

PRESIDENTIAL RHETORIC AND THE
CONGRESSIONAL AGENDA SETTING PROCESS

A Senior Thesis

By

Holly Gene McIntush

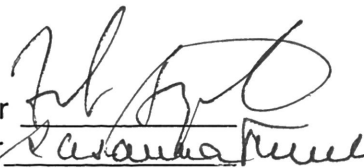
1996-97 University Undergraduate Research Fellow
Texas A&M University

Group: POLITICAL SCIENCE/HISTORY

Presidential Rhetoric and the Congressional Agenda Setting Process

Holly Gene McIntush
University Undergraduate Fellow, 1996-1997
Texas A&M University
Department of Political Science

APPROVED
Fellows Advisor
Honors Director



PRESIDENTIAL RHETORIC AND THE CONGRESSIONAL AGENDA SETTING PROCESS. Holly McIntush (Frank Baumgartner), Political Science, Texas A&M University.

Can the president use rhetoric to set the Congressional agenda? This study examines the president's legislative agenda as set forth in the State of the Union addresses from 1947-1993. This agenda is then compared with the Congressional agenda, as measured by Congressional policy hearings. This research concludes that the president and Congress have completely different policy agendas.

The President of the United States holds many titles. He is called Chief Executive, Commander-in-Chief, and Chief Legislator among other things. He is known as the leader of the free world and as the most powerful man on earth. Yet, despite all these titles, the president's power here at home is quite limited. The Constitution of the United States ensures that he can not do much on his own. If the president wants his policies implemented, he must go through Congress. However, many scholars have pointed out that Congress is not always a willing follower: "The government of the United States is not a fertile ground for leadership, and nowhere is this clearer than in the president's dealings with Congress" (Edwards, 1989: 1). A very important question in political science is, to what extent can the president lead Congress and the nation?

The president is often credited with being able to set the nation's policy agenda. However, in order to truly set our nation's political agenda, the president must be able to set Congress' agenda. Can the president do this? Does the President of the United States influence and shape the Congressional agenda? This question is quite important because if the president simply reacts to the bills and issues at which Congress is looking, his power is quite limited. By exerting control over Congress' agenda, the president has a chance to truly point the nation in the direction s/he wants it to go.

The president can not force Congress to look at the issues in which s/he is interested. As Richard Neustadt, Harvard professor of government and White House assistant to President Harry S. Truman, said, "Presidential power is the

power to persuade" (1976, 78). Many of the president's persuasion efforts are exerted through communication and rhetoric. Some of this is private, one-on-one communication. Other is rhetoric addressed to the nation, or world, as a whole. Presidents have whole departments in the White House set up to craft the perfect public messages. Aristotle defined rhetoric as the faculty of discovering all the available means of persuasion in a given situation (Rigsby, 1997). Presidents strive to do this. Are they able to use that carefully crafted rhetoric to influence Congress' agenda? One particularly prominent and relevant piece of presidential rhetoric is the State of the Union Address. This rhetoric will be examined in this study.

Why the State of the Union Address?

Two Constitutional Instructions on communicating with Congress are given to the president. Article II Section 3 states: "He shall from time to time give to the Congress Information on the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient." Over time, the interpretation of just what this passage entails has changed. The State of the Union Address was sent in written form to Congress from presidents. Jefferson through Taft. Wilson brought back the tradition of delivering "the message" in person to Congress (66). Now the president is expected to present Congress with a full fledged legislative agenda. The first president to do this was Woodrow Wilson (Edwards and Wayne 1990, 7). In recent times, these two

Constitutional commandments have been firmly linked together in the State of the Union Address delivered annually to a joint session of Congress at the beginning of each legislative term.

Furthermore, when the President delivers the State of the Union, the nation listens. "Whatever may be its purport, the message is the one great public document of the United States which is widely read and discussed" (Beard, in Campbell and Jamieson, 1990, 52). State of the Union Addresses have had a mass public audience through radio or television since the 1930s. This audience puts added constraints and obligations on the president, as we shall see in both the literature on State of the Union Addresses and the data gathered in this study.

RELEVANT LITERATURE

One area that has just begun to catch the attention of political scientists is the Congressional agenda setting process. In 1984, John W. Kingdon published *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*, an innovative look at how an issue makes it on to the nation's policy agenda. Kingdon focuses on the questions, "How does an idea's time come?" and, "What makes people in and around government attend, at any given time, to some subjects and not to others?" (1). Using the issues of transportation and health, he surveyed the policy community to see what ideas were on their agenda. He interviewed congressional staff, executive branch officials, as well as people outside of government, such as lobbyists and academics, among others. Through these interviews, as well as case studies, Kingdon tried to find out who and what influenced whom and what

in the agenda setting process. His results seemed to show that it is a very interrelated process. Congressional staff cited presidential staff and lobbyists. Executive branch officials cited congressional staff and lobbyists. Lobbyists cited executive branch staff and congressional officials. They all mentioned an illusory "public mood" as being important. A very important insight that Kingdon leaves us with is the distinction between agenda setting and alternative setting. Some players, such as elected officials and The People were determined to be more important in the process of putting general issues and problems on the agenda, while others such as policy experts and civil servants played an important role when it came time to choose between alternatives for solving the problems already on the agenda. Kingdon's study of how an issue becomes an issue is very important groundwork for any study involving agenda setting.

Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones have undertaken a multi-year project on the Congressional agenda setting process. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics* (1993) introduces us to this study and some of their findings. Through their study of Congressional policy hearings and media coverage of the issues, they put forth a theory of "punctuated equilibria" in American politics: The American political agenda is characterized by periods of stability and institutionalized policy subsystems, which are interrupted by "short, violent periods of change" (4). The previously disadvantaged interests achieve this change through issue definition. In attempting to change the way the political establishment views the issue, those previously excluded from the subsystem take

advantage of the many policy venues available in our federal system of government. They bring new players into the game. As new participants become involved in the debate over the issue, a window of opportunity opens, and rapid change often follows. Many times, a new policy monopoly is created, in which different interests and policies come to the forefront. These agenda changes have significant policy consequences.

What role does the president play in Congress' agenda setting process?

Neither Kingdon nor Baumgartner and Jones systematically address this question. This project is designed to help fill this gap. In looking at how the president's rhetoric influences this process, it is important that we also have an understanding of the literature on presidential rhetoric, and studies done on the president's influence of Congress.

In *The Rhetorical Presidency* (1987), political scientist Jeffrey K. Tulis examines the changes in the institution of the presidency. His particular focus is how increased *public* presidential rhetoric has changed the presidency and all of American politics. Increasingly, Tulis notes, presidents direct their rhetoric towards moving the nation. Earlier presidents would have been condemned for demagoguery if they had utilized such rhetoric. But now direct popular appeal by presidents of both parties is quite commonplace. In fact, Tulis calls rhetorical leadership the essence of the modern presidency. He stresses that this turn towards popular leadership can not be dismissed as simply another institutional change. "Bound up in the common opinion that presidents should be popular

leaders is a larger understanding -- of how our whole political system works, of the contemporary problems of governance that we face, and of how the polity ought to function" (4). Tulis sees the changes as a problem. He argues that as presidents turn to the public, they turn away from the Constitution. This innovative book spawned a whole new genre of study within the field of communication.

One of the books that came out of this new focus on presidential rhetoric is *Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency*. Martin J Medhurst leads a team of scholars in taking Tulis study one step further, shifting the focus from the institution of the presidency to the rhetoric itself. Tulis leads off by expanding the theories put forth in his earlier book and urging a return to earlier, constitution-based forms of rhetoric. Then Glen Thurow, an early colleague of Tulis' looks at how the shift in rhetoric results in a decline in presidential character. From there the focus begins to shift, as the book moves to the studies of communication scholars, who are interested in rhetoric for its own sake. Bruce Gronbeck and Thomas Benson both look at how electronical breakthroughs have changed presidential rhetoric. Finally the study turns to practical criticisms of presidents and their rhetoric by speech communication scholars. Medhurst calls this book "a tale of two constructs" (1). This interdisciplinary work is helpful in understanding the differences in the institutionally-based approach of the rhetorical presidency and the rhetoric-centered approach of presidential rhetoric.

In Deeds Done in Word: Presidential Rhetoric and the Genres of Governance

(1990), Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell examine some of the major genres of presidential rhetoric and their influence on the presidency as an institution. They discuss the expectations and constraints of each of these major genres. In their chapter on State of the Union messages, they tell us claim that when delivering the address presidents take on the role of national historian. S/he is given "the opportunity to reconstruct the past in order to forge the future" (52). In doing this, the president uses his/her interpretation of the past to advance the legislative program s/he is presenting to Congress. To do this effectively, presidents do not just assess the past and then recommend a legislative program for their consideration. The president also "articulate[s] the values underlying [the] assessments" (53). Thus, Campbell and Jamieson characterize the Message as being recognized by three distinct processes. In the first, public meditations on values, the president molds the nation into a unified whole, a singular people with a common past and common destiny. The second process the president undertakes is to assess the nation's current situation. S/he discusses the problems and issues that are facing the nation. Then the president moves on to the third process of recommending specific legislation to Congress to combat the problems assessed earlier in the speech. Through these processes, the president is able to link the report on the state of the union to the legislative proposals that s/he is advancing. Campbell and Kohrs point out that "State of the Union addresses work to sustain the presidency as an institution," because "submitting a legislative program to Congress implies that the president is committed to the use

of power through [Constitutionally] authorized powers" (63). *Deeds Done in Words* provides information that is essential in understanding the context in which the president is working. It is one of the few works in speech communication that deal specifically with State of the Union addresses. Other work on this genre consists mainly of evaluations of specific addresses.

Four such evaluations will be examined here. These studies reinforce the findings set forth in the Cambell and Jamieson study. Dan F. Hahn examines "Archetype and Signature in Johnson's 1965 State of the Union" (1983). The concept of archetype, which is defined as the beliefs of the community, and signature, which can best be defined as the beliefs of the speaker, are very closely related to the processes described in *Deeds Done in Words*. In this article Hahn explores how Lyndon Baines Johnson uses archetype and signature to become "the repository of our values, the enunciator of our hopes, the initiator of our highest aspirations" (237). Hahn teams up with J. Justin Gustainis to discuss the "Anatomy of an Enigma: Jimmy Carter's 1980 State of the Union Address" (1985). Hahns and Gustainis discuss the rhetorical situation which Carter faced, identifying many problems which he faced. They conclude that Carter did not deal adequately with these problems. Through a succession of rhetorical mistakes, Jimmy Carter projected an image of inconsistency and weakness, which did not impress the nation or the world. Kenneth R. Chase evaluates Reagan's 1982 State of the Union address. In "Reagan's First State of the Union Address: A Case Study in Language, Argument and Culture," Chase contends that the president did

an excellent job of using the policy victories of 1981 to set his 1982 legislative program in a favorable context. He claims that, "rhetorically Reagan is in full stride in this speech, laying out the positions which would allow him to take credit for the economic recovery of 1983 and propel him to victory in 1984" (290). In "Reagan's Quest for Freedom in the 1987 State of the Union" (1989), Mark P. Moore describes Reagan's seventh State of the Union as a quest story. Moore defines a quest story as "a literary form involving an adventurous journey filled with romance, intrigue, and danger" (52). Reagan sets himself up as the hero of the story who will lead the nation to victory over the villains: the Soviet Union. Moore states that through this quest story Reagan "produces a common vision of the future through the mythic appeals of the past" (53). These four studies examine that tactics different presidents use as they go through the processes described in the Cambell and Jamieson book.

