

International Conflict and Campaign Speech Rhetoric

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A Senior Honors Thesis Submitted to the Political Science Department

University of California, San Diego

April 3rd, 2023

Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to my family, who raised me to believe I am capable of anything.

I would like to thank Professor Fonna Forman and Professor Germaine Hoston for a beautifully run honors seminar, for teaching me how to undertake a project of this magnitude, and for offering support every step of the way.

Finally, I would like to thank Professor Seth Hill, without whom this project would not have been possible. Thank you for all of the edits, meetings, recommendations, and encouragement. I could not have asked for a better advisor.

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I. Introduction

International crisis, restlessness at home, national economic downturn; an address to the nation accepting a nomination to represent your political party in the coming presidential election. Public speeches and national addresses are the most direct and primary source of communication between a political candidate and their audience. In an address to the public in an election coinciding with a significant international affair, a candidate must reflect their take on foreign conflict through the rhetoric of their communication. From the declarative tone of Richard Nixon's diction to the eloquent appeal of Ronald Reagan, a successful candidate will represent their campaign strategy through the rhetoric of their address to the public. My thesis will ultimately respond to the research question,

What campaign strategies in elections concurrent with foreign violence allow a candidate to connect with their audience through the rhetoric of a public address, and how was this demonstrated in 1968 and 1980 respectively?

Democracy is paramount to American identity, and voting serves as the avenue by which individual citizens participate in government. In a presidential election year populated by international conflict, foreign affairs emerge as a focal point of the campaign. The political climate from unrest overseas sways how the voting populous characterizes each presidential candidate. I base my thesis on the idea that international affairs are a major driving factor in motivating voters to the polls, exacerbated when international relations are a subject directly impacting the average voting citizen. I intend to explore how different theories of personifying a candidate to his voters through the avenue of public speaking are reflected in election years in which there is a prominent foreign conflict. This research is done with the goal of identifying the commonalities between speech rhetoric that have proven successful in effectively personifying

the candidate to his audience, as well as consistencies in what has been proven to make an ineffective strategy.

Campaign speeches and public addresses are the most consistent way that presidential candidates have been historically given the platform to address their own audience and employ their oratory command over the voters. The rhetoric employed in these speeches may serve as a primary avenue of study for the motivations of the campaigns of the past, and my research question aims to display how valuable public speaking is in the public's perception of a presidential candidate. The avenue of a public address is a consistent factor on a campaign trail for a presidential candidate, and in future elections involving foreign violence we can use the precedent of campaign address rhetoric to characterize the strategy of a candidate beyond their spoken word.

In an effort to design a methodology to answer my research question, I formulated two theories for how a presidential candidate can run a successful campaign in an election year concurrent with conflict overseas. A candidate can emerge victorious through successful implementation of either of these two theories, but the theory chosen must be a calculated response to the state of foreign affairs.

The theories for how a presidential candidate can successfully run a campaign in an election year characterized by international relations are as follows:

First, presidential candidates running their campaign in the midst of foreign crises can resonate with voters through emphasizing patriotism in a country-focused approach; this strategy is effective when a foreign crisis directly impacts a large number of American households. A candidate running with a country-focused approach is likely to instill national pride and investment in the progress of the nation, but couple this with a call to action or an ask for

selflessness. This strategy is better suited to a situation in which the effects of the crisis are being felt firsthand in most American households.

Second, candidates may successfully run a campaign in the midst of foreign crisis through a person-focused approach when they are able to effectively make each individual person believe that their presidency will positively impact their unique life and circumstances; this strategy has a higher rate of success when a foreign crisis is directly affecting very few Americans. A person-focused approach is likely to absolve the voters of responsibility for the state of the nation, and it is better suited to a situation in which the effects of the crisis are being felt on a national level rather than by the individual.

After creating these two theories for how a foreign crisis centered campaign can be successful, I created a third theory to convey that both theories could be successful if implemented in the right political environment.

Third, the success of a campaign focusing on foreign conflict is contingent on the accuracy of the campaign's analysis of whether the voting public needs a person-focused or a country-focused approach. This portion of my theory represents how voters respond to different strategies from presidential candidates depending on the salience of the international crisis. If each American voter is feeling the effects of the crisis in their own household, a different method should be used than if the crisis is manifesting itself on a national level.

This thesis will examine how the rhetoric of a public address characterizes each presidential candidate according to the campaign theories highlighted in my hypothesis, and explore how each strategy can yield a victorious campaign depending on the state of the nation and the needs of the voting populus at a given point in time. American voters need one of two things in a period of foreign crisis: patriotic confidence or empathy to their individual plights.

Presidential candidates who are able to correctly analyze, select, and implement into their campaign the approach which the voters need will ultimately run a successful campaign; this is reflected in the presidential elections in 1968 and 1980, which ran concurrently with the Vietnam War and the Iran hostage crisis respectively.

In 1968 Richard Nixon ran a winning campaign solely on the promise that he would end the Vietnam War—even stating explicitly in his speech accepting the party nomination that he made no promises for his potential time in office other than facilitating peace overseas. His competitor, Hubert Humphrey, was unable to commit to consistent rhetoric. The success of the Nixon campaign is indicative of an effective analysis of the needs of the country, promising an approach that adequately assessed the need for a country-focused tactic.

A little over a decade later, Jimmy Carter ran his campaign emphasizing that he would do everything in his power as the incumbent to free the hostages in Iran and end the hostage crisis; and yet he lost by a landslide to Ronald Reagan because of his faulty analysis that the American voters needed a country-focused approach as opposed to the person-focused theory reflected in Reagan's campaign speeches.

The success of a person-focused or country-focused campaign is contingent on the state of foreign affairs and how the foreign conflict is manifesting itself in individual American households. The Iran hostage crisis, while unpopular, directly affected very few Americans; Vietnam, on the other hand, affected a much broader population of American individuals due to the draft and subsequent casualties. Thus, a person-focused campaign was successful in the case of Iran, but the war in Vietnam required a country-focused strategy to produce a victorious candidate.

Paramount to their success on election day is a candidate's understanding of environments in which a person-focused campaign will be successful, and how this differs from an environment in which a country-focused campaign will better resonate with voters. The common factor between presidential candidates who are able to effectively reach voters and subsequently exploit foreign affairs to win their election is contingent on their understanding of how directly a foreign affairs crisis is affecting individual voters, and understanding if the nation is in need of a strong sense of national unity, or if voters are looking for a crisis response that targets their own specific and unique personal needs. Successful candidates successfully ascertain which approach the voting populous needs in a time of foreign crisis: patriotic confidence or empathy to their individual plights; essentially, either a country-focused or a person-focused campaign, and are able to reflect this in their connections with the public through the syntax and rhetoric of their speeches.

I intend for this research to be applicable to the future of campaign strategies and serve as a tool in understanding how a presidential candidate's position regarding foreign affairs can be understood through the rhetoric of their speeches. Analysis of the spoken word is focal to understanding political intention when concurring with violence overseas, and can be applied in the contemporary political world when the conflict between Russia and Ukraine ultimately runs concomitantly with our next presidential election.

At the denouement of this thesis, I will demonstrate the factors creating a strong person-focused and a strong country-focused approach, the category into which each candidate in my case studies fell, and why each strategy succeeded or failed in the elections of 1968 and 1980 respectively.

