects a trend that has developed over at least the past two generations (Wallach, 2016). This erosion of public confidence challenges the assumption that democracy and legitimacy are somehow inextricably linked.

Public discourse is fundamental to democratic governance. The rhetoric of political speech thus provides a window into public policy legitimation. My study is premised on the notion that effective use of tone can influence the domestic audience, create a national consensus, and mobilize public support. A mobilized public can, in turn, overcome political constraints on presidential policy making and push the president's foreign policy agenda forward.

By examining political speech as symbolic action, my research aims to provide new perspectives on the development of foreign and national security policy. Curiously, scholars have focused almost exclusively on the spoken word to examine public policy legitimation. Their focus on campaign rhetoric, inaugural addresses, joint sessions of Congress, and other keynote speeches effectively ignores the importance of executive planning documents in policy making. This omission is problematic, as these types of documents are essential to establish an administration's strategic position on an array of critical issues of national security.

Moreover, language and rhetorical techniques used to communicate those strategic

positions not only vary from one administration to the next, but also can vary quite considerably within an individual administration. Problem definition, issue framing, and argument selection often evolve throughout the process of policy learning. A nuanced awareness of how policy legitimacy is influenced by rhetoric – one focused not on the spoken word, but on executive planning documents – may better enable presidential administrations to shape national consensus.

Policy Legitimation Dynamics

Foreign policy scholarship has a traditional focus on policy legitimation (Ingram & Fiederline, 1988). Public policy legitimation dynamics are the means by which the president can develop a national consensus necessary to overcome the political constraints that exist between policy goals and ratified agreements (Melanson, 2005; Trout, 1975). Domestic constraints on foreign policy include not only public opinion, but also the media, Congress, and special interest groups (George, 1980). Policy legitimation may be described as the justification of public policy to achieve public consensus (Smoke, 1994). Two schools of thought characterize public policy legitimation.

Symbolic Legitimacy. In the first, public policy is thought to be legitimate when the domestic public acknowledges the authority of the policy-making process and of the policy maker. For example, Supreme Court decisions tend toward wide acceptance as the law of the land because of the symbolic legitimacy of that institution and its members. Public trust in the U.S. judiciary has not been as tarnished as it has for the executive and legislative branches (Zilis, 2015). The political capital of symbolic legitimacy thus relies upon institutional prestige and individual credibility (Mondak, 1994). Policy content is not necessarily relevant to symbolic legitimacy. Instead, it is the source of that policy which establishes symbolic legitimacy.

Substantive Legitimacy. America's current crisis of symbolic legitimacy reinforces the importance of the second school of thought. Here, policy legitimation is based on substance and content (Mondak, 1994). In this dialogical construct, substantive legitimacy develops from the conversation between political actors and the public, wherein political actors justify their policy positions (Goddard & Krebs, 2015; Tjalve & Williams, 2015). Acceptance and policy legitimation is dependent upon the public's evaluation of the perceived justification.

Alexander George identified two distinct aspects of substantive legitimacy. The normative (moral) component relates to a policy's fit with public values and norms. This aspect of substantive legitimacy determines a policy's desirability. The cognitive (knowledge) component relates to a policy's perceived ability to be realized. Cognitive legitimacy requires political leaders to convince the public that their understanding of the problem and its context is sufficient to enable the proposed policy solution. This aspect of substantive legitimacy determines a policy's feasibility (George, 1980; Smoke, 1994).

The logic of legitimation thus suggests that some policies are "taken off the table" for their failure to comport with national values and norms, or due to a perceived impression of implausibility, even when those policies would otherwise be effective (Goddard & Krebs, 2015, p. 11). Substantive legitimacy is especially important for long-term policies, like foreign and national security policies, which require patient and persistent application. In the absence of national consensus on foreign policy, the president may be compelled to justify each individual component of a broader grand strategy on its own merits, rather than as part of the larger whole (George, 1980).

Application to Foreign Policy. Stacie Goddard and Ronald Krebs specifically apply the policy legitimation dynamic to grand strategy, that is, foreign policy "in execution" (Goddard &

Krebs, 2015; Sayle, 2011). According to Goddard and Krebs, five factors influence the success of policy legitimation: (a) who speaks, (b) when and where, (c) to whom, (d) what is said, and (e) how it is said. These factors correspond to content (what is said), context (who speaks, when and where, and to whom), and technique (how it is said). Goddard and Krebs' focus on content, context, and technique highlights the implications of substantive legitimacy for foreign and national security policies.

Content. Problem definition and issue framing are fundamental to the content (i.e., what is said) of legitimation dynamics. Frames are theoretical constructs that describe issues, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies (Chilton & Schaffner, 2002; Entman, 1993). By providing the audience with a story line, framing determines how social problems and political issues are fundamentally understood by the public audience (Sniderman & Theriault, 2004). Effective frames diagnose, evaluate, and prescribe in terms that can generate public support (Asen, 2010; Stone, 2012).

Issue framing governs how a problem is defined through the selection of certain features and the omission of others, specifically, how it is understood, evaluated, and addressed (Beasley, 2010; Entman, 1993; Sniderman & Theriault, 2004; Weiss, 1989). Like the construct of the terministic screen, frames are deployed to invoke particular ideas and shape the audience's understanding of social problems and issues (Burke, 1966). Frames reflect an intended reality by focusing the audience on select meanings, while deflecting others. The framing effect purports to resolve audience confusion by identifying which, among many, considerations are relevant and important, and which are not (Sniderman & Theriault, 2004).

The effectiveness of content in policy legitimation depends on whether audience perception of the framing offered by political leaders resonates with the public (Chong &

Druckman, 2007; Sniderman & Theriault, 2004). Significantly, there is a tendency for the public to accept frames as they are presented, rather than to reframe issues (Teague, 2004). When combined with a lack of media coverage typical of foreign policy issues in the popular press, the public's reluctance to reframe suggests the likely acceptance of the president's problem definition (Cohen, 1995).

A failure to challenge framing also encourages development of a single perspective or collective opinion (Cruz-Rubio, 2013). Public opinion adheres almost exclusively to the frame provided. National consensus in this context refers to a coherent and consistent collective public opinion shaped by presidential rhetoric. Public opinion is a mobilizing force, enabling policy goals by providing the influence necessary to overcome domestic constraints.

Context. Problem definition is influenced by political context; that is, who speaks, where and when, and to whom (Goddard & Krebs, 2015; Weiss, 1989). Context is the interface between discourse and society, culture, and institutions. It is not observable in and of itself. Rather, context is apparent through its effect on discourse and the environments in which it occurs. Context provides the basis for the subjective interpretation of political speech by the audience (Van Dijk, 2006). Effective deployment of policy content by means of rhetorical technique requires an appreciation of the political context. Failure to adapt political speech to its particular context can undermine efforts to build national consensus and attain policy legitimacy.

Early research on discourse analysis defined context in terms of sociological variables such as age, gender, race, religion, income, and education. More recent studies of political speech express context in cognitive terms (Wodak, 2008). Cognitive models consider the social, cultural, and institutional environments in which political speech is situated. They also reflect participant cognition, the knowledge, beliefs, and intentions of the author, and the perceptions

and comprehensions of the audience (Van Dijk, 2006).

Context for policy legitimation emanates from the environment in which policies are developed and proposed. Indeed, context often determines selection and omission in the framing of content, by establishing which policy arguments are presented, under what conditions, and by whom (Krebs & Jackson, 2007). This environment includes the symbolic legitimacy of political institutions and policy makers (Chilton & Schaffner, 2002). Contextual legitimation accompanies the presentation of policy. Subsequent policy legitimation adheres to the definition and framing of provided content (Trout, 1975).

Technique. The operation of rhetorical technique (i.e., how it is said) relies on the human predisposition toward meaning-making. As symbolic communication, political speech translates public values and norms into political action (Gronbeck, 2012). Explanation and understanding are central to the assignment of meaning to those actions. But understanding necessarily includes audience evaluation and judgment (Fairclough, 2003). Policy legitimation enables meaning-making by providing significance to political action. Rhetorical concepts, particularly tone, are addressed more fully in the section on political rhetoric and policy legitimation, below.