One of the foremost studies in political science on the president's leadership of the legislature is *At the Margins: Presidential Leadership of Congress* (1989) by George Edwards. Edwards seeks to answer the questions, "What do presidents do to try to lead Congress and how reliably can they use each source of influence" (7)? He identifies three main sources of presidential influence: party support, public support/approval, and legislative skills. Edwards examined roll call votes for 1953-1986, and calculated "the percentage of support each member of congress gave the president" (25). In other words, he looked at the percent of the time that individual legislators voted with the president's position. He determined that the

president is largely at the mercy of his environment when trying to influence the congressional vote. A president's success in leading Congress is impacted by his ability to exploit the opportunities that environment presents him. He claims that presidents are not truly directors of change. They are simply facilitators. Edwards concludes that "American chief executives by themselves will not bring about major changes in public policy" (224).

In *The President in the Legislative Arena* (1990), Jon R. Bond and Richard Fleisher ask the question, "Under what conditions do presidents succeed on floor votes in Congress?" (9). The variables they examine in this study are political parties, political ideology, presidential popularity, and presidential leadership skills. While Edwards measures congressional *support* of the president's policy position, Bond and Fleisher measure the presidential *success* rate in Congress. They calculate the percentage of congressional roll call votes in which the president's position succeeds. Their conclusion is that the congressionally centered variables (political parties and political ideology) are a much stronger indicator of presidential success than are the presidency centered ones (presidential popularity and leadership skills). In other words, according to Bond and Fleisher, the president does not have much influence over Congressional roll call vote outcomes.

Another important study in this field is *Presidential Leadership: Politics and Policy Making* (1990) by George Edwards and Stephen J. Wayne. Edwards and Wayne examine presidential leadership of the public, the executive branch, the media, and Congress to determine if through this leadership he can "influence the

actions and attitudes of others and affect the output of government" (13). In his/her dealings with Congress, they say that the president is only marginally influential. His/her main resources are the abilities to "help set the legislature's agenda and prevent some of what he opposes from passing" (316). One of the ways the president does this is through leadership of the public. "...the president is rarely in a position to command others to comply with his wishes. Instead, he must rely on persuasion. A principle source of presidential influence for the president is public approval of his performances and his policies" (90).

The bulk of literature on presidential leadership is based on Congressional votes. While the president's ability to influence the agenda is viewed as a factor in this leadership, this assumption has never been tested. This paper attempts to bring together three genres of study to determine whether the issues the president talks about and advocates are the issues the legislature is considering.

Methods

The State of the Union Addresses from 1947-1993 were read and coded by issue area¹. The issues were arranged into topic areas according to the system which had been used to code the Congressional policy hearings in the Baumgartner and Jones project. Table 1 presents the major topic areas used in that study.

¹ There are four years missing from this study: the 1967, 1969, and 1973, speeches were not available in the library, and in 1977 President Carter did not deliver one.

(Table 1 about here)

The number of complete thoughts the president spoke on each area were counted and recorded. A complete thought is very close to a sentence. However, sometimes presidents speak in short simple sentences. Other times they discuss the issues in long, complex ones, which contain more than one complete thought. For example:

It produced more research and treatment for AIDS, more childhood immunizations, more support for women's health research, more affordable college loans for the middle class; a new National Service program for those who want to give something back to their communities for higher education; and a dramatic increase in high-tech economy.

This one sentence from the 1994 State of the Union Address is definitely more than one complete thought. In it, President Clinton discusses three different issues: health, education, and macro-economics. The same principle must be applied to long sentences that express more than one thought on the same issue.

No matter how earnest is our quest for guaranteed peace, we must maintain a high degree of military effectiveness at the same time we are engaged in negotiating the issue of arms reduction. Until tangible and mutually-enforceable arms reductions are worked out, we will not weaken the means of defending our institutions.

While this passage from Eisenhower's 1960 State of the Union Address only consists of two sentences, five thoughts/ideas are expressed. 1) Our quest for guaranteed peace is earnest. 2) We must maintain a high degree of military effectiveness. 3) At the same time, we are engaged in negotiating the issue of

arms reduction. 4) We will not weaken the means of defending our institutions. 5) [Unless and if] tangible and mutually-enforceable arms reduction measures are worked out. Basically the compound sentences and complex sentences are broken down into their simple parts. By counting complete thoughts rather than sentences, we are able to avoid giving more weight to an issue simply because the president chose to discuss it in short simple sentences or, conversely, giving less weight to an issue because the president discussed uses a run-on sentence.

Once the unit of analysis was decided on, the actual coding process was quite straight forward. In each speech the number of thoughts in each topic were counted. After the whole speech is coded, it is then possible to see how much attention the president devoted to each issue area in his speech. If presidents spend more time discussing the issues that are most important to them, then this procedure should give at least a rough estimate of the president's public policy priorities.