II. Literature Review

II.I Reasoning

Academic work surrounding the analysis of a political campaign is broad and thorough, with a plethora of methodologies in analyzing candidates. Authors Norpoth et. al caught my interest with the line of reasoning they employed regarding the Iraq War's impact on the election of 2004. "Mission Accomplished: the Wartime Election of 2004" outlines the argument of the effect of the Iraq War on the reelection of George W. Bush in the 2004 presidential election through establishing the idea that the general public perceives the Iraq War to have negatively affected his campaign, but arguing that this perception is flawed and the war ultimately served in favor of Bush's reelection. This paper poses the question of what is more common in American history—an incumbent to win or to lose in a wartime election? The authors proceed to introduce the "expectation of success" and how it impacts public response to casualties; people are willing to look past casualties when the war seems winnable, but they are a detriment to the campaign if the public believes the war might be lost (Norpoth et. al.).

The research methodology of identifying a novel factor, in this case, the "expectation of success", influenced my thesis by prompting me to look for the factors of a campaign that I later came to define as "person" or "country" focused. I learned I could deviate from the orthodox understanding of campaign strategy, and developed my own theories on trends in a campaign. This piece inspired the idea that I could formulate my own understanding of the strategies being implemented by the presidential candidates and craft my own definitions. This influenced the creation of the person-focused and country-focused theories, and allowed me to draw my own connections between campaign rhetoric.

The likelihood of Americans to look past casualties in a war if they think the war might serve to their benefit works complimentary to my hypothesis that the voting population responds differently to international relations depending on how salient it is to the comfort of their everyday life. Norpoth et. al. cast the framework for the idea that an international issue must be sufficiently disruptive to the lifestyle of the greater society for one style of campaign to be effective, and that an alternative strategy should be implemented when it is not.

The Message Matters: The Economy and Presidential Campaigns by Lynn Vavreck influenced my research by demonstrating how candidates can be categorized and compared based on their approach to the campaign. The author had a unique argument, fantastic sources, and a line of thinking from which my thesis takes inspiration. The author demonstrated a research method of creating two different molds for a campaign strategy in a presidential election, and then demonstrated how presidential candidates of the past have reflected the strategy framework she outlined.

A great piece of the research design of this thesis is modeled after the work of Vavreck. In my thesis I created two hypotheses for how presidential candidates may run their campaigns in a period of international crisis, and argue that presidents of the past can be characterized according to each hypothesis. This reflects Vavreck's creation of novel hypotheses for campaign strategy, as well as her method of observing presidential campaigns of historical elections to observe and analyze these trends.

This piece explores, essentially, the role of the economy in a presidential campaign. It asserts that in every election, the competitors take on one of two roles: the "clarifying" campaign and the "insurgent" campaign. The "clarifying" candidate takes the economy as their main point of argument; the incumbent if the economy is good, or the challenger if the economy is bad. The

“insurgent” campaign must then find a different issue to make the focal point of their campaign, and their objective is to convince the voters that this issue is more important than the economy as represented by the clarifying campaign. This process of identifying candidates as falling into one of two categories is similar to a comparative argument I was developing: that one candidate emerges as “country-focused” while another emerges as “person-focused” in an election campaign taking place during a significant foreign affair.

This source changed the direction of my thesis through the assertion that incumbent presidents are not predisposed to fare any better or worse in a wartime election than they do in a year without a significant foreign affairs factor. This is reflected later in the body of my work, in which I assert that incumbency is a factor in if a candidate takes a person- or country-focused approach.

War and American Democracy: The Electoral Costs of the Last Five Wars by Timothy Y.C. Cotton developed an argument strategy that influenced my writing through their portrayal of a foreign crisis. This article caught my attention because it examined the wars it used as case studies as one broad concept, rather than narrowing in on each individual event. In this thesis I intend to draw conclusions that are applicable to the future of campaign politics amidst international affairs. The tendency of this author to look at a more theoretical definition of war rather than each one as its own discrete event inspired my interest in expanding my body of research beyond just a declaration of war, and developing hypotheses applicable to a broader range of crises.

Cotton reflected this personal goal of mine through their broadly applicable conclusions drawn based on specific events. This article also asserts that so far, the impact of war on presidential elections has not been adequately considered. Cotton describes war as having a

“disintegrative” effect on America due to the loss of life, rationing of materials like food and energy, disagreement regarding war strategies, or failures in battle. This is an interesting comparison with the work of Norpoth et. al, which describes that Americans are much more willing to accept loss of life and continue to support a war despite casualties if the war seems winnable and might manifest onto American soil.

While wartime elections are described as disintegrative, I wonder what Americans might rally around in times of foreign distress. Aside from political feelings about the war efforts, I hypothesize that people might seek a remedy to this disintegration by rallying together behind the support of a political candidate during election years. This may serve as a way for civilians to feel involved in the politics of the war effort, as well as promote patriotism and nationwide strength. Cotton’s piece depicts the movement left and right in the voting population in the late 60s to be nearly entirely contingent on their stance regarding the Vietnam War.

Cotton concludes that when foreign conflict is a significant factor in an election year, it becomes the most important topic for voters. This concurs with my argument of a foreign crisis being sufficiently salient, in which I argue that which strategy the voters will respond to is dependent on if the political climate is permeating their individual household.

The political status of foreign affairs was directly challenged by Reagan in 1980, as he focused on the economy while Jimmy Carter placed a much greater emphasis on the resolution of the Iran hostage crisis. While Cotton argues of the salience of foreign affairs on the mind of the voters, he leaves the strategy for a successful crisis campaign unresolved.

The Y.C. Cotton source, while making significant contributions in its own right, also drew my attention to an additional source cited within Cotton’s research. Jacobsen and Kernell’s 1981 publication, “Strategy and Choice in Congressional Elections”, proved valuable in

demonstrating their theory of how national events sway elections for Congress. They made a compelling comparison, stating that the relationship “between national trends and individual voters lies in the decision-making process of political elites, whose choices are affected by national events and, in turn, affect the decisions of many voters.” (Jacobsen and Kernell, 1981). I found this to be an interesting perspective around which to frame my research, and essentially explore how the campaign decisions of candidates in regard to the current state of affairs related to the voter trends, and how this data can intersect and coexist.

Understanding how the state of foreign affairs impacted the voice of the public through the midterm elections is a valuable indicator of partisan trends, but is not a sufficient indicator of the strategy that will be implemented by the presidential candidates of the following years. However, the argument of how national events affect the voting populous can be referenced in a broader range of applications. With the broad interconnectedness of the political world, the observation of the power of the decision-making process of the elites can be applied to presidential campaigns as well as congressional elections.

II.II 1968: Richard Nixon and Hubert Humphrey

Lewis J. Gould’s literature *1968: The Election that Changed America* was the beginning of my academic research into my case studies. In this piece of literature Gould examines the “new strategy” developed by the Republicans in the era of the Vietnam War that led to significant Republican success in the next many elections. Gould credits Nixon and the 1968 election for getting the ball rolling on a strategy surrounding “wedge issues” that resulted in Republican victors and Democrat challengers throughout the 70s and 80s. A wedge issue is “a factor one party employs to split the votes of the other party”.

This piece responds to my research question by asserting that a candidate uses a “wedge issue” as their strategy to resonate with voters, and that this was the strategy implemented by Nixon in 1968. While this piece adds concurrent research to support my pool of evidence, it does not focus on the factor of international crisis that characterizes a complete response to my research question.

Aiming to achieve a more general understanding of the strategies employed by each candidate in the election of 1968 in addition to literacy to the analyses of academics, I picked up *The Contest* by Michael Schumacher. This literature proved to be of value by describing the points in time where Hubert Humphrey and his campaign were able to close in on Nixon in the polls, and at what points he fell behind in the public perception. This allowed me to analyze what point in time the public was responsive to Nixon’s strategy, and what changed when they became more responsive to Humphrey’s.