Public Opinion and Policy Legitimation

The internal architecture of substantive legitimacy – normative legitimacy (desirability) and cognitive legitimacy (feasibility) – shapes public opinion (George, 1980; Smoke, 1994). Successful influence of public opinion is dependent on desirability and feasibility. Both must be present to legitimate public policy (Melanson, 2005).

Public opinion is typically considered to influence policy making from the “bottom-up.” In this approach, public opinion triggers a policy response by political leaders. The use of public opinion examined in my research, however, promotes “top-down” policy making. In this

approach, political leaders deploy rhetoric to shape national consensus (Krebs & Jackson, 2007). Consensus implies policy legitimation and mobilizes public opinion (Melanson, 2005). In addition, policy agendas and goals are actualized as formal policy. An anecdotal description of the causal connection between foreign policy and public opinion estimates that policy making is a bottom-up process about one third of the time. In the remaining two thirds of policy making, public opinion is ignored approximately one third of the time, and manipulated in the remaining one third (McGraw, 2001).

Critics of bottom-up policy making argue that the American public is an inattentive audience on the topic of foreign policy. Political leaders can then act as free agents on foreign policy matters given the lessened likelihood of electoral retribution (Holsti, 1992). Although research has challenged theories of the inattentive public, the influence of these theories on media coverage is apparent with regard to foreign policy issues (Page & Bouton, 1996, Page & Bouton, 2006).

The Inattentive Public. The media-driven cycle of “apathetic internationalism” begins and ends with an inattentive domestic public (Lindsay, 2000). Assumed and perceived indifference toward foreign policy dissuades news media from framing foreign policy issues. Without media coverage, public appreciation of foreign policy issues decreases, even among the attentive public. When public discourse is absent, a national consensus fails to emerge. Political responsiveness is thereby diminished (Burstein, 2003).

The influence of political realism on the phenomenon of apathetic internationalism is apparent. Realists consider public opinion – attentive or not – to be an obstacle to the development of coherent foreign policy (Mead, 2002). Walter Lippmann actively promoted realist assumptions of an apathetic and uniformed public (Holsti, 2007; Isaacs, 1998; Sniderman

& Theriault, 2004). Consistent concerns were advanced by Gabriel Almond. Almond's "mood theory" identified various policy constraints imposed by a volatile, impassioned public (Almond, 1960; Holsti, 2007). The resulting "Almond-Lippmann consensus" concluded that: (a) the volatility of public opinion makes it an unsuitable basis for effective foreign policy, (b) public opinion lacks coherence or structure, and (c) public opinion has little impact on foreign policy (Holsti, 1992).

Despite subsequent research challenging the unstable and unpredictable public promoted by realism (Caspary, 1970; Smoke, 1994; Sniderman & Theriault, 2004; Yankelovich & Smoke, 1988), the Almond-Lippmann consensus had a profound and enduring influence on American foreign policy and national security scholarship. Political realism is most closely associated with the Hamiltonian and Jacksonian traditions of U.S. foreign policy (Mead, 2002).

The Rational Public. As a counterpoint to political realism, liberal internationalist theory recognizes public opinion as a necessary condition to the development of effective foreign policy. My contention that domestic public opinion can facilitate top-down policy making relies on scientific public opinion polling popularized by liberal internationalists in the 1930s (Holsti, 1992; Holsti, 2007). Liberal internationalism is most closely associated with the Wilsonian and Jeffersonian traditions of U.S. foreign policy (Mead, 2002).

The notion of a "rational public" is supported by the public opinion research of Benjamin Page and Marshall Bouton. Their analysis of eight national surveys administered by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations conducted between 1974 and 2002 revealed a collective American opinion characterized as coherent, consistent, and rationally based (Page & Bouton, 2006). Page and Bouton's research supported earlier findings that substantial shifts of collective public opinion tend to rationally correlate with world events, newly available information, and

demographic changes (Page & Shapiro, 1983).

Political Rhetoric and Policy Legitimation

Language and by extension, rhetoric, is the currency of political action (Chilton & Schaffner, 2002; Hart, Childers, & Lind, 2013). As a political technique, rhetoric seeks to influence public opinion and guide public behavior (Schneider & Ingram, 1990). In doing so, rhetoric provides a bridge between problem definition and policy solutions. Policy legitimation is facilitated by the deliberate deployment of rhetorical techniques and strategies.

Definitions. Notwithstanding wide disparity in definitions of rhetoric, my use of the term is influenced by its classical foundation. In ancient Greece, the ability to speak convincingly was key to political power (Ponton, 2016). Aristotle contended, “It is not enough to know what to say; we must also say it in the right way” (Grose & Husser, 2014). Rhetoric thus evolved as the practical art and science of the persuasive use of language.

Even today, scholars of political science consider rhetorical skill to be critical to political leadership (Crew & Lewis, 2014). Assessment of rhetorical skill considers clarity and understanding, grammatical correctness, evidence or vividness, adequacy, and efficacy (Reisigl, 2008). Within the context of political speech, rhetorical technique encompasses the various strategies used by political leaders to shape opinion and “move policy” (Crew & Lewis, 2014, p. 172).

My use of rhetoric is aligned with this notion of linguistic persuasion, not with the negative label often assigned to political spin, or with insincere, hyperbolic, and verbose political speech (Goddard & Krebs, 2015; Van Dijk, 1997). In the latter sense, “talk is cheap” and political speech is “mere rhetoric” (Krebs & Jackson, 2007). In the former, rhetoric is viewed positively, and recognized as the art of effective communication (Condor, Tileagă, & Billig,

2013). The discipline of rhetorical political analysis adheres to this understanding as well.

Rhetorical styles include devices which bring ideas to life, including figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor), sound techniques (e.g., alliteration, rhythm), structure (e.g., narrative), and register (e.g., syntax, voice) (Arp & Johnson, 2009). Tone is a stylistic device of register that is focused on word choice. Through the conscious selection of words, tone is used to signal to an audience what is important. The intent is to persuade the audience to agree with an author's appeal (Hart, Childers, & Lind, 2013).

“Discourse” refers to communicative action, including written, oral, and visual communication; it is the interactive element of communication. Discourse theory assumes that communication occurs in a historical, social, and cultural context. More than just monologue or dialog, discursive dynamics give meaning to social interactions and power structures (Fischer, 2003). Where discourse is abstract, text is concrete (Wodak, 2008). “Text” is the actualization of discourse, represented by the written or spoken word.

Scholarship on Political Rhetoric. Early studies of political rhetoric were primarily conducted by political scientists interested in language and by linguists interested in politics. As the field evolved, empirical studies tended to focus on formal means of communication, including high-profile speeches, published texts, and historical documents. The substantive topics of political rhetoric research reflect a range of political issues, from immigration and citizenship, to climate change and foreign policy (Reisigl, 2008). Some, like my study, examine the microfeatures of communication, including the strategic use of metaphors (Ferrari, 2007), appeals to common values such as “change” (Roan & White, 2010), “choice” (Gaard, 2010), “community” (Buckler, 2007), and reliance on religious language and idioms (Kaylor, 2011; Marietta, 2012; Stecker, 2011).

Verbal Style. Roderick Hart identifies four indicators of rhetorical tone (“verbal style”): activity, certainty, optimism, and realism (Hart, 1984). Activity refers to movement, change, or the implementation of ideas. It indicates proposed transformation of the status quo. Certainty reflects speech patterns characterized by resoluteness or inflexibility. Optimism broadly refers to statements that endorse someone or something, offer positive descriptions, or predict favorable occurrences. Realism captures expressions of tangible, immediate, and practical issues. It indicates an inclination to manage policy issues in a forthright, honest, and uncompromising manner (Crew & Lewis, 2014; Grose & Husser, 2014; Hart, 1984; Kaid & Holtz-Bacha, 2008).