When reading or listening to a State of the Union Address, one comes across quite a bit of material that is not issue-oriented *per se*. However this dialogue can be catalogued and accounted for. These "extra-issues" serve very important functions in the speech. As we saw above in the discussion of Campbell and Jamieson's book, *Deeds Done In Words*, presidential State of the Unions are identified by three functions. Assessments of information and issues and policy recommendations include the information that fits neatly into the topic areas. However, the latter function, meditations on the values of the nation, is

just as important and necessary in the president's speech as are the first (53). In categorizing the thoughts in the State of the Union Addresses, I noticed several "extra-issues" that showed up regularly in the speeches of the different presidents. The extra-issues are: Up to the task, Individual/Private Sector Initiative, Protestant Work Ethic, School Prayer, Traditional Values, Tribute to Citizens, American Responsibility, and Nobleness of Goals. Table 2 provides the amount of speaking all the presidents in this study did on each issues area, the average across presidents, and the average percent of time on each issue area. The extra-issues are listed at the bottom of the table. These topics can be explained and recognized upon a more in depth evaluation of the meditations on values process:

(Table 2 about here)

Campbell and Jamieson describe the meditations on values section as forging a national identity. One of the first steps in this process is assuring the people that America, as in the past, will overcome adversity (54-55). The coding system used in this study places these thoughts in the "Up to the Task" category. According to Campbell and Jamieson, "no president, no matter how pessimistic or how severe the crisis, has ever reported that the state of the Union was such that its problems could not be surmounted" (55). The next step is to "urge the audience to celebrate a certain national ethos" (55). In other words, the president asks the nation to live up to the ideals that the founding fathers and settlers are believed to embody. The categories of "Individual/Private Sector Initiative" and

"Protestant Work Ethic" can be explained through this step. Often in doing this, presidents give "definitions of exemplary attitudes and conduct for citizenry" (57). For President Reagan, this was done through holding up ordinary citizens for praise for their accomplishments. These tributes are given the category "Tribute to Citizens." The third step in the public meditations process is to reflect on the past and reconsider America's values ("Traditional Values"). "Meditation and reconsideration reassure the audience that the legislative recommendations to follow are the product of careful consideration, not partisan passion or momentary whim" (57). In this study, statements in the "Nobleness of Goals" and "American Responsibility" categories serves this purpose.

The one category left is School Prayer. This issue was featured in every one of Reagan's addresses, and in the speeches of no other president. Placing these entreaties in any of the major topic areas proved difficult. It could conceivably be placed in Civil Rights and Civil Liberties or Law, Crime, and Family, among others. To avoid confusion, it was simply given its own category.

For inaugural years, the State of the Union Address is delivered before the inauguration. Therefore, it is delivered by the lame duck president and is not really relevant to Congress, the nation, or this study. In those years, the incoming president generally delivers a speech to a joint session of Congress wherein he sets forth his agenda. This address is treated in the same way as the State of the Union Address by the press, the public, and the president. While he has not been in office long enough to report on the official state of the union, he does assess

the problems and needs of the nation. Therefore the constraints and expectations for this address are the same as those of a State of the Union Address. It is those speeches which are evaluated in this study.

The results of this study enlighten us about the presidential agenda. While certain issues are constants for all presidents, there are also a few to which presidents pay sporadic, highly varied attention. As Figure 1 reveals, Defense and Macroeconomics are discussed at length by virtually every president. While the amount of attention paid definitely varies, rarely did any president speak less than fifty thoughts on either of these topics. On the other hand, presidents varied widely on the amount of attention they paid to Civil Rights, Education, Social Welfare, and Government Operations. Even within a single presidential term there are some wide variations. One particularly vivid example is the gap in Social Welfare discussion in the late fifties, or the extreme jump in attention to Government Operations issues in 1971. Government Operations includes such things as cutting red tape in the bureaucracy and reducing government waste.

(Figure 1 about here)

(Table 3 about here)

Comparing the presidents to each other also reveals some interesting results. Table 3 shows the average percent of time that each individual president spent on each issue. The large increase in discussion on the issue of health by Bill Clinton tends to renew our confidence in elected officials working on what they discussed in their campaigns. However, some stereotypes are shattered by the

data. For example, the two presidents who talked the most about the economy were Richard Nixon and George Bush. The results of the energy crisis can clearly be seen in the jump in attention to energy paid by Gerald Ford. Comparing the presidents to each other reveals interesting data on what issues each president cared about or were forced by circumstances to discuss.

(Table 4 about here)

Comparing the average Democratic president to the average Republican president is also revealing. Table 4 does just this. Once again, stereotypes are shattered. The top three Democratic issues are Defense, International Affairs and Health. The Republicans' top three issues are Government Operations, Traditional Values, and the Environment. This seems to indicate that the political environment during a president's term can be just as important as political ideology in determining their spoken legislative agenda.

A look at presidential agendas from 1947-1993 has revealed that while there are some issues that always seem to be present and salient, presidents do respond to their changing political environment and their own policy preferences. The next question that must be addressed is does the Congress follow the president in this varied legislative agenda, or do they break their own path?

Presidential v. Congressional Agendas

The presidents in this study were not successful in setting the

Congressional agenda. For the most part, the President and Congress have completely different agendas. Table 5 shows the average percent of attention that presidents and Congress pay to the different issues. The correlation is not great.

(Table 5 about here)

Another interesting fact is that compared to the president, Congress' attention to the issues is very evenly spread out across all issues. The president generally focuses on a few key issues and basically ignores the rest.