While Hubert Humphrey was the sitting vice president at the time of his campaign, President Lyndon B. Johnson was very late and very reluctant to endorse Humphrey’s presidential campaign. This idea runs parallel with my research by implying that the nation sought a united front from its government, and the disparity between Lyndon B. Johnson and Hubert Humphrey’s stance on the war and essential policy made Humphrey a less appealing pick on election day. In response to the Vietnam War, the voters were keen to vote for a candidate with rhetoric promoting national strength. Ultimately, I concluded that a fragmented approach was a detriment to the Humphrey campaign.

Next I read *The Deadly Bet: LBJ, Vietnam, and the 1968 Election* by Walter LeFeber. This piece argued that Lyndon B. Johnson had an unsuccessful term because of his inaccurate assessment of the bandwidth of Americans to withstand both the war and domestic reforms. This

relates to my research because it demonstrates how a sitting president can fail to correctly understand the needs of the country and if they would respond to a country or person focused foreign relations strategy. I characterize a country-focused approach by a call to action and an ask for selflessness, but the candidate first needs to establish a rapport with the voters before they can successfully make this ask. A country focused approach won't be successful if you haven't created the political environment necessary for that strategy to thrive.

“Lost Confidence: The Democratic Party, the Vietnam War, and the 1968 Election” by M. Nelson highlighted Nixon’s campaign strategy and how it impacted the campaign of Hubert Humphrey as he saw how successful Nixon’s foreign affairs approach was polling with the voters. This source provided insight into how heavily the American public weighed the status of the Vietnam War into their voting calculus, which was hefty. This data confirmed my earlier assertion that foreign violence remained at the forefront of the minds of voters in this election, and Nixon’s promise of a “victorious peace” appealed to the voter pool. Because the Vietnam War was sufficiently salient to the lives of the individual voters, Nixon’s analysis of the needs of the country was successful.

II.III 1980: Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter

As the only incumbent president in my research pool, I intended to look into Carter’s presidency before the election of 1980 and compile an academic viewpoint of why he was not put in a position to run a winning reelection campaign. I hoped to observe how these weaknesses identified in his presidency may have carried over into threatening the success of his campaign. Thus, I read Stephen Hess’s paper aptly titled “Jimmy Carter: Why he Failed”. In this piece of literature, Carter is defined as the first “process president”. Hess defines this phenomenon as a president who “places greater emphasis on methods, procedures, and instruments for making

policy rather than on the content of the policy itself". This led to no direct governmental philosophy, resulting in a lack of "predictive capacity" and an uncertainty in leadership. I hypothesize that this uncertainty contributed to Carter's limited ability to create a strong stance as a presidential candidate and became washed out in comparison to his competitor. This funneled into the idea that the voting populus looked for strength from their candidate: something Carter was unable to offer.

A reflection of my hypothesis of a country-focused method of campaign yields the idea that to run a successful country-focused campaign, a candidate must first foster adequate national pride. If Carter reflected uncertainty in his leadership in his first term as president, he likely didn't create the patriotic foundation needed to run an effective country-focused campaign.

I next read "The Effect of the Iranian Hostage Crisis on the 1980 Presidential Election" by MK Collins. This piece highlighted the idea that the major public perception of the hostage crisis and Carter's subsequent response was concern for the status of the economy as a result. In the New York Times, a series of polls were given inquiring the most important issues to voters a mere two months before election day. These polls showed that voters were largely concerned about the status of the homeland economy, and saw the international crisis as to blame for their financial woes. As oil imports from Iran were halted, the resulting economic crisis sealed Carter's fate on a second term of presidency. This runs in tandem with my theory that voters must see sufficient homeland salience before they truly enter international affairs into their voting perspective. Looking into the status of the economy as a result of the hostage crisis displays how the American public needed one of two things: country focused or individual focused security; neither of which the sitting president was able to offer.

Similar to the case of Vietnam, the Iran hostage crisis was an issue that became apparent before the campaign cycle truly began. Carter was in a unique position compared to other candidates in my case studies because he was already in a position to make decisions regarding foreign affairs as the sitting president. In David Patrick Houghton's piece "US Foreign Policy and the Iran Hostage Crisis", the hostage crisis is described as one Carter had much personal stake in resolving. Taking the crisis personally as the commander in chief, the back end of Carter's presidency was largely characterized by response to the hostage crisis. This is a responsibility no other candidate in my case studies had to bear, as Carter is the only incumbent.

Houghton described the hostage crisis in a way similar to academics describing Vietnam; "the hostage crisis had exerted a striking effect on ordinary Americans, who gradually became as obsessed as Carter with the fate of their countrymen" (Houghton). He described how Carter, along with the nation, labored over the status of these Americans held hostage, and that nightly updates were displayed throughout the media. This piece also displayed how Carter's failed military rescue mission decimated American optimism for the fate of the hostages. I found this reflection of the hostage crisis in comparison to what I know of the public perception of Vietnam to be of value; the public regarded these two issues similarly in the media, and yet valued them completely differently in the polls.

The failure of Carter's rescue mission, as well as his willingness to take full responsibility for the consequences, likely damaged his likelihood of crafting an effective country-focused campaign. Sacrificing the confidence of the people with his meek response to the failure of his rescue mission, he was unable to generate the national pride that he needed to promote collective effort for the good of the nation.

III. Theory and Hypotheses

III.I Three Theories

In response to my research question, I designed the framework for two theories on how a presidential candidate can run an effective campaign amidst a foreign crisis. I created these theories with the intention of retroactively analyzing campaigns of the past through a rhetorical analysis of the candidate's campaign speeches. I then designed a third theory, in which I articulated the idea that either of my original two theories could be equally effective in a campaign if the candidate was able to reflect the theory that was most cohesive with the political climate at the time of the election. In each instance of international crisis, one of the two theories would yield a successful campaign; a candidate must choose the correct theory and consistently implement it into their campaign design in order to produce a victorious candidate in a presidential election.

The two theories representing a successful campaign plan and the third theory reflecting the measure of success each theory has the potential to obtain are as follows:

1. Presidential candidates running their campaign in the midst of foreign crises can resonate with voters through emphasizing patriotism in a country-focused approach; this strategy is effective when a foreign crisis directly impacts a large number of American households.

I hypothesized that a country-focused approach would be more effective in a period of foreign crisis similar to the Vietnam War, as the societal magnitude of the event had every American household facing unique individual impacts. Thus, voters partake in political mobility because they want to see a theme of advancement throughout the entire nation; that is their priority on their ballot. I define a country-focused approach as a strategy aiming to connect with

voters by displaying how a candidate's presidency may affect the livelihood of the country as a whole, and allows American voters to see a vision for the success of the entire nation.

A country-focused approach is characterized by an emphasis on national pride and unity throughout the nation. A country-focused approach relies on a culture where individual Americans want to see the entire nation progress; the political climate must be agreeable to personal sacrifice in exchange for national gain. A country-focused campaign will promote a call to action or an ask for individual sacrifice in response to international events, so the campaign must correctly assess that the voting public is in a position to trust their government enough to be responsive to this strategy.

Country-focused rhetoric can be portrayed in the speech of a candidate through how the individual perceives the relationship between the president and the country. This approach underlines the necessity for an action from the presidency and the people for the benefit of the country; this is characterized by a call to action or an ask for selflessness. This can also manifest itself into the rhetoric of a public address through an air of speaking *to* the American people, portraying themselves as an entity separate from the voting populus; a person-focused approach, by contrast, would group the candidate in with the country as one unilateral entity undertaking the conflict together. This approach uses the rhetoric of characterizing the voters and the presidency as one team to promote the good of the country.