Research conducted by Robert Crew and Christopher Lewis found that rhetorical style correlates with public approval ratings of U.S. governors (Crew & Lewis, 2014). Similarly, Grose and Husser determined that the rhetorical tone of U.S. presidential candidates can sway moderate voters (Grose & Husser, 2014). However, the majority of the existing literature has little to say about the nexus between policy legitimation and the microfeatures of political rhetoric. In fact, tone – a rhetorical device that communicates much more than words alone – is seldom examined in the social sciences (Hart, Childers, & Lind, 2013). Even more remarkable is the relative lack of scholarship on rhetoric and international relations (Krebs & Jackson, 2007). After all, diplomacy is virtually synonymous with talk and text, and diplomacy with international relations.

Executive Rhetoric and Influential Power

Richard Neustadt argued that the “power to persuade” is most important among the presidential powers. According to Neustadt, true presidential power resides in the ability to advance a chosen agenda, not simply to “get things done.” The latter (“getting things done”) refers to formal power, which describes unilateral authority expressly granted by law (Howell,

2005; Neustadt, 1990; Ulrich, 2004). The former (advancing an agenda) describes the concept of influential power.

Unlike formal authority which commands compliance, influential power resides in a political leader's ability to persuade others to support specific plans and policies (Neustadt, 1990). Rhetorical techniques, such as tone, are tactics used by political leaders to address the public, influence public opinion, and advance policy. Research studies established that executive rhetoric impacts public approval of political leadership (Crew & Lewis, 2014; Druckman & Holmes, 2004), and public perception of policy issues (Wood, 2007). In sum, words matter, particularly when they are delivered by the President of the United States.

If public perception is the center of gravity for influential power, then public opinion is an essential tool by which a policy agenda may be advanced. Just as the "will of the people" determines outcomes in democratic elections, public support can enable national strategic direction. If agenda advancement is the measure of a presidential administration, then executive rhetoric is critical to political leadership (Beasley, 2010).

Conclusion

Although frequently discussed in linguistics, rhetorical strategies such as tone are rarely contemplated in the social sciences (Hart, Childers, & Lind, 2013). As this body of literature evolved, most scholars focused on spoken rhetoric, rather than on written documents. The omission of formal planning documents, such as the National Security Strategy, from the literature on political rhetoric, has prevented scholars from fully exploring the strategic positions of American presidential administrations. My approach to the study of foreign policy also builds upon the relative lack of research on rhetoric and international relations (Ingram & Fiederline, 1988). By examining political speech as symbolic action, my research aims to provide new

perspectives on the development of foreign and national security policy.

Chapter 6

Research Design and Methods

My research explores the relationship between rhetorical techniques used in the National Security Strategy, public opinion, and policy legitimation. In doing so, I ask the following research questions: what is the relationship between rhetorical strategies used in the National Security Strategy and public policy legitimation, and how can rhetorical strategies help or hurt the White House's ability to advance the president's foreign policy agenda?

This inquiry is premised on the notion that effective use of rhetoric can influence public opinion and advance a policy agenda (Crew & Lewis, 2014). Central to this premise is the supposition that political actors will implement their plans as articulated. Yet, rhetoric and policy at times oppose one another (Hart, Childers, & Lind, 2013). Formal planning documents like the National Security Strategy represent a nation's explicit strategy. Explicit strategy signals intended action. However, the complexities of implementing foreign and national security policies can often result in applications that are incongruent with actual decision making (Dale, 2007). Thus, the difference between explicit and implicit strategy is the difference between theory and practice.

Although language is central to policy studies, particularly in the study of policy change, relatively little attention has focused on the microfeatures of communication, such as rhetorical technique. Comparative descriptive content typically examines discursive dynamics in their literal sense; that is, by evaluation of the original text (Morgan, 2010). My research, in contrast, studied political communication in executive planning documents, focusing on the use of tone as rhetorical strategy. This approach facilitates a fresh perspective on the development of foreign and national security policy.

Fundamental to my research is an understanding of tone as a product of individual word choices that signals something important in the author's perspective to an audience. This interpretation is supported by three related observations: "1) politicians use words to do things, 2) they use them in varying proportions, and 3) their audiences react to these deployments cognitively and socially" (Hart, Childers, & Lind, 2013, p. 19).

Qualitative Research

Critical discourse analysis emerged as an analytical tool in the 1990s. In its investigation of discursive dynamics, critical discourse analysis seeks to make transparent rhetorical techniques used within, and ideological positions represented by, documents and texts (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Interdisciplinary in its approach, critical discourse analysis encompasses communications, linguistics, political science, and public policy. This method consists of deconstructing and interpreting a particular text or collection of texts ("discourse"). Discourse is understood as symbolic action and situated within its specific historic, social, and political settings (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002; Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Ponton, 2016). Given its adductive orientation, researchers who rely upon critical discourse analysis move from theory to data and back to reach their findings (Mogashoa, 2014). Researchers who rely on critical discourse analysis typically seek to account for relationships between language and power (Fairclough, 2003; Mogashoa, 2014).

Application. The selection of content in the National Security Strategy shapes its meaning, therefore critical discourse analysis is essential to understand how that content is perceived by the domestic audience and, in turn, reflected by public opinion. My interpretation of rhetorical strategy used within the National Security Strategy was guided by the interaction between intended meaning and perceived meaning. Both intended and perceived meanings rely

upon, not only the National Security Strategy's explicit literal substance, but also upon its implicit symbolic content (Fairclough, 2003). The merging of explicit and implicit political speech belies the notion that "actions speak louder than words" (Wood & Kroger, 2000). Rather, words (content) and action (context) are equal partners in the relationship between intended meaning and audience perception.

As a written statement of the president's foreign and national security policy, the National Security Strategy is rhetorical by nature. Authorship is collective, but highlights the policy position and ideology of the president (Asen, 2010; Fairclough, 2003). Included among the legislative requirements of the *Goldwater-Nichols Act* is an administration's foreign policy agenda as found within the National Security Strategy. Although policy makers and others sometimes deride the National Security Strategy as a marketing tool, the National Security Strategy provides a "terministic screen" into an administration's worldview, transcending any public relations function it might also deliver (Burke, 1966).

Terministic screens are filters through which language is communicated. They are the linguistic windows to an administration's soul. In this rhetorical construct, terministic screens are used to reflect, select, and deflect. Specifically, terministic screens reflect reality as it is understood. Terministic screens select aspects of that reality consistent with the author's values and beliefs. Finally, terministic screens deflect those aspects of reality that challenge that worldview (Burke, 1966). Terministic screens are illustrated in the debate over abortion: pro-choice advocates tend to frame the issue by use of the word, "fetus"; pro-life advocates use the word, "baby."

Specific words are chosen for the National Security Strategy to evoke a particular audience reaction. In political speech, such as the National Security Strategy, one intended response is audience support of policies and actions. Word selection is thus reliant on its consistency with an administration's values and beliefs, as well as its ability to influence perceptions and opinions. The terministic screens of Presidents Bush and Obama are revealed through textual analysis of word choices made in the National Security Strategy. Select words function as indicators to reflect, select, and deflect their respective world views. My research focused on assertive versus cooperative terministic screens.

Strengths and Limitations. Critical discourse analysis satisfies the requirements of methodological purposiveness for my research study. Methodological congruence is similarly provided by the data collection methods typical of critical discourse analysis: document review and secondary data analysis (Richards & Morse, 2013). Its functional emphasis on language is essential to successful analysis of the relationship between the political purpose of the National Security Strategy and the rhetorical techniques contained therein (Chilton & Schaffner, 2002).