(Figure 2 about here)

Figure 2 illustrates well the differing agendas of Congress and the president. Defense is always an important issue for Congress as it is for the president. However, as the graph reveals, the peaks and valleys in attention do not correspond across the two institutions. In fact, many times Congress decreases its attention to the issue of defense as the president shows increased attention or vice versa. Another perennial issue for Congress is agriculture. While there are a few isolated cases of high presidential attention to the issue, it is nothing like Congress' constant scrutiny. The same can be said of the area of Transportation. In general, presidents do not focus on this issue area. They tend to stick with the more salient issues. Yet Congress spends much time on this issue each year. In the area of Civil Rights, Congress responded to the exigency of the Civil Rights movement long before any president did. Eisenhower was determined to stay out of the civil rights conflict, but he did not manage to keep Congress' attention from straying to this highly controversial issue.

(Figure 3 about here)

There are a few issues where it appears as if the President is leading Congress at some points. These areas are presented in Figure 3. In the early years of the study there are a few cases where the attention that Congress and president pay to the area of International Affairs rise and fall together. However, this trend is not consistent. As the figure shows, for the last thirty years, Congressional attention has been steadily rising, while the president's attention to this issue has been stable at best. In 1970 there was a large increase in attention paid to the environment. However, if we look back at history we realize that this is probably the result of earth day and mass public motivation rather than a case of the president leading Congress. The same can be said of the rise in attention to energy in the early seventies. We can be almost positive that this was a case of both Congress and the President responding to the energy crisis rather than a case of President Ford leading Congress through his brilliant rhetoric. In 1980 when Reagan was elected, there is a small increase in attention by Congress to the issue of Macroeconomics that corresponds with the president's extreme rise. It is conceivably a result of a presidential push, but this one instance is in no way representative of the whole.

CONCLUSION

The basic finding of this study is that Congressional and Presidential agendas do not correspond. The change in the style of presidential rhetoric that

Jeffrey Tulis documents can perhaps explain this. As the president has increasingly addressed his rhetoric to the public, he turns his attention to salient issues. He wants the public behind him so he must focus on issues which they can understand and rally around. The people must see how the agenda that the president advances will benefit and affect them personally. The president attempts to enlist the help of Congress with enacting favorable legislation. Yet Congress does not have the luxury of focusing only on the issues which the public will unite around. They have a country to run and must therefore still pay attention to the more mundane tasks such as maintaining the nation's infrastructure.

The fact that this study focused on public presidential rhetoric and more private actions by Congress might also be a factor. Perhaps correlating the presidential agenda with the *rhetoric* of Congressmen would result in a higher correlation. Regardless of these factors, it is still evident through the wide spread differences in attention to the issues that presidential rhetoric does not set the Congressional agenda.

However, this study in no way trivializes the rhetoric of presidents. The total impact of that rhetoric can not be judged through a simple correlation. First of all, counting thoughts does not in any way evaluate the quality of presidential rhetoric. Do well crafted messages result in a higher correlation? Does the president affect what Congressmen speak to their constituencies about? Do his words affect the loyalty of Congressmen to the President? Or does it impact the

presidential coattails that bring in Congressmen who are more sensitive to the president's agenda? The bills the president introduces to Congress and pushes for through-out the term is also important. How does the president's bargaining skills and private rhetoric affect the Congressional agenda? All these questions are important and would be good topics for future study. We now know that the president's most visible piece of public rhetoric does not systematically set the Congress' agenda. Do any of his other actions?

Works Cited

- Baumgartner, Frank R. and Bryan D. Jones. 1993. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bond, Jon R. and Richard Fleisher. 1990. *The President in the Legislative Arena*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Campbell, Karlyn Kohrs and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. 1990. *Deeds Done In Words: Presidential Rhetoric and the Genres of Governance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Chase, Kenneth R. "Reagan's First State of the Union Address: A Case Study in Language, Argument, and Culture." University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Typescript.
- Edwards, George C. III. 1989. *At the Margins: Presidential Leadership of Congress*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.
- Edwards, George C. III and Stephen J. Wayne. 1990. *Presidential Leadership: Politics and Policy Making*. 2nd ed. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Gustainis, J. Justin and Dan F. Hahn. 1985. "Anatomy of an Enigma: Jimmy Carter's 1980 State of the Union Address." *Communication Quarterly*. 33: 43-49.
- Hahn, Dan F. 1983. "Archetype and Signature in Johnson's 1965 State of the Union." *Central States Speech Journal*. 236-246.
- Kingdon, John W. 1995. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. 2nd ed. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Medhurst, Martin J., ed. 1996. *Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency*. College

Station: Texas A&M University Press.

Moore, Mark P. 1989. "Reagan's Quest for Freedom in the 1987 State of the Union

Address." *Western Journal of Speech Communication*. 53: 52-65.

Rigsby, Enrique D. January 16, 1997. Lecture. "The Rhetoric of the Civil Rights Movement." Texas A&M University.