I hypothesize that a country-focused approach is likely to be most successful in an instance where an international crisis is affecting the livelihood of individual American families. When the state of the nation is making itself apparent within the household, voters are more likely to organize social mobility and be reactive to changes in the government. In a crisis such as the Vietnam War, voters are being affected individually through the draft and economic

downturn. This means that they are more likely to be responsive to political rhetoric that advocates for the progress of the entire nation, and a country-focused approach would be most appropriate.

2. Candidates may successfully run a campaign in the midst of foreign crisis through a person-focused approach when they are able to effectively make each individual person believe that their presidency will positively impact their unique life and circumstances; this strategy has a higher rate of success when a foreign crisis is directly affecting very few Americans.

I define a person-focused approach as a strategy targeting voters by using a campaign to display how the candidate will change *their* life. Rather than prompting a voter to envision how the country may prosper, this strategy prompts a voter to envision how their own individual life will improve as a result of the candidate's presidency. I believe that a person-focused approach would be most effective in a foreign conflict in which few American households are directly affected. When the effects of a foreign crisis is not sufficiently salient to the direct wellbeing of each individual American household, a candidate presenting a person-focused strategy will be triumphant. The person-focused approach is superior in this instance because it is void of the call to action and the ask for selflessness that characterizes the country-focused approach. Instead, a person-focused approach will aim to make the audience feel taken care of by the presidency; the candidate will appeal to the audience's desire to absolve themselves from responsibility for the state of the nation. This strategy is effective when a candidate can understand that the voting populus needs an individual and calculated outreach rather than a call for collective action.

A candidate's address can also reflect a person-focused approach through how the relationship between the president and the country is portrayed; a person-focused address

promises for the president and country to work for the benefit of the people. This is reflected in a candidate's address through the absence of a call to action, absolving the audience of responsibility for the state of the nation; this can also be reflected through the way the candidate commiserating with the audience about the state of things and empathize with the plights of each individual audience member. The person-focused approach is characterized by the presidential candidate relating himself to the audience in regard to the state of affairs, and showing the voters that the status of their individual household is paramount. The country-focused approach, by contrast, is characterized by an established relationship between the candidate and his audience through a unilateral national action rather than attention to the individual. A person-focused approach characterizes the presidency and the country as one entity, dedicated to progress for the individual.

A person-focused approach is likely to be more effective in a period of international crisis where voters are being targeted on a national level, rather than an issue that is salient to each individual household. When the international crisis is focused on a national level, voters require a person-focused approach in which they believe that the president and the government are working together for their individual interests. A country-focused approach would be ineffective in this instance because the crisis is not sufficiently salient to each individual household for the voters to be responsive to a call to action. While a voter may be aware cerebrally of the threat to the entire nation, the average American voter needs a person-focused strategy to show them how a unilateral effort from the presidency will impact their individual life.

3. The success of a campaign focusing on foreign conflict is contingent on the accuracy of the campaign's analysis of whether the voting public needs a person-focused or a country-focused approach.

A person-focused approach and a country-focused approach can each be equally successful in producing a winning campaign, as long as the strategy chosen is an accurate analysis of what the country needs in response to the crisis. The nation needs a person-focused approach when the issue at hand is not saliently permeating individual homes; the nation needs a country-focused approach when the plights of the nation are felt in every household.

I hypothesize that a country-focused approach was successful when Richard Nixon won the presidential election in 1968 because the Vietnam War was an international affair that was directly impacting most American households. Hubert Humphrey, while conveying neither a country- nor person-focused approach with conviction, would have been unsuccessful in a person-focused campaign as well because this specific moment in history prompted a country-focused response. The American people needed a response to the national crisis that emphasized patriotism, unity, and duty; this was an effective ask for a foreign affair like Vietnam that was sufficiently salient in each individual American household.

In contrast, a person-focused approach was successful in 1980 when Ronald Reagan ran against Jimmy Carter in an election concurring with the Iran hostage crisis because this was an issue that did not permeate each individual household, but rather targeted the core of the country as a whole. In this case, a country-focused strategy characterized by a call to action and an ask for selflessness would be ineffective as each individual American is not being directly affected by the international crisis. Thus, Jimmy Carter failed to generate the patriotism and duty that would characterize a successful country-focused approach, and Ronald Reagan won the presidency due to his campaign's ability to resonate with the unique needs of each individual American household through his economy-focused appeal and tendency to absolve the audience of responsibility for the state of the nation.

The idea that the success of a campaign is reliant on the candidate's ability to analyze what approach would be most effective in a given circumstance is adapted from the research of Walter LeFeber in *The Deadly Bet: LBJ, Vietnam, and the 1968 Election*. LeFeber asserts that Lyndon B. Johnson was an unsuccessful president because he poorly analyzed the bandwidth of the country. This has been adapted to my thesis through the idea that a prerequisite for a fruitful campaign strategy is an accurate analysis of the needs of the voting populous.

III.II Case Studies

The 1968 election and the 1980 election, running concurrently with the Vietnam War and the Iran hostage crisis respectively, serve as case studies in my argument to reflect the three theories I have outlined above. I will use a rhetorical analysis of the addresses each of the candidates delivered at their respective parties' national conventions to convey which theory each candidate represented, how the strategy they used was made evident through the rhetoric of their speech, and why they succeeded or failed to secure the presidency.

Richard Nixon employed a country-focused strategy. Nixon ran his campaign during the final years of the Vietnam War, in which I have hypothesized that a country-focused approach would be most effective. The effects of the war were permeating households across America; the country was poised for a call to action from a presidential candidate in exchange for a promise to end the war. The Vietnam War was an issue so salient in the average American household that people were more likely to respond to an appeal for selflessness. I hypothesize that a rhetorical analysis of Richard Nixon's speech accepting his nomination from the Republican party in 1968 would yield a tendency for country-focused rhetoric, and his address will be characterized by a call to action and an ask for selflessness.

Jimmy Carter too employed a country-focused strategy. I attribute a country-focused strategy to Jimmy Carter because of the call to action to the American people that he based his platform upon. His campaign was characterized by an ask for national faith and unity as the federal government worked to resolve the hostage crisis; however, this was an ask that the voters in 1980 were not well poised to receive. Throughout his incumbency Carter was unable to establish the trust for the government that characterizes the country-focused method, and therefore his ask to the American people was unyielding.

A country-focused method was ultimately unsuccessful in an international affair like the hostage crisis, as the voters were not being sufficiently impacted in their own personal lives to foster responsiveness to an ask from the government. Carter had the responsibility to react to the international crisis in a position his challenger did not, and thus he was pigeon-holed into a country-focused approach that led to his ultimate demise as a candidate. I hypothesize that a rhetorical analysis of Jimmy Carter's speech accepting his nomination from the Democratic party in 1980 would reveal use of country-focused rhetoric, to the ultimate detriment of the Carter administration.

Ronald Reagan employed a person-focused strategy. Challenging incumbent Jimmy Carter for the presidency in 1980, Reagan was given the opportunity to employ a person-focused approach that Carter was denied due to his responsibility to respond to the international crisis as the sitting commander in chief. Reagan was able to capitalize upon this position, and express a person-focused concern for the fiscal wellbeing of individual American households. While Carter was forced to preoccupy himself with trouble abroad, Reagan was poised to look to the individual needs of individual voters. He was able to implement a person-focused rhetoric into his public address that appealed to the needs of the country in response to the ongoing hostage

crisis in Iran. Because the issue overseas was not sufficiently impacting the livelihood of individual American households, the nation was not poised to be reactive to the country-focused ask that would come from the Carter administration.