Significantly, critical discourse analysis has been criticized for its lack of political neutrality (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Given that the practice of politics and political activity itself is reliant on upon language, proponents of critical discourse analysis counter that political speech is inherently structured to achieve social or political goals (Chilton & Schaffner, 2002). Therefore, complete neutrality is unfeasible due to the very nature of political speech. To mitigate against potential bias, critical discourse analysis researchers strive to identify their predisposed positions and interests and remain self-reflective during their research processes (Breeze, 2011; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

Critical discourse analysis has also been criticized for its overreaching breadth. Indeed, critical discourse analysis is less a method than a theoretical perspective (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Opponents argue that those who rely on critical discourse analysis approach their research with expectations that encourage a particular interpretation of selected text (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Another significant criticism is the propensity for discursive labels to identify little more than common sense strategies to linguistic approaches (Morgan, 2010). Finally, claims that thematic labels and descriptive codes are arbitrary in their selection and application raise questions of reliability (Breeze, 2011).

Within the narrower context of my study, an exclusive focus on tone neglects the full complement of stylistic devices, such as syntax, imagery, register, voice, predication, and lexicon. Other researchers place less emphasis on tone, treating word selection as a choice of minor consequence. Yet, tone offers the ability to convey dual messages by conditioning or qualifying what is said (Hart, Childers, & Lind, 2013). In the world of words that is politics, tone can be as powerful as it is subtle.

Qualitative Data Collection. My research uses public opinion poll data to examine public perceptions of the rhetorical techniques used within the National Security Strategy. Thus, I extracted qualitative data from a document review of unclassified versions of the National Security Strategy, as published for public consumption. With document review, data is more accurately *selected* than collected (Bowen, 2009).

Given the transformative effect that the events of September 11, 2001 had on U.S. foreign and national security policy, data selection was limited to the four National Security Strategies produced since that time: the 2002 and 2006 versions published by President George W. Bush, and the 2010 and 2015 versions published by President Barack Obama. Although by

law the National Security Strategy is due annually, the two most recent administrations have produced only one per term. Given the lack of congressional consequence for this deficiency, it is assumed that this trend will continue.

Qualitative Data Analysis. Initial examination of the selected documents considered the original purpose and its intended audience (Bowen, 2009). In doing so, my attention extended beyond the statutory purpose and audience set forth in the *Goldwater-Nichols Act*, and reflected each administration's likely intent and target constituency (e.g., domestic public, international community). Essential to this inquiry was identification of the social and historical context for each of the four documents. For example, the 2002 National Security Strategy was published one year after the terrorist attacks on U.S. soil, while the 2010 National Security Strategy was published the year after President Obama's inauguration.

Next, an iterative process of skimming (superficial review) and reading (thorough examination) facilitated deconstruction of each document (Bowen, 2009). Superficial examination allowed for the a priori development of thematic labels and descriptive codes; thorough examination provided the opportunity for actual coding. I identified themes as motifs of shared ideas that reinforced the discursive structure of the text and advanced the political positions advanced therein (Mogashoa, 2014).

Descriptive coding allowed for characterization of each National Security Strategy by tone. Simply stated, tone is a rhetorical technique used to create a distinct perception by way of word choice (Hart, Childers, & Lind, 2013). Tone reflects how content is delivered to an audience. The use of tone by political leaders – whether consciously used or not – influences audience perception. Drawing from Hart's model of verbal style, my research identified two contrasting styles of tone within the National Security Strategy texts: assertive and cooperative

(Appendix B) (Hart, 1984). These themes were selected a priori based on widely held perceptions of the presidential styles of Presidents Bush and Obama. Other stylistic tones are present, but the categories of assertive and cooperative are well suited to an examination of foreign and national security policies.

A priori themes developed in superficial review were defined through detailed examination. The 2002 and 2010 National Security Strategies – the first publications for both Bush and Obama – were analyzed for evidence of assertive and cooperative language. I then produced a range of assertive and cooperative words, based on their actual use by the two administrations in these executive planning documents. Those indicator words formed the definitions for the assertive and cooperative codes. Comparable numbers of indicator words were identified for each thematic code to ensure that the overall characterization was not unduly influenced by sheer quantity. To characterize a document’s tone as assertive, I identified 52 indicator words. To characterize a document’s tone as cooperative, I identified 58 indicator words. I reviewed both documents multiple times before definitions were finalized.

With clear definitions established, codes were systematically applied during further thorough examination. Codes were applied only when the contextual use of identified words was consistent with the overall characterization. For example, “support” was not coded as cooperative in the context of rogue nation support to terrorist organizations. It was coded as cooperative, however, in the context of U.S. support to foreign nations.

My principal objective in coding was the consistent categorization of content. The reliability of coding depends upon “intracoder reliability,” which involves a coder’s consistency across time (Lacy, Watson, Riffe, & Lovejoy, 2015). To ensure high levels of consistency, each indicator word was coded one at a time across the four National Security Strategy documents.

Coding of all four documents was completed in approximately two weeks in Dedoose, a web-based application (“on-demand software”) for qualitative research.

Quantitative Research

Whereas a qualitative approach was used to characterize the overall rhetoric of each administration’s terministic screen as evidenced by the National Security Strategy, the relationship between rhetorical technique and public support relied on a quantitative approach. Secondary data analysis relies upon existing data, collected for the purposes of prior research, to explore research questions that are distinct from the original work (Vartanian, 2011). Here, public opinion was used as an indicator to measure whether the president’s foreign policy agenda was advanced, or not.

An administration’s terministic screen is conveyed through various media, therefore public opinion is a reliable indicator of policy support, irrespective of whether respondents have read the National Security Strategy itself. Terministic screens are presented not only by the National Security Strategy, but also by press conferences, announcements, social media messaging, public speeches, and other message platforms that are more readily accessed by the domestic public. Public awareness of an administration’s terministic screen through, for example, White House press briefings substantiates familiarity with the more detailed policy content for each agenda item contained within the National Security Strategy.

Application. Secondary data for the social sciences is available from a variety of sources, including the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Science Research (ICPSR). Located at the University of Michigan, ICPSR is a membership-based network of academic institutions and organizations providing access to a data archive of over 250,000 research files in the social and behavioral sciences (ICPSR, 2016).

My quantitative research was based on secondary data available from the ICPSR; specifically, cross-sectional public opinion polls conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. The Chicago Council is an independent, bipartisan, membership organization that aspires to inform and influence public discourse on critical global issues (Chicago Council, 2016). Since 1974, the Chicago Council has conducted a series of surveys regarding the perceptions and attitudes of the American public on matters relating to U.S. foreign policy. Polling was conducted quadrennially from 1974 to 2002, biennially from 2002 to 2015, and is now performed annually (DSDR, 2016). Target populations reflect representative samples of the adult U.S. population.

Strengths and Limitations. Collection of primary data to support my research study was neither economically feasible, nor practical. Reliance on secondary data, however, provided ample access to rich data sets from large samples. In addition to providing larger sample sizes, secondary data facilitated a longitudinal evaluation of foreign and national security policy (Vartanian, 2011).

Several challenges are potentially presented by secondary data analysis. First, detailed information regarding study design and data collection techniques may be limited or difficult to ascertain. Second, interview protocols and survey questions may not always be available for review. Finally, the research goals of the original research may introduce bias into a secondary analysis of the data (Schutt, 2015).

Quantitative Data Collection. The Chicago Council series on *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy* is designed to examine the opinions and attitudes of the domestic public concerning U.S. foreign policy. The data collected pertains to a wide range of topics, including foreign policy goals, potential threats to vital interests, the US's role in foreign affairs,

international trade, and the use of military force. Survey responses typically define the parameters of public opinion in which political leaders and policy makers operate.

My research focused on survey responses to a single question that appears throughout the series on *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Respondents were read a series of goals and asked for each whether it should be a very important, somewhat important, or not important U.S. foreign policy goal. The number of goals presented in this series ranged from 14 to 20. Consistently tested goals included: combating international terrorism, maintaining superior military power worldwide, protecting the jobs of American workers, controlling and reducing illegal immigration, preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations, improving the global environment (reframed as limiting climate change in 2008), and combating world hunger.