Tulis, Jeffrey K. 1987. *The Rhetorical Presidency*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Table 1 Issue Coding scheme developed in the Baumgartner and Jones Project

Major Topic Codes

Macroeconomics

Civil Rights, Minority Issues, and Civil Liberties

Health

Agriculture

Labor, Employment, and Immigration

Education

Environment

Energy

Transportation

Law, Crime, and Family Issues

Social Welfare

Housing and Community Development

Banking, Finance, and Domestic Commerce

Defense

Space, Science, Technology, and Communications

Foreign Trade

Foreign Affairs and Foreign Aid

Government Operations

Interior

Table 2: Presidential Attention By Topic Area, 1947-1993

Topic	Total Number of Thoughts	Average per Speech	Percent
Macroeconomics	2196.50	49.92	14.68
Civil Rights, etc	340.00	7.73	2.27
Health	461.00	10.48	3.08
Agriculture	389.00	8.84	2.6
Labor, etc	734.50	16.69	4.91
Education	434.50	9.88	2.9
Environment	214.00	4.86	1.43
Energy	378.00	8.59	2.53
Transportation	86.80	1.97	0.58
Law, etc	394.50	8.97	2.64
Social Welfare	593.00	13.48	3.96
Community Development, etc	278.00	6.32	1.86
Banking, etc	384.00	8.73	2.57
Defense	3257.00	74.02	21.77
Space, etc	191.30	4.35	1.28
Foreign Trade	353.00	8.02	2.36
International Affairs	1338.00	30.41	8.94
Government Operations	1203.00	27.34	8.04
Interior	159.00	3.61	1.06
Up to the Task	587.00	13.34	3.92
Individual/Private Sector Initiative	222.00	5.05	1.48
Protestant Work Ethic	13.00	0.30	0.09
School Prayer	25.00	0.57	0.17
Traditional Values	432.00	9.82	2.89
Tribute to Citizens	125.00	2.84	0.84
American Responsibility	148.00	3.36	0.99
Noble Goals	24.00	0.55	0.16

Figure 1: The Variability of Presidential Attention to Selected Issues, 1947-1993

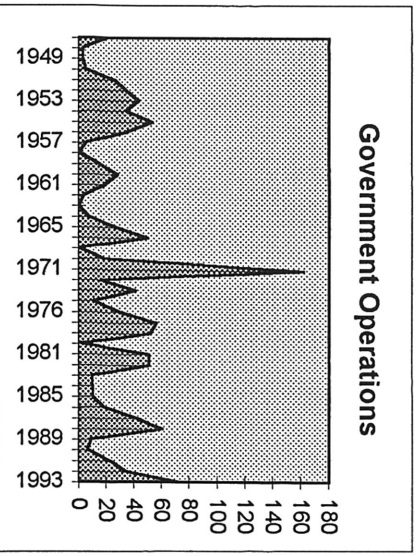
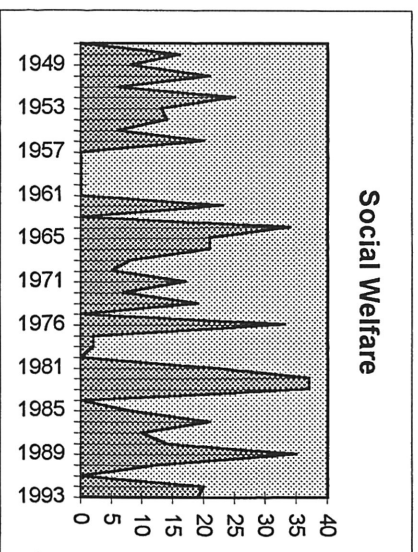
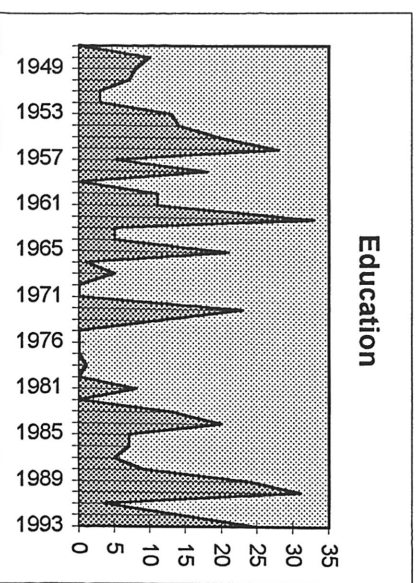
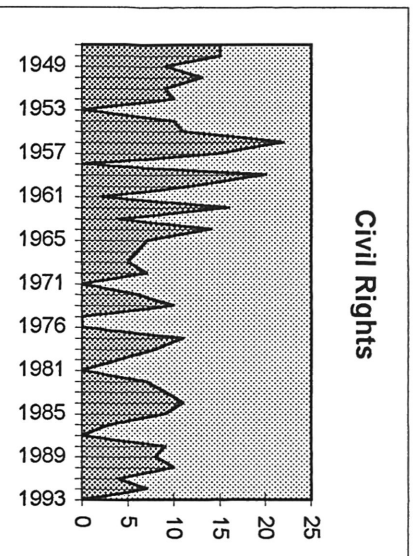
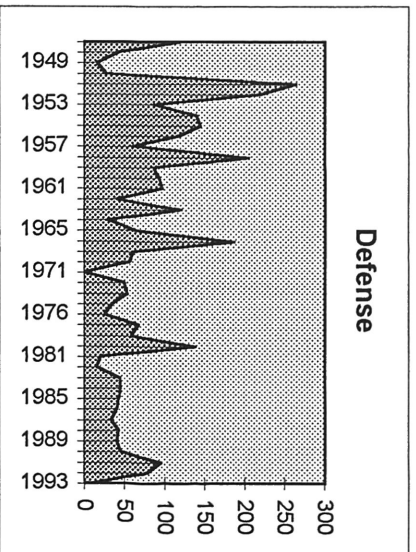
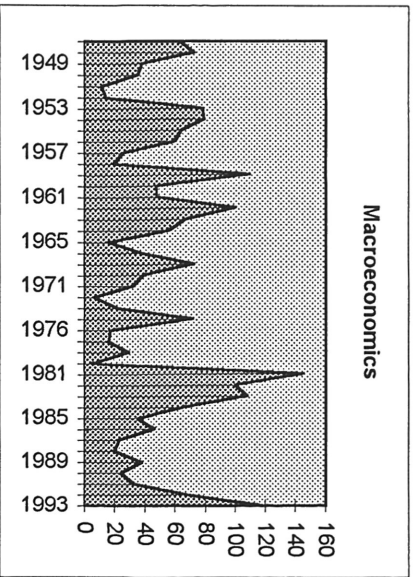