Thus, Ronald Reagan was able to employ a person-focused approach through showing the American voters that a Reagan administration would take care of the individual plights of the voters, while the incumbent administration is tied up with a threat on the national level. The voters, unprepared for the political mobility prompted by the Carter campaign, yielded success for a person-focused rhetoric from Reagan. I hypothesize that a rhetorical analysis of Ronald Reagan's address accepting his nomination from the Republican party in 1980 would yield use of person-focused rhetoric, appealing to the selfish tendencies of the American electorate and providing a stark contrast to the rhetoric of the Jimmy Carter campaign.

Hubert Humphrey did not characterize as significantly one strategy or the other through the rhetoric of his public address. While Hubert Humphrey may employ portions of country-focused and person-focused rhetoric at points in his campaign, I don't predict that his speech rhetoric will stick to the formulaic structure of one theory of campaign strategy. Due to an inconsistent implementation of a country-focused or person-focused strategy, Hubert Humphrey demonstrates the third theory I developed in response to my research question in which a candidate can find themselves unable to maximize their relationship with their audience through a public address due to their lack of commitment to one campaign theory or the other. While Humphrey may make a fantastic individual person-focused or country-focused case, I hypothesize that an inability to ultimately stick to one strategy or the other was a factor in running a losing campaign.

Analysis of the address of each candidate accepting their party nomination ultimately allowed me to outline the factors creating a strong person-focused and a strong country-focused approach, the category into which each candidate in my case studies fell, and why each strategy succeeded or failed in the elections of 1968 and 1980 respectively.

IV. Research Design

My research design began with the formulation of three theories in response to my research question; I developed two hypotheses for how a presidential candidate can run an effective campaign amidst a foreign crisis, and a third hypothesis detailing that both theories can be successful in the right environment. This method of developing two different frameworks for a presidential campaign strategy is adapted from Lynn Vavreck's research in *The Message Matters*; Vavreck creates two theories for campaign strategy in regard to the economy, and characterizes presidential campaigns of the past as falling into one of her two established categories. I borrowed this design for my method of retroactively categorizing candidates into theories of my own design, and forming my own framework for understanding the campaign strategies at play.

After establishing my hypotheses, I chose case studies that would showcase how presidential candidates have reflected my theories. I wanted to capture two different foreign crises, but in years close enough that a similar pool of voters would be participating in the election. I also searched for election years in which a foreign crisis would play a significant role in the politics of campaigns—years in which the public perception concluded that the results of the presidential election would serve to impact the outcome in a tangible way. Presidential elections are a major outlet for the mobilization of the views of the public; in years that foreign

affairs were a sufficiently salient topic of culture, each respective campaign strategy would have been highly calculated in regard to the perception of foreign affairs. I believe this is an appropriate method of design in relation to my research question because the conclusions I hope to draw are not unique to only wartime elections. By using two different violent foreign affairs that do not each include a formal declaration of war, the conclusions I draw in this study can be demonstrated on a broader range of application.

I ultimately chose to study the presidential elections of 1968 and 1980, in which Hubert Humphrey ran against Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter ran against Ronald Reagan respectively. The 1968 election ran concurrently with the Vietnam War, and the 1980 election ran in the midst of the Iran hostage crisis. I began with the intention of studying two elections concurrent with different wars; however, the characterization of a person-focused approach leaves this theory much better suited for an alternate foreign crisis. Wars are often too salient to individual wellbeing to truly yield an effective person-focused strategy, but by including the hostage crisis I was able to theorize and compare the two methods with adequate case studies.

The Iran hostage crisis, while not a war in its own right, was a prominent factor characterizing international relations with the Middle East in the late 1970s through the beginning of the 1980s. This conflict had an effect on the American public comparable to that of the Vietnam War, in which Americans were faced with the juxtaposition between their own nuclear wellbeing and the prosperity of the country as a whole. The hostage crisis was a consistent point of reference for the presidential candidates of the 1980 election year, and is relevant to my speech analysis because of its prominence in the political culture of the campaign periods in which I am studying. The hostage crisis, similar to the impact of a war on the

American psyche, called for national attention and response that allows for it to be categorized as a significant point of international conflict.

I then began to explore what medium I would use to compare the implementation of foreign affairs into each respective campaign strategy. I initially explored polling data and comparing dates within campaigns, but ultimately realized that I needed to find an analytical perspective and explore what factors were driving the public perception of each of the candidate's take on foreign policy. I then decided to refocus my research onto the most primary way that each campaign could communicate with the voters: their speeches. I found this method of analysis to be more true to my research question: the actual public addresses of the candidates would be much more telling of their campaign's prerogative than the net public response, as starting at the primary source controls more variables. I hypothesized that by understanding the intention behind the method of their addresses to the public I could ultimately understand the core of their campaign.

I had to decide what speeches I would use, and what exactly I would search for to compare them. I wanted addresses that would be comparable between elections as well as between candidates—I wanted all of the addresses to be in response to the same prompt. Thus, I decided on the most uniform address of a presidential candidacy: their addresses accepting the nomination at their respective party conventions. I thought these would be comparable speeches because they were all held on a consistent date, with a consistent audience type, at a consistent time in the election. I found this research design to control as many variables as possible and keep the rhetorical analysis of the speech transcripts uniform.

At the beginning of my research I listened to these speeches once over, and then began annotating the transcripts. I first went in with only a highlighter before trying to make any

conclusions or connections; I marked anything that stood out to me as a rhetorical device, or anything that appeared to be significantly intentional in the audience's perceived relationship with the speaker. I noted short sentence structure versus complex, collective nouns, and significant colloquialism.

I began to attribute different sentence structures to different theories, as the rhetoric of the speeches began to reflect the strategies of the candidates. I began to associate short, declarative statements with a country-focused theory, consistent with the idea of promoting strong American identity. In contrast, I attributed long, eloquent sentence structure as an attempt to restructure the tone of the address as conversational. This is consistent with a person-focused theory of portraying the candidate as more similar to the audience than different.

I next noted usage of words such as "you", "I", "we", and "they"; words that might indicate the relationship the presidential candidate is hoping to portray between himself and the audience. In a country-focused approach, these words will portray the people and the president working as a sole entity, together for the benefit of the nation as a whole. In contrast, a person-focused approach will portray the president and the country as a partnership, working together for the benefit of the people as individuals. How the presidential candidate portrays his relationship with his audience in his speech is indicative of how the campaign portrays the role of the presidency in working with the government for the benefit of the people.

Another factor I made note of in my annotation process was the tendency of the presidential candidate to relate himself to or separate himself from the audience. For example, I analyzed how a president would address a national problem: would their speech have a call to action in which the candidate framed the issue as a communal undertaking, or would the candidate separate himself from the audience through taking a more pedantic avenue in

addressing the issue? I characterized this through the presence of a call to action. In a call to action, the presidential candidate demonstrates a country-focused ask for a communal act or sacrifice for the good of the country. In comparison, a candidate may lack a call to action, in a person-focused reflection of the perceived ability of the government to take care of individual citizens.