The public opinion period relevant to each National Security Strategy was fixed as beginning from the month and year of each National Security Strategy publication and ending at the month and year of the following National Security Strategy publication. Table 6.1 highlights methodological notes from the surveys reviewed.

- The survey representative of public opinion for the National Security Strategy published on February 6, 2015 was the *2015 Chicago Council Survey of American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy* (ICPSR 36437). Data for this survey was collected from May to June 2015.
- Surveys representative of public opinion for the National Security Strategy published on May 27, 2010 were as follows: *2014 Chicago Council Survey of American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy* (ICPSR 36216), *2012 Chicago Council Survey of*

American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy (ICPSR 36230), and *Global Views 2010 – American Public Opinion and Foreign Policy* (ICPSR 31022). Data for these surveys was collected from April to May 2014, May to June 2012, and throughout June 2010, respectively.

- The survey representative of public opinion for the National Security Strategy published on March 16, 2006 was *Global Views 2008 – American Public Opinion and Foreign Policy* (ICPSR 26301). Data for this survey was collected from July to September 2008. A survey conducted in 2006 was not available for review.
- Surveys representative of public opinion for the National Security Strategy published on September 17, 2002 were as follows: *Global Views 2004 – American Public Opinion and Foreign Policy* (ICPSR 4137) and *2002 American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy* (ICPSR 3673). Data for these surveys were collected in July 2004 and June 2002, respectively.

Table 6.1. Chicago Council Survey Methodology

Year	Data Collection	Survey Method	Sample Size	Completion Rate	Median Survey Length	Margin of Error
2015	5/28 – 6/17	Online	2,034	61%	23 minutes	+/- 2.4
2014	5/6 – 5/29	Online	2,108	61%	37 minutes	+/- 2.5
2012	5/25 – 6/8	Online				
2010	5/28 – 6/8	Online	1,702	65%	n/a	+/- 2.8
2008	7/3 – 7/15	Online	1,505	n/a	n/a	+/- 2.5 – +/- 3.7
2004	7/6 – 7/12	Online	1,195	n/a	n/a	+/- 3.0
2002	6/1 – 6/30	Telephone	2,862	n/a	n/a	+/- 1.7

Source: Chicago Council

Quantitative Data Analysis. Close examination of a single question that appears throughout the series on *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy* provides longitudinal data on public attitudes and perceptions. It also allows for comparison among surveys conducted within each administration. Descriptive summary statistics were used to identify public opinion regarding policy agenda items presented in the National Security Strategies published during the Bush and Obama administrations. Unlike inferential statistics, which are used to reach conclusions extending beyond the immediate data, descriptive statistics simply provide an overview of the data at hand (Balnaves & Caputi, 2001).

A determination of whether policy agenda items were advanced was evaluated by survey response. Public identification of an agenda item as a valid U.S. foreign policy goal validated the president's public policy agenda. Here, the National Security Strategy is a stand-in for the administration's terministic screen. It is assumed that public opinion not specifically informed by personal review of the National Security Strategy was nevertheless shaped by another strategic communication that shared the administration's terministic screen. An inability to confirm

whether those polled by a given survey were familiar with the recently published National Security Strategy should not invalidate the supposition that public opinion reflected popular appraisal of the president's foreign and national security policy.

Ethical Considerations. Because there were no "participants" in my research design, there was little to no risk of individual harm associated with my research study. The secondary data used to establish public opinion was anonymous, confidential, and de-identified. Accordingly, Northeastern University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) determined that my research was exempt. My study was IRB-approved on September 19, 2016 (Appendix A).

Conclusion

My qualitative research identified the frequency with which assertive and cooperative language appeared in the 2002, 2006, 2010, and 2015 National Security Strategies published by Presidents Bush and Obama. Language selection in the National Security Strategy was intended to stimulate audience support for the foreign policy contained therein. Word choice was thus selected based on its ability to influence audience perception and public opinion, as well as its congruence with the author's terministic screen. Words indicative of assertive and cooperative tones were contextually applied to ensure consistency with their characterization as assertive or cooperative. The frequencies of occurrence for each tone indicator functioned as a means to characterize the overall tone of each document.

The extent to which the promotion of the president's foreign policy agenda was successful was measured by quantitative research. Cross-sectional public opinion polls served as indicators of public agreement for policy agenda items. Survey responses were used to determine whether domestic public opinion supported a policy agenda item. The connection between my

qualitative and quantitative research relies upon the contention that tone can influence domestic public opinion and prompt foreign policy approval. Differences in presidential tone revealed by the 2002, 2006, 2010, and 2015 National Security Strategies were then measured against public opinion polling conducted by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations.

Chapter 7

Findings and Recommendations

My study explored the relationship between rhetorical techniques used in the National Security Strategy, public opinion, and policy legitimation. Fundamental to my research is an understanding of tone as a product of individual word choices that signals something important about the author's perspective to an audience. Deliberate or not, tone and other rhetorical techniques communicate an author's intent, motive, and tendencies, thereby affecting audience perception (Wood, 2007). In turn, audience perception regulates the ability of political leaders to develop national consensus and promote their policy agenda.

Summary of Qualitative Findings

With one significant exception, my textual analysis of the National Security Strategies published by Presidents Bush and Obama indicated a relatively even distribution of assertive and cooperative language within each publication. The mix of assertive and cooperative language delivered by Bush in 2002 was approximately 28% for each; in 2006, it was 39% assertive and 38% cooperative. Obama's distribution was more varied, with an eight-point spread in 2010 (35% assertive, 27% cooperative) and a six-point spread in 2015 (34% cooperative, 28% assertive). Contrary to popular perception and media representation, Bush's language was evenly cooperative and assertive, and Obama's was less cooperative than assertive.

Table 7.1. Frequencies of Use of Word Indicators in the National Security Strategy

Publication	Assertive	Cooperative	Total
2015	34% (390)	28% (476)	13,400
2010	35% (751)	27% (962)	26,277
2006	39% (463)	38% (468)	17,861
2002	28% (381)	28% (383)	10,701

Surprisingly, word choices made in the 2006 National Security Strategy demonstrated that Bush used more cooperative language (38%) than Obama in either 2010 or 2015. Moreover, the 2002 publication – arguably the most criticized of these documents for its perceived assertiveness – indicates roughly equal use of cooperative language (28%) to both the 2010 and 2015 versions.

Significantly, the results of my manual coding were fairly consistent with those generated by a computer-assisted textual analysis (CATA) program, presented in Table 7.2. DICTION was developed by Roderick Hart to support his scholarly research on the semantic features of political speech. DICTION uses 10,000 search words in 33 lists, called dictionaries, to determine the levels of standardized variables. The program measures five standardized variables related to tone: certainty, activity, optimism, realism, and commonality (Digitext, 2017; Hart, 1984). My assertive and cooperative codes closely match DICTION's certainty and commonality, respectively. DICTION is designed to support large numbers of documents; therefore, its application to a small sample size such as mine was questionable. Thus, DICTION was not used as a primary method of analysis.

Table 7.2. DICTION Results for Comparison of the 2002, 2006, 2010, and 2015 National Security Strategies

Publication	Author	Certainty	Commonality
2002	Bush	49.29	50.58
2006	Bush	53.96	52.06
2010	Obama	48.54	53.33
2015	Obama	49.53	56.68

Instead, I used DICTION's CATA results to informally corroborate the results of my manual coding; this was particularly significant given the subjectivity inherent in manual application. To do so, portable document format (PDF) files of the 2002, 2006, 2010, and 2015 National Security Strategies were imported into DICTION. The documents were then analyzed for content and compared against predefined norms for political speech. Normative data for political speech is generated by comparison with campaign speeches, political advertising, political debates, public policy speeches, and social movement speeches. Results calculate the relative use of words, applied against the normative formula, and expressed in terms of standard deviation from the mean (Digitext, 2017).