Table 3: Presidential Attention to the Issues Compared

	Average	H.S.T.	D.D.E.	J.F.K.	L.B.J.	R.M.N.	G.R.F.	J.C.	R.W.R.	G.H.W.B.	W.J.C.
Macroeconomics	14.68	10.36	13.48	19.71	14.95	8.83	13.03	5.95	23.07	13.39	20.11
Civil Rights, etc	2.27	3.16	2.52	2.02	2.63	1.49	1.18	2.73	2.05	2.38	0.28
Health	3.08	2.49	2.27	1.47	3.78	2.52	4.15	1.31	0.38	3.78	19.55
Agriculture	2.60	4.22	5.87	3.21	0.74	0.00	0.71	2.26	0.55	0.16	0.00
Labor, etc	4.91	10.23	6.91	2.29	4.60	2.18	3.44	2.26	2.96	0.82	4.22
Education	2.90	1.38	3.05	4.49	2.63	2.64	1.30	0.12	2.94	5.96	5.20
Environment	1.43	0.22	0.17	0.00	2.38	10.32	0.36	0.00	0.81	4.85	0.42
Energy	2.53	3.47	1.12	0.09	0.00	0.00	20.85	6.90	0.51	0.25	1.41
Transportation	0.58	0.18	1.43	0.64	1.15	0.23	0.59	0.00	0.00	0.27	0.07
Law, etc	2.64	0.00	0.06	0.27	4.44	3.78	4.74	0.00	3.34	7.97	12.24
Social Welfare	3.96	3.38	1.48	2.11	6.90	3.33	6.16	0.48	6.35	5.50	7.88
Community Dev.	1.86	3.07	1.37	1.83	3.86	3.10	0.95	0.12	1.36	1.56	0.84
Banking, etc	2.57	2.62	7.13	0.00	3.20	0.11	0.12	0.59	0.13	1.73	0.00
Defense	21.77	30.59	26.01	23.56	27.86	11.93	13.27	31.15	11.97	21.12	3.80
Space, etc	1.28	0.40	1.06	2.47	0.66	2.29	0.00	0.12	2.75	1.26	1.20
Foreign Trade	2.36	1.02	2.43	11.09	1.89	0.00	1.18	1.90	2.09	1.31	1.13
Internat'l Affairs	8.94	7.34	9.03	16.59	7.56	0.00	7.82	12.84	10.91	8.54	6.05
Gov Ops	8.04	4.09	5.93	2.11	6.90	22.48	9.72	13.08	10.74	5.92	11.25
Interior	1.06	1.82	2.68	0.37	0.00	2.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Up to the Task	3.92	3.47	1.76	0.82	1.23	10.89	6.75	8.80	0.00	3.04	4.36
Indiv./Private Init.	1.48	0.22	1.45	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.24	4.64	1.32	7.64	0.00
Prot. Work Ethic	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.43	0.25	0.00
School Prayer	0.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.07	0.00	0.00
Tradit'l Values	2.89	1.91	1.90	1.01	2.63	11.81	3.44	2.73	4.05	2.30	0.00
Tribute to Citizens	0.84	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.02	4.60	0.00	0.00
Amer Respons.	0.99	3.29	0.89	3.85	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Noble Goals	0.16	1.07	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
AVERAGE NUMBER OF THOUGHTS	340.025	374.833	447	363.667	304.25	290.667	281.333	280.333	293.375	304.275	355.5

Table 4: Comparison of attention paid to the issues by Democrats versus Republicans

	Democrats	Republicans	Difference
Gov Ops	7.47	10.94	-3.47
Tradit'l Values	1.65	4.69	-3.04
Environment	0.60	3.30	-2.69
Energy	2.37	4.55	-2.17
Up to the Task	3.67	5.61	-1.94
Indiv./Private Init.	0.97	2.12	-1.15
Law, etc	3.38	3.97	-0.59
Banking, etc	1.28	1.84	-0.56
Tribute to Citizens	0.40	0.92	-0.51
Interior	0.44	0.95	-0.51
Space, etc	0.97	1.47	-0.50
Social Welfare	4.14	4.55	-0.42
Education	2.76	3.17	-0.41
School Prayer	0.00	0.21	-0.21
Macroeconomics	14.19	14.33	-0.14
Prot. Work Ethic	0.00	0.13	-0.13
Transportation	0.41	0.50	-0.10
Noble Goals	0.21	0.00	0.21
Civil Rights, etc	2.16	1.92	0.24
Community Dev.	1.94	1.67	0.27
Agriculture	2.08	1.46	0.63
Amer Respons.	1.43	0.18	1.25
Labor, etc	4.71	3.26	1.45
Foreign Trade	3.40	1.40	2.00
Internat'l Affairs	10.06	7.24	2.82
Health	5.71	2.62	3.10
Defense	23.34	16.83	6.51