Alongside a call to action, I sought for the presence or the absence of a promise being made *to* the American people. I inquired if the presidential candidate was taking on an issue as a unilateral government force, or if he was looking to the people for a national undertaking of responsibility; this demonstrates a difference between viewing a foreign crisis as a government undertaking or an undertaking of the entire country, and therefore indicates different campaign philosophies. The most significant difference in regard to differences is if they are making a promise *to* the American people, or making a promise *for* something to happen alongside the public. A promise to the American people appeals to a person-focused desire to be taken care of by the leaders of the government, whereas a promise *for* the American people furthers a country-focused campaign strategy in which the government alongside the voting populus works together. I searched for indicators that a candidate was calling for a national gesture of selflessness or if the candidate was playing into the selfish tendencies of the American voter. This included compiling the calls to action and the perceived relationship between the candidate and his audience the candidate used his speech to cultivate.

Finally, I aimed to characterize the campaign strategies of each candidate through a definitive “you” statement. “You” statements are reflective of a person-focused rhetoric; the candidate is using their address to make each individual in the audience feel seen, and feel as though the presidency and the government will work to address the voter’s individual comfort.

These “you” statements show the audience that the candidate truly understands their unique plights, and convince the audience that only a person-focused strategy will yield a candidate serving their best interest. By contrast, a country-focused candidate will populate their speech with rhetoric representing the progress of the country as a whole, overlooking the assurance for the individual.

After performing my analysis I noted which theory was reflected by each candidate, and how that theory was represented through the rhetoric of their address accepting their party nomination. This allowed me to draw my ultimate conclusion at the resolution of this thesis, in which I was able to outline the factors creating a strong person-focused and a strong country-focused approach, the category into which each candidate in my case studies fell, and why each strategy succeeded or failed in the elections of 1968 and 1980 respectively.

V. Speech Analysis

V.I. Overview

In an exploration of how violent foreign affairs impacted the campaigns of the 1968 and 1980 elections respectively, I looked to the most concentrated outlet for candidate publicity: their speeches. In addition to being a ubiquitous and consistent means for the candidates to communicate the focal points of their campaigns with the public, political speeches are deliberate and calculated in their rhetoric. This makes them a beneficial tool in analyzing campaign motives and strategies, as candidates reveal how they desire to be perceived by their audience. I intend to use the candidates from 1968 and 1980 to portray my two theories for what may yield a successful campaign. I will perform a rhetorical analysis of their addresses accepting their

nomination to represent their party in the primary election, with the objective of understanding the broader political climate that resulted in the success of each strategy.

I will analyze the speeches of Hubert Humphrey, Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan to categorize them into a “person-focused” or “country-focused” campaign approach based on a rhetorical analysis of their addresses accepting their party nomination at their respective party convention. My initial understanding of my hypothesis is that Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter both employ the country-focused approach, implementing it with vastly different measures of success, which is reflective of their respective election years and the needs of the country at this given point in time. I hypothesize Ronald Reagan successfully used a person-focused approach with an accurate assessment of the country’s needs and the rhetoric that would appeal to the voting populous. Finally, I hypothesize that Hubert Humphrey fell somewhere in the middle, faltering back and forth between a person- and country-focused strategy. This was an inaccurate analysis of the needs of the people, and Humphrey’s inconsistent implementation of one of the two country- or person-focused methods ultimately resulted in defeat on election day.

V.II. Richard Nixon: Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the 1968 Republican National Convention in Miami Beach, Florida

In Richard Nixon’s address in 1968 accepting the presidential nomination at the Republican National Convention, he promoted a strong country-first agenda in his confident, powerful statements instilling national pride and unity. He frequents repetition of “we”, promoting cohesive strength, transitioning into repetition of “they”, creating a secure American identity and promoting faith and loyalty to that entity. Nixon is much more decisive in his diction than his competitor; he effectively inspires the confidence in Americans that he needs to create a

foundation for a successful ask for selflessness. He repeats “we are going to win because [...]”, which inspires confidence in the ability of the nation as well as encourages Americans to see themselves as a part of and taking pride in the national entity. Nixon is effective in his use of vivid imagery, and speaks in short sentences, coming off almost poetic. This is a stark contrast to the long, eloquent sentences employed by Humphrey, and, eventually, Ronald Reagan. This vivid imagery works so effectively in Nixon’s favor because of the ongoing violence overseas. In the Vietnam War, in which the 1968 election ran concurrently, there was a national draft; the stark imagery of the violence overseas is strategic to resonate with the voting population who likely know or love someone actively fighting overseas. This depiction of the violent horrors, followed by the blunt promise to end the war, was an effective campaign strategy as it spoke to the pathos of the entire country; to which he asks, “can America meet this great challenge?”. This call to action is a characteristic of the country-focused approach, in which the presidential candidate makes an ask to the voters in the name of the country after emphasizing national pride and establishing rapport.

Richard Nixon differed from his opponent Hubert Humphrey through his prose of making promises *to* the American people, which was a stark contrast to Humphrey’s strategy of trying to perceive the issues as a matter of the president and the voting populous on an even playing field, working together. At the end of his address, Nixon repeats to the American people the phrase “I pledge to you”. Nixon makes a promise to end the war to the American people, while Humphrey speaks of his foreign affair strategy as though it is to be undertaken *with* the American people. Nixon explicitly promises to end the war, yet states that this is his only promise for his presidency; he does not guarantee anything else. However, this strategy proved effective; the strong country-focused promise of the direction of the entire nation was a direct and

confidence-instilling way to conclude his address and secure the assurance and certitude of his audience. Humphrey employs a person-focused approach, which was an incorrect calculation of the needs of the nation. Nixon displayed a country-focused campaign, which was a correct analysis of the needs of the American voters and therefore led to his successful candidacy.

V.III Jimmy Carter: Remarks Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the 1980

Democratic National Convention in New York

Jimmy Carter employs a similar country-focused approach, but he does so in a way that is entirely less effective than that of Nixon years prior. In his speech accepting the presidential nomination at the 1980 Democratic National Convention, he employs a speech pattern similar to that observed in Hubert Humphrey in which he speaks with the intent of “lowering” himself to the level of his constituents. He does this through speech patterns such as “fellow Democrats, fellow citizens” and the repetition of “we”, in which he groups himself along with the citizens in being a victim of happenstance and wanting to work with the general public to arrive at a solution. In this way he puts the good of the country in the hands of the people, and absolves himself with collective responsibility he tries to create amongst his audience.

The emphasis on collective responsibility is indicative of a country-focused approach because it reflects the country-focused idea of the presidency and the voters working together for national progress. This groups the president and the voters together as the actors, striving for the wellbeing of the nation as a whole. This contrasts from a person-focused approach, in which the presidency and the government work together to portray an emphasis on individual progress. This focus on prosperity within individual American households takes priority over the progress of the entire nation.

In Carter's address he focuses on the wellbeing of the entire nation, and relies on the belief that American voters will foster empathy for those affected by the hostage crisis in Iran powerful enough to sway their decision on voting day. In his address to the Democratic National Party, Carter inclines that the president cannot "yield to shortsighted demands", as such a broad quantity of individuals relies on the support of the presidency. This calls on the selflessness of the voters, which, per my hypothesis, works against Carter in the success of his campaign. The greatest comparison in person versus country focused campaigning is seen in the following quotation from Carter's address:

And that's why the President cannot bend to the passions of the moment, however popular they might be. That's why the President must sometimes ask for sacrifice when his listeners would rather hear the promise of comfort.