Both foreign policy elites and the media described Bush's tone in the 2002 and 2006 National Security Strategies as confrontational (Daalder, Lindsay, & Steinberg, 2002; Gosselin, 2003). Scholars labelled the new approach to the use of military force prescribed by the Bush doctrine as stark and dramatic in tone (Gray, 2002). However, the roughly equal use of assertive and cooperative language observed in the textual analysis of Bush's 2002 and 2006 National Security Strategies challenges that description. Although my textual analysis contradicted popular perceptions and media representations of Bush and Obama, examination of the National Security Strategy as symbolic speech suggests at least one explanation for this divergence. The

unexpected results of my study demonstrate Fairclough's contention that perceived meaning is reliant, not only on explicit literal substance, but also on implicit symbolic content (Fairclough, 2003). While this would appear to be a case of "actions speak louder than words," to construe it as such would be to erroneously separate words and action (Wood & Kroger, 2000). Fairclough's theory of audience perception suggests that speech is best understood as both words and action.

President Bush introduced an overview of his doctrine of preemption in his commencement speech at the United States Military Academy, West Point on June 1, 2002 (Bush, 2002a; Jarratt, 2006). However, the specific details of the Bush doctrine were not articulated until the 2002 National Security Strategy, published later that year on September 17. The doctrine was presented in the main body of the document as preemptive action:

While the United States will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community, we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our country. (Bush, 2002b, p. 6)

The president's doctrine, however, may be understood more accurately as a significant expansion of the established principle of preemptive self-defense under customary international law. "As a matter of common sense and self-defense, America will act against such emerging threats *before they are fully formed* [emphasis added]" (Bush, 2002b, p. 4).

This new model of preventive self-defense which defined the Bush doctrine was again described in the 2006 National Security Strategy: "If necessary ... under long-standing principles of self-defense, we do not rule out the use of force before attacks occur, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack" (Bush, 2006, p. 23). Efforts were made to mitigate the aggressive character of the Bush doctrine itself through the use of cooperative

language in the 2002 and 2006 National Security Strategies. In 2002, Bush pledged to “continue to work with international organizations such as the United Nations, as well as nongovernmental organizations and other countries” (Bush, 2002b, p. 7). In 2006, Bush prefaced his description of the Bush doctrine with a stated “strong preference ... to address ... concerns through international diplomacy, in concert with key allies and regional partners” (Bush, 2006, p. 23). The symbolic content of Bush’s actions leading up to, and including, the 2003 invasion of Iraq undermined his use of cooperative language in the 2002 and 2006 National Security Strategies.

Compare Bush’s statements on the use of military force with Obama’s in 2010: “The United States must reserve the right to act unilaterally if necessary to defend our nation and our interests, yet we will also seek to adhere to standards that govern the use of force” (Obama, 2010, p. 22). Obama softened this assertive language by reaffirming his commitment to “diplomacy, development, and international norms and institutions to help resolve disagreements, prevent conflict, and maintain peace” (Obama, 2010, p. 22). Obama’s vocal disapproval of the U.S. invasion of Iraq provided context for the audience to receive his moderated language as it was intended in the 2010 National Security Strategy. Despite the equal use of assertive and cooperative language, Obama’s tone is perceived by the audience as more cooperative than that of his predecessor.

Obama’s repudiation of the Bush doctrine was even more evident in 2015: “In all cases, the decision to use force must reflect a clear mandate and feasible objectives, and we must ensure our actions are effective, just, and consistent with the rule of law” (Obama, 2015, p. 8). This symbolic speech, reinforced by the conduct of the Obama administration, tempers otherwise assertive language: “When there is a continuing, imminent threat, and when capture or other

actions to disrupt the threat are not feasible, we will not hesitate to take decisive action” (Obama, 2015, p. 9).

The idea that actions speak louder than words is related to the concept of influential power. In the policy legitimation dynamic, political leaders use words, actions, and rhetorical strategies to guide public opinion. These means of influence correspond to Goddard and Krebs’ concepts of content, context, and technique (Goddard & Krebs, 2015). The results of my study indicate that word choice, as well as the context for those words (actions), affects the success of public policy legitimation. This outcome presents an opportunity for political leaders to develop approaches that more effectively support the policy legitimation dynamic.

Moreover, my results suggest that context can undermine content in shaping audience perception and influencing public opinion. This consequence highlights the significance of the third element of influence in political speech: technique. The effective use of rhetorical techniques such as tone requires authors to recognize the potential implications of context, rather than focus exclusively on word choice. To meaningfully counter America’s democratic legitimacy crisis, political leaders and policy makers alike should take note of the interaction between content, context, and rhetorical technique to enhance public policy legitimation.

Similarly unexpected findings were reached by political science scholar Andrew Wolff. Wolff conducted a textual analysis of the 2015 State of the Union address in response to criticism that President Obama paid too little attention to foreign policy. Empirical data revealed that Obama devoted almost 27% of the speech to foreign policy themes, compared with approximately 14% in 2010, 15% in 2011, 17% in 2012, 18% in 2013, and 22% in 2014 (Wolff,

2015). As with the National Security Strategy, audience perception of the State of the Union contradicted Wolff's textual analysis.

Summary of Quantitative Findings

Quantitative examination of the Chicago Council series on *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy* did not suggest any significant difference in foreign policy performance between the Bush and Obama administrations. Survey results, presented in Table 7.3, nevertheless provide an interesting perspective on the salience of foreign policy among the domestic public over time. The results also indicate the normative legitimacy (desirability) of the foreign policy agendas of these presidents (George, 1980; Mondak, 1994).

My research focused on a single question that appears throughout the series on *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Respondents were read a series of goals and asked for each whether it should be a very important, somewhat important, or not important U.S. foreign policy goal. The number of goals presented ranged from 14 to 20: 20 in 2002, 14 in 2004, 14 in 2008, 19 in 2010, 11 in 2012, 19 in 2014, and 14 in 2015. Survey responses served as an empirical indicators of normative legitimacy (desirability).

Table 7.3. Percentage of Respondents Identifying a Possible Foreign Policy Goal as “Very Important”

Goal	2002	2004	2008	2010	2012	2014	2015
Combating international terrorism	91	84	67	69	64	30	65
Preventing the spread of nuclear weapons	90	87	73	73	70	36	72
Protecting the jobs of American workers	85	41	80	79	83	37	73
Stopping the flow of illegal drugs into the United States	81	46	--	63	--	--	--
Securing adequate supplies of energy	75	57	80	68	--	30	61
Controlling and reducing illegal immigration	70	21	61	59	52	22	52
Maintaining superior military power worldwide	68	37	57	59	54	25	55
Improving the global environment/limiting climate change	66	61	42	35	32	10	38
Limiting global warming	--	--	--	--	--	11	--
Combating world hunger	61	67	46	42	41	20	42
Defending our allies' security	57	--	--	--	--	19	38
Strengthening the United Nations	57	40	39	37	34	17	--
Safeguarding against global financial instability	54	--	--	52	--	--	49
Reducing our trade deficit with foreign countries	51	--	--	55	--	--	--
Promoting international trade	--	--	34	33	--	--	--
Protecting the interests of American business abroad	49	22	--	--	--	21	--
Promoting and defending human rights in other countries	47	--	31	30	27	15	30
Strengthening international law and institutions	43	--	--	--	--	--	--
Protecting weaker nations against aggression	41	33	24	24	--	12	--
Promoting market economies abroad	36	29	--	--	--	--	--
Helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations	34	--	17	19	14	8	--
Helping to improve the standard of living in less developed nations	30	64	--	--	--	--	--
Improving America's standing in the world	--	--	83	53	--	--	53
Reducing U.S. dependence on foreign oil	--	--	--	74	77	34	--
Making sure China does not dominate the Korean Peninsula	--	--	--	27	--	--	--

Source: Chicago Council

My analysis focused on a single policy issue that demonstrated continuity throughout the Bush and Obama administrations. Counterterrorism consistently ranked in the top five possible foreign policy goals in Chicago Council surveys conducted throughout the Bush administration. Not surprisingly, counterterrorism was identified as the top foreign policy goal in 2002, with 91% of respondents characterizing the issue as very important. In 2004, counterterrorism ranked second among possible foreign policy goals, with 84% of survey respondents identifying this goal as very important. In 2008, counterterrorism dropped to fifth place, with a “very important” characterization from only 67% of respondents

Counterterrorism was also ranked in the top five possible foreign policy goals throughout President Obama’s tenure in office. In 2010, counterterrorism was ranked fourth among possible foreign policy goals, with 69% of survey respondents identifying this goal as very important. Counterterrorism fell to fifth place in the 2012 and 2014 surveys, with a “very important” characterization by 64% and 30% of respondents, respectively. The salience of counterterrorism increased in 2015, ranking third among possible foreign policy goals, with 65% of survey respondents characterizing the issue as very important.