Figure 2: The Differing Agendas of the President and Congress, Selected Graphs

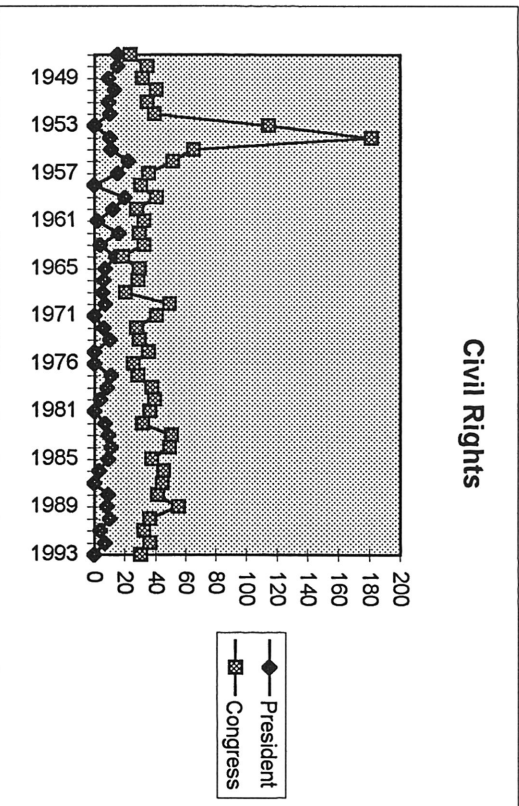
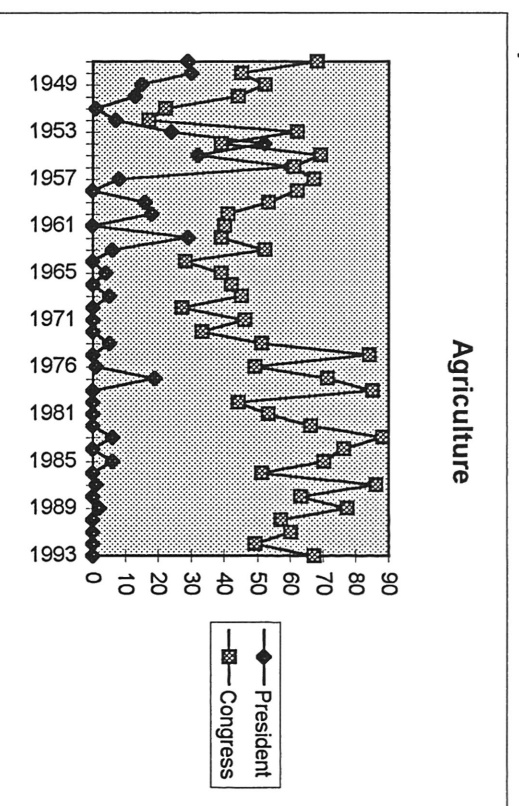
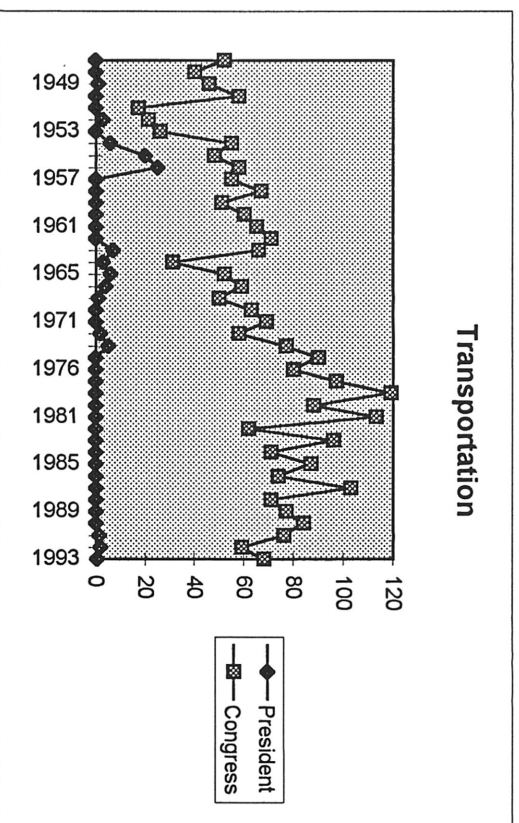
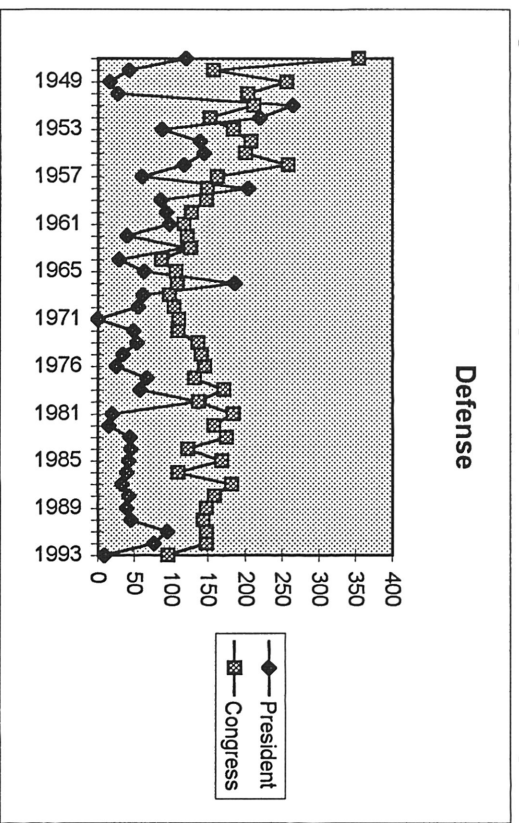


Figure 3: Isolated Cases of Correlation in Presidential and Congressional Agendas