This quotation is the heart of the comparison between people versus country focus. A president representing a true country-focused ideology must foster the national pride and patriotism of the American culture to create the type of electoral environment that allows for the president to ask for sacrifice from its people, instead of the person-focused strategy of promising comfort and solutions. Calling for selflessness is inherently a country-focused method of campaigning, and appealing to the selfish tendencies of the American household's desire to look after oneself first is an inherently person-first method of campaign. Carter called for the selflessness required in a country-focused approach in response to the hostage crisis in Iran, but had not fostered the trust and rapport with the voting public to implement this method successfully. Reagan, on the other hand, had the ability to appeal to the person-focused desire to be taken care of by the government that the voting public sought—and was thus able to run a more successful campaign in tune with the needs of the people in a time of foreign violence.

Jimmy Carter lacks any definitive “you” statements in his address—he fails to allow the voters to visualize how *they* will benefit. This is a country-focused rhetoric; he visualizes his dreams for the country as a whole, but overlooks the individual plights of the actual people that will be at the polling booths. He does insert repetition of “I see a future of [...]” to relay his dreams for the country. This phrasing allows for a hopeful outlook on the state of the country to come, but absolves Carter of having to take responsibility for or promising the actuality of this future.

Jimmy Carter continues throughout his speech to paint scenes of grandeur of what the country might become, should the citizens be agreeable to a country-focused pledge of selflessness. He states, “you and I have been working toward a more secure future”. This is yet another telltale cue on the difference between a country and person focused speaker. This is representative of the difference between country and person focused respectively; you and me for the benefit of the country, versus me and the country for the benefit of you. This is reflective of the meaning of “you” and “I” in the context of this statement; I went into my analysis under the impression that this word use was person-focused, but the analysis of understanding that “you” and “I” are the working players for the overall benefit of the country is a new take on the syntax that reflects the usage of these words as country-focused.

Later in his address, Carter calls for the defense of human rights as a responsibility that is undeniably American. He once again makes a huge ask for selflessness and compassion for the benefit of the country in a time when many individual American households are struggling; this was perhaps a poor analysis of the needs of the country in this time. With the American voters themselves suffering at home, calling for empathy overseas and country-focused strength might not hold a salient impact on voters.

Finally, Jimmy Carter makes a significant country-focused statement in his piece through his repetition of “I want”; a direct contrast from an “I will” statement that might indicate a person-focused approach. Carter is careful with his statements that he does not make any promises, only puts himself in the same shoes as the voting populous. This analysis leaves the audience with an air of understanding that the public and the president are hoping for a result together; a stark contrast from the person-focused approach the public needed in which they would feel taken care of by their sitting president and not asked to make personal sacrifices for the good of the country.

V.IV. Ronald Reagan: Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the 1980 Republican National Convention in Detroit

Ronald Reagan begins his address accepting his nomination at the Republican National Convention with a misleadingly country-focused statement. He speaks of unification and renewal, and alludes to his goals for the country throughout his candidacy. However, he proceeds to list “three grave threats to our existence”, in which he takes a significant divergence from his rival Jimmy Carter through omitting the hostage crisis as one of these three grave threats. He lists person-focused concerns, focusing his hard-hitting policy changes on the status of the weakened economy, a person-focused endeavor.

Reagan then begins to appeal to the selfish tendencies of the American voters, and their person-focused desire to be taken care of by the government. Reagan appeals to the public’s desire for the government to take responsibility for their unique individual struggles, and accurately analyzes the timely need for a person-focused campaign to appeal to the public. Due to the nature of the hostage crisis, the international affair was not sufficiently impactful to individual American households for a country-focused strategy to be successful.

Reagan's address highlights the telltale key to a person-focused address: the absence of a call to action. Reagan absolves his audience of responsibility for the call to action highlighted in Carter's campaign, stating that "we do not have inflation because—as Mr. Carter says—we have lived too well". Jimmy Carter makes a country-focused appeal to the collective action of the people for the benefit of the national economy; Reagan counters this by asserting that the state of the economy is not an issue of the people, but rather an undertaking the government is responsible for completing. The absence of a call to action in Reagan's address appeals to the audience in a situation like the Iran hostage crisis, when the foreign violence is not directly affecting the quality of life of most voters and voters are thus more attuned to personal prosperity than to national progress.

Reminiscent of Vavreck's argument regarding a candidate's stance on economy in *The Message Matters*, the Reagan challenging candidate has the luxury of being able to offer a person-focused campaign. While Carter is forced into a country-focused rhetoric due to the responsibilities he must fulfill as the sitting president, Reagan is able to implement a proactive strategy to target the wavering national confidence of the voters. The incumbent has the unavoidable responsibility of addressing a national crisis at whatever expense to their own campaign. Jimmy Carter was pigeonholed into a country-focused strategy with his publicized efforts in response to the Iran hostage crisis, setting the stage for Reagan to emerge as his person-focused challenger.

Reagan's next powerful statement in his address is appealing to the ego of the audience; he states that the American people, "the most generous on earth [...] are not going to accept the notion that we can only make a better world for others by moving backwards ourselves". Reagan counteracts Jimmy Carter's country-person approach appealing to national unity by framing his

effort at global peace as an effort that will be undertaken at the expense of the wellbeing of the individual American citizens. Ronald Reagan displays national pride, but ultimately displays a person-first mentality; he states the importance of prioritizing the comfort and safety of the citizens at home, not asking them to put their comfort on a limb for the sake of overall national progress.

Through his reframing and argument of Jimmy Carter's candidacy platform, Reagan also addresses Carter's explanation of inflation as the result of the lifestyle of the general public. Reagan empathizes with the American people, and declares that it is unjust of the sitting president to blame the economic state of the nation on the actions of the people. He rejects the notion that the state of the economy is the fault of the people, and takes a highly person-focused approach in reframing a national issue to appeal to the desire of the American people to be taken care of by their government. His take on the economy is highly individual focused, assuring the American public that the excessive inflation is not your fault, the government will take care of it, it's our responsibility. While Jimmy Carter calls for national strength and unity in what he frames as a trying time for America as a whole, Ronald Reagan embarks on a person-focused approach and appeals to the individualistic desire of the American people to be taken care of; Reagan offers the public an alternative to stepping up for the sake of the country, and the voters are happy to oblige.

Reagan is successful in his person-focused approach because there is no call to duty or obligation to the country, to other citizens, nor to the government; the speech is designed to target the individual listener's needs. Reagan's campaign is playing into the selfishness of the voters and campaigning towards how his time in office if elected would affect that voter individually. Not how it would affect the neighborhood, community, or country, but how it would

affect *you*. This analysis of the country's need for a person-focused approach led to Reagan's successful campaign.

V.V. Hubert Humphrey: Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago

Finally, I will analyze Hubert Humphrey's acceptance of the candidacy at the Democratic National Convention as an example of a candidate who was unable to evaluate the rhetoric with which the nation would resonate in his speech. He did not choose a direct person-focused or country-focused agenda, and therefore was unable to resonate with his audience through either avenue. While he ran a campaign that was able to come extremely close to Nixon in both the electoral and popular votes, his ability to resonate with the voters through his public speaking in regard to foreign affairs was not as effective as his opponent.

In Hubert Humphrey's August 1968 speech accepting his nomination to represent the Democratic party in the coming presidential election, he addresses the state of the union and the recent violence. He takes time to quote the viewpoints of presidents prior, most prominently John F Kennedy's renowned statement: "ask not what your country can do for you, but what can you do for your country". He later directly addresses the war in Vietnam; he said he would do what he could for a quick end to the war, and initiates a call to action for the American public. He then addresses the need for "law and order" in response to the protests of the public, and concludes with the following call to action: "I call you to risk the hard path of greatness". This speech takes a significant country-focused tone as the continuous call to action for the audience is emphasized throughout.

Humphrey begins his speech accepting the party nomination by immediately placing himself on the same level as his audience, beginning his speech with "my fellow Americans, my

fellow Democrats”. Humphrey wants his audience to see him as more similar than different, to see themselves in the audience and the candidate they support as one entity fighting for a common cause. This falls under the country-focused framework, as the predefined “me and you for the benefit of the country”. Attempting to lower himself to the level of his constituents is not a defiant display of strength from Humphrey. The American people need a show of strength during a war; whether that be the strength of the country or the strength of their leader, they need one or the other to inspire confidence in their country’s ability to emerge from the war.

While Humphrey’s public speaking in part displays significant country-focused tones, this sense of national unity and grit he hopes to portray is undercut by the counteractive person-focused appeals in his address. He asks the audience to pray with him for the state of the country; he tries to create a sense of community, but fails through lack of direction and lack of confidence instilled about the status of the war, so he is forced to redirect to religion. The ask for prayer does not invoke confidence in the country, nor in the candidate’s ability to take care of the status of the public should he be elected president.

Hubert Humphrey speaks of a “search for peace”, which is a passive word choice that does nothing to further the status of his campaign. He does not instill any measure of national pride in the ability of America as a whole to achieve this peace, nor does he make any promises as an executive to take care of it for the general public. Humphrey speaks in favor of union in the country, but places the responsibility for this unity at the feet of his audience. He makes no clear statement of what we will do to improve the country or the conditions of the individual, and therefore fails to make a significant impact from a country-focused nor a person-focused approach.

VI. Discoveries

My thesis paper at its genesis was authored with the intention of articulating my hypotheses for how a presidential candidate can sway their audience in a time of violent foreign crisis through their speeches. I categorized each candidate as either a “person-focused” or a “country-focused” case study, and dove into a rhetorical analysis of each candidate’s address accepting their nomination at their respective party conventions. I used this rhetorical analysis to determine if I had been accurate in my characterizations of the candidates I used as case studies, as well as to display how each of my theories is implemented in practicality. I created this project to determine if a person-focused or country-focused campaign would be ultimately more successful, but ultimately hypothesized that each could be equally successful if it was an accurate analysis of the needs of the country at that point in time. At the culmination of my rhetorical analysis I was able to confirm my initial definitions of each of my three theories, categorize the prose of each candidate’s campaign based on these definitions, and explain why one theory was successful in one election year and not the other.

In my “theory and hypothesis” chapter, I outlined three hypotheses for how a candidate can structure a successful campaign in a period of foreign crisis. I described how I understood each of the theories to characterize themselves through the prose of a presidential candidate’s address accepting their party nomination, as well as what type of foreign crisis would yield success from that specific hypothesis. After performing a rhetorical analysis on the prose demonstrated in the addresses accepting the party nomination for each respective candidate, I developed a working set of criteria for using the public speeches of a political figure to characterize them as a specific theory as outlined by my hypotheses.

In my first hypothesis, I declared that presidential candidates running their campaign in the midst of foreign crises could connect with their audience through using a country-focused approach. This strategy is effective when a foreign crisis directly impacts a large number of American households. After analyzing the speech rhetoric of the candidates in my case studies, I was able to characterize the country-focused approach further than I had defined in my hypothesis.

In the speeches of Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter I observed the call to action, ask for selflessness, and an affinity for national pride that is consistent with what I attributed to a country-focused approach. In addition, I observed that the country-focused approach lacks definitive “you” statements in their rhetoric. The country-focused approach does not make a promise to each individual, but rather a promise for national progress that everyone will benefit from in their own way. Rather than descriptive statements highlighting how the candidate’s presidency would affect the individual, the rhetoric of speaking directly to the audience is sidestepped and replaced with a more collective address. A country-focused candidate is not in the business of appealing to progress for the individual, and thus this approach lacks any major “you” statements that describe what the audience stands to gain from the candidate. The use of “you” and “I” in the speech rhetoric also characterizes differently than I had anticipated; after analyzing my case studies I came to understand that “you” and “I” serve as working players acting for the overall benefit of the country. This spin on syntax reframes the usage of these words as country-focused, as it reflects the ideology that the presidency and the people are working together for the benefit of the country.

A piece of syntax that was consistent between both of my country-focused case studies was short, commanding sentences that were blunt and straightforward. Nixon and Carter both

omitted the frills and eloquence of speech that was reflected by Reagan and the person-focused strategy, but the country-focused candidates conveyed strength and assertiveness. I discovered that the candidate employing a country-focused was more likely to try to relate themselves to the audience, highlighting their similarities like their political party and status as Americans. This is done in an effort to win the trust of the audience through familiarity, and make an ask for selflessness or a call to action feel more personal because the voters feel a more personal connection with the presidency.

In my second hypothesis, I theorized that a person-focused approach can be successful in an election concurrent with foreign crisis when they are able to effectively make each individual voter feel as though they will be taken care of by the candidate's presidency. This strategy has a higher rate of success when a foreign crisis is directly affecting very few Americans. After reading the speech rhetoric of the person-focused approach applied by Reagan, I had an understanding of the person-focused approach with further depth than was reflected in my hypothesis.

In my "theory and hypothesis" section of this thesis I represent the person-focused method of campaign strategy as having an absence of a call to action, an appeal to the selfishness of the voters, and the empathetic approach to how the political climate affects the household. The person-focused strategy absolves the audience of any guilt or responsibility for the ongoings of the political environment. Reagan argued that the economy was not in shambles because the people had "lived too well", and advocated for the right to return to economic prosperity. This was a comforting desire the American public couldn't refuse, as Reagan offered a solution to their plights.

I came to understand this strategy to be characterized by long, eloquent syntax. This was employed by Ronald Reagan and Hubert Humphrey, who frequently used beautiful and poetic language, while Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter were far more traditional with their speech. While the country-focused rhetoric emerged as assertive and commanding, I observed the person-focused theory to foster a conversational method of public speaking. The objective of this rhetoric is to mimic a personal connection between the candidate and their audience, and feign the belief that each voter's individual prosperity is the priority of the candidate.

I found the person-focused rhetoric to portray comfort, security, and unilateral government action in response to national crises; this is juxtaposed with the country-focused tendency to hold individuals as well as the government accountable for fostering progress within the nation. Ronald Reagan appeals to his voters by absolving them of responsibility for the state of the nation, and holding the presidency and the government accountable for the decreasing livelihood of the average citizen. By contrast, the country-focused theory employs the rhetoric of appealing for a national effort between the people and the president to address the state of the nation. The person-focused campaign takes much greater institutional responsibility for the wellbeing of the individual, which is why it resonated so strongly with the voters in the case of the 1980 election concurrent with the Iran hostage crisis.

In my third hypothesis, I asserted that the success of a campaign focusing on foreign conflict relies on how well the campaign judges if the voting public needs a person-focused or a country-focused approach. I hypothesized that the country-focused or the person-focused approach could each be successful if implemented in an election year where the status of foreign affairs is best suited. Richard Nixon ran a successful country-focused campaign in 1968 because Americans needed a response emphasizing national progress to the war in Vietnam; Jimmy

Carter ran an unsuccessful country-focused campaign in 1980 because the voting public was poised to better respond to a person-focused campaign like Ronald Reagan implemented in response to the Iran hostage crisis.

In the 1968 election, the Vietnam War was a salient national issue the effects of which were being felt in nearly every American home. Between the draft and economic downturn, most American households wanted the war to end for their own sake. In this case, a country-focused campaign like the one implemented successfully by Richard Nixon was a correct analysis of the needs of the country because Americans wanted to see a national progressive