President Bush mentioned counterterrorism only three times in the 2002 National Security Strategy. Terror, terrorist, and terrorism are cited 81 more times, usually in the context of battle, struggle, fight, and war. The 2006 National Security Strategy only referenced counterterrorism once; terror, terrorist, and terrorism were referenced another 118 times. The domestic public understands these terms synonymously. Consistent with Bush’s terministic screen, the narrative of counterterrorism was presented through the metaphor of war: “The enemy is not a single political regime or person or religion or ideology. The enemy is terrorism

...” (Bush, 2002b). The introduction to the 2006 National Security Strategy began: “America is at war. This is a wartime national security strategy ...” (Bush, 2006). The Bush administration thus framed the war on terror as an existential threat to core American values. Counterterrorism became the cornerstone of Bush’s foreign policy (McCriskin, 2011).

President Obama referenced counterterrorism nine times in the 2010 National Security Strategy; terrorist and terrorism were mentioned 46 more times. The 2015 National Security Strategy cited counterterrorism six times, and terrorist and terrorism 29 times. Reflecting the change of presidential rhetoric in 2009, when Obama abandoned Bush’s terminology of the “global war on terror,” terror is not mentioned a single time in either document. The Obama administration not only avoided words and phrases characteristic of Bush’s foreign policy, but also downplayed terrorism across a wider range of foreign policy issues. Yet, counterterrorism forms a large part of Obama’s foreign policy legacy (McCriskin, 2011).

Limitations

My research was premised on the idea that the effective use of presidential rhetoric can influence domestic audience opinion, develop a national consensus, and mobilize public support. A mobilized public can, in turn, overcome political constraints on presidential policy making and push the president’s foreign policy agenda forward. My findings suggest that an underlying assumption informing this research project may have been somewhat overstated. Specifically, the supposition that the foreign policy agenda of the National Security Strategy is made familiar to the public through messaging an administration’s terministic screens by other means, including public speeches, press conferences, and social media messaging. However, the lack of media coverage of the National Security Strategy, as compared with the State of the Union

address for example, makes it less likely to become part of the national conversation.

Significantly, my qualitative exploration of tone in the 2002, 2006, 2010, and 2015 National Security Strategies did not reveal any significant differences between Presidents Bush and Obama. Furthermore, my quantitative examination of domestic public opinion on U.S. foreign policy did not indicate any meaningful differences in the national response to the Bush and Obama foreign policy agendas. I was aware of the potential for subjective selection in the contextual application of codes, so I did not review my results for rates of frequency until all coding was complete. My ability to adjust research methods at that stage, including adding in other National Security Strategies to the study, was constrained by time limitations.

Another important factor limiting the effects of rhetorical choices can be explained by the theory of motivated reasoning. Motivated reasoning predicts that pre-existing political beliefs form the basis for policy agreement (Karpowitz, 2014). The impact of these beliefs and the audience's partisan tendencies on the responsiveness to rhetorical techniques is neither well understood in the literature, nor addressed in my research.

Future Research

An expansion of my study to include the National Security Strategies published from the end of the Cold War to 9/11 may provide greater understanding of the effect of rhetorical techniques on public opinion. A larger sample size – 14 National Security Strategies instead of just four – may reveal differences in rhetorical strategy not apparent in my narrower comparison. The inclusion of related presidential papers (e.g., formal speeches, public remarks, and other official documents) regarding National Security Strategy may be similarly beneficial. The lack of

significant divergence in tone between Presidents Bush and Obama found in my study is assumed to be the result of my small sample size.

Future research should investigate the use of other rhetorical devices, such as narrative, imagery, and symbolism, in executive planning documents. An exploration of how these techniques may influence public opinion and potentially legitimate policy could provide greater insight as to how political leaders and policy makers can shape national consensus.

Further investigation of the relationship between intended and perceived meaning might also clarify the connection between content and context. My inclination to limit document review to post-9/11 National Security Strategies was based, in part, on the perception of a significant divergence between the verbal styles of Presidents Bush and Obama. This perception was shared by the foreign policy elite, media, and domestic public, despite textual evidence to the contrary provided by my study. The results of this study, which suggest that actions speak louder than words, merits further analysis so that political leaders and policy makers can better leverage the policy legitimation dynamic. Again, future research might benefit from a comparison of written documents, as well as between written and spoken policy platforms, such as the National Security Strategy and State of the Union.

Moreover, the literature could benefit from a rhetorical study of the role played by the National Security Strategy as an instrument of public diplomacy. Executive documents like the National Security Strategy are accepted as indicators of presidential intent, motive, and tendencies by wide-ranging audiences. Foreign governments, in particular, are likely to look to the National Security Strategy to make sense of U.S. foreign policy, to consider its present state and where it might be headed in the future. This is particularly significant as the effectiveness of

international cooperation often depends on our allies and partners' perceptions about our intentions and attitudes.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

As a general rule, executive planning documents like the National Security Strategy go largely unnoticed by the domestic public. However, President Bush's declaration of his doctrine of preventive war in the 2002 National Security Strategy attracted the attention of the nation. The policy legitimacy of the Bush doctrine demanded a demonstration of its desirability and feasibility among the American public (George, 1980; Mondak, 1994). Without these essential elements of public policy legitimation, the Bush doctrine – as well as other foreign policies presented in the National Security Strategy – lacked the justification required to develop a national consensus (Smoke, 1994).

The Bush Doctrine

The domestic public's awareness of the 2002 National Security Strategy, published on September 17, 2002, was likely prompted by a combination of factors: the publication's proximity to 9/11 and the heightened media coverage of foreign policy issues in general following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan on October 7, 2001. There was also a sudden increase in media coverage of Iraq at this time, following President Bush's address to the United Nations' General Assembly on September 12, 2002 and Congressional authorization for the use of military force on October 16, 2002, which may have been significant. As the attentive public became aware of this influential policy making vehicle, the National Security Strategy assumed a larger role in the national conversation.

The Bush doctrine demonstrated a departure from prior U.S. foreign policy with its bold assertion of U.S. power. At its core, the doctrine consisted of a four-part approach to the emerging threats of the 21st century: preventative self-defense, elimination of state sponsors of

terrorism, global promotion of democracy, and unilateral action (Jervis, 2003). Seemingly overnight, America's approach to foreign policy and national security transitioned from "with others when we can, alone when we must" to "alone when we can, with others when we must" (Murdoch, 2003).

Obama's Ad Hoc Foreign Policy

Enter President Barack Obama, elected in 2008 on a platform to disengage American troops from open-ended commitments in the Middle East (Larkin, 2016; Rothkopf, 2014). As an admirer of the foreign policy realism of President George H. W. Bush, Obama's decision-making was based on cost-benefit analyses (Goldgeier & Suri, 2016; Larkin, 2016). For Obama, military intervention demanded a deliberate, case-by-case assessment of real risk to American blood and treasure (Gates, 2014). In 2014, halfway through the end of his second term, during a private but candid moment, Obama summed up his own foreign policy as, "Don't do stupid shit" (Goldberg, 2016).

If the 2002 National Security Strategy was Bush's response to the terrorist attacks of September 11th, the 2010 National Security Strategy was Obama's reply to the perceived missteps of his predecessor's foreign and national security policies. Yet, Obama's attempts to soothe international tensions arguably emboldened U.S. adversaries. To some, Obama's pragmatism too closely resembled appeasement (Kuntzel, 2015). Others would say that rather than lessen tensions, Obama's ad hoc compromises heightened the potential for violence from terrorist, insurgent, and criminal networks (Kaufman, 2010). Indeed, Obama's apparent reluctance to exercise hard power may have been just as risky to U.S. national security as the seeming arrogance of Bush's foreign policy.

Rhetorical Similarities

The similarities of word choice and tone revealed in my study reflect substantial overlap in the foreign policies of the Bush and Obama administrations. Despite popular optimism that Obama's election would result in dramatic and substantive change, close consideration of his foreign policy reveals significant continuity with his predecessor (Gates, 2014; Goldsmith, 2012). Counterterrorism and nuclear nonproliferation headlined both presidencies. The drone program initiated by Bush was embraced and expanded by Obama. After a brief suspension, military commissions for unlawful enemy combatants held in Guantanamo continued. Obama's deployment of the U.S. military to Syria in 2015 to counter terrorist threats and support regime change echoed the Bush ground wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This continuity of policy and executive action supports the consistency demanded by substantive legitimacy (George, 1980). In particular, Obama extended almost all of Bush's counterterrorism policies into his own administration. But the policies so continued were those of Bush's later years, more refined than originally presented in the 2002 National Security Strategy (Goldsmith, 2012). Given the importance of patient and persistent application for long-term foreign and national security policies, such as those outlined in the National Security Strategy, this continuity facilitated both presidents' relative success in counterterrorism strategy.

Differences in Approach

Differences between Bush and Obama are better illustrated by way of their opposing world views. Despite common word use and rhetorical tone, the National Security Strategies of Bush and Obama communicate divergent terministic screens. In 2002 and 2006, Bush portrayed the United States as *apart from* the international community, free to act alone and with license to

remake the world in its image. In 2010 and 2015, Obama represented the United States as *a part of the international community*, compelled to confront common challenges collectively and with an active duty to lead the international response (Cram, 2014).

The terministic screens of Bush and Obama illustrate two sides of the same coin of American exceptionalism. Traditionally, exceptionalism suggests that the United States is unique among the international community, superior to others, and worthy of admiration. Assertions of the qualitative difference of U.S. values, politics, and history are often perceived as arrogance (Gans, 2011). Furthermore, American exceptionalism implies an exclusive responsibility to transform the world (Walt, 2011). This sense of purpose compels U.S. action in global affairs, conveying a sense of both U.S. nationalism and American identity. As a rhetorical device, American exceptionalism was used by both Presidents Bush and Obama in their National Security Strategies, but to different ends. In 2002 and 2006, Bush presented an image consistent with more traditional expressions of American exceptionalism. As such, Bush's version is perceived as triumphant and assertive. In 2010 and 2015, however, Obama delivered a new American exceptionalism, one that effectively messaged compromise and cooperation.

A growing body of work has studied the president's State of the Union address as a vehicle for domestic policy issues. Research demonstrates that issue salience among the domestic public has been influenced by inclusion of that issue in the annual State of the Union address (Shogan, 2015; Wolff, 2015). Foreign policy, on average, accounts for 41% of policies presented in the State of the Union (Cohen, 1995; Hill, 1998). The more frequently foreign policy is mentioned, the more likely it is that the president will take action consistent with those policy statements as real-world events present themselves (Shogan, 2015).

As such, the National Security Strategy represents a significant opportunity for the executive branch to influence public opinion and develop national consensus. Just as the annual State of the Union address communicates a comprehensive vision of the administration's domestic policy platform, the National Security Strategy can deliver a detailed account of the president's foreign policy agenda.

Summary of Research Study

My research asked the following questions: what is the relationship between rhetorical strategies used in the National Security Strategy and public policy legitimation, and how can rhetorical strategies help or hurt the White House's ability to advance the president's foreign policy agenda? The results of this study revealed a relatively even combination of assertive and cooperative language within each National Security Strategy; therefore, I was not able to characterize each publication as conclusively assertive or cooperative. Similarly, public opinion polls did not suggest any significant differences in policy performance among the Bush and Obama administrations. As such, I was unable to establish a correlation between presidential tone and policy legitimation.

However, the results of my analysis indicate a complex relationship between the content and context of political speech. Specifically, context (actions) can undermine content (words) in the attempt to shape audience perception and influence public opinion. My research thus confirmed an established theory in the study of public policy; that is, public policy legitimation is intimately linked to political speech. My study also substantiated the content-context-technique framework for policy legitimation advanced by Goddard and Krebs (Goddard & Krebs, 2015). Significantly, my work provided a new perspective on the microfeatures of rhetorical technique,

adding to the larger body of work on the verbal rhetoric of political speech and building upon the research on political speech as symbolic action.

Policy Implications

Deliberate management of the content, context, and rhetorical technique of political speech offers the executive branch an opportunity to exercise its influential power, shape public opinion, and leverage public policy legitimation. National consensus not only provides substantive legitimacy, but also advances the policy agenda. To meaningfully counter America's crisis of democratic legitimacy, political leaders and policy makers must better understand the relationship between content, context, and rhetorical technique. These aspects of political speech form the building blocks of policy legitimacy. In understanding this relationship, the beneficial effects of public policy legitimation can be harnessed to facilitate a powerful response to the democratic legitimacy crisis.

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Appendix A: Institutional Review Board (IRB) Documentation

Northeastern

NOTIFICATION OF IRB ACTION

Date: September 12, 2016 IRB #: CPS16-08-10

Principal Investigator: Mary Thompson-Jones
 Laura Heller

Department: Doctor of Law & Policy
 College of Professional Studies

Address: 20 Belvidere
 Northeastern University

Title of Project: Influential Executive Power: Third Party
 Messaging in the National Security Strategy

Participating Sites: N/A

Approval Status: Approved

DHHS Review Category: **EXEMPT, CATEGORY #4**

*Human Subject Research
 Protection*

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C. Randall Colvin, Ph.D., Chair
 Northeastern University Institutional Review Board

Nan C. Regina, Director
 Human Subject Research Protection

This approval applies to the protection of human subjects only. It does not apply to any other university approvals that may be necessary.

No further action or IRB oversight is required, as long as the project remains the same. However, you must inform this office of any changes in procedures involving human subjects. Changes to the current research protocol could result in a reclassification of the study and further review by the IRB.

Northeastern University FWA #4630

Appendix B: Discourse Analysis Codebook

Code	Description	Application
Assertive	Insistent, firm, forceful; certain, resolute, unwavering; inflexible, steadfast	<i>Variations and abbreviations of:</i> always, battle, cannot, clear, combat, commit, commitment, compel, condemn, conflict, confront, consistent, continue to, counter, defeat, defend, demand, deny, destroy, disrupt, enforce, ensure, fight, firm, force, imperative, insist, intervene, intervention, maintain, military, must, necessary, never, none, non-negotiable, only, oppose, persist, press, prevent, priority, pursue, push, reject, remain, require, repel, resist, resolve, sustain, unilateral
Cooperative	Coordinated effort; commonality, consensus; aid, assistance	<i>Variations and abbreviations of:</i> advance, agreement, aid, alongside, alliance, ally, assist, assistance, association, bilateral, bipartisan, bolster, coalition, collaborate, collaboration, collective, common, concert, consensus, contribute, coordinate, coordination, cooperate, cooperation, cooperative, defense of (others), diplomacy, diplomatic, empower, forum, friend, friendship, help, join, joint, multi-lateral, multi-national, mutual, negotiate, negotiation, offer, partner, partnership, promote, promotion, protocol, provide, reinforce, relations, relationship, share, side-by-side, summit, support, together, treaty, United Nations, work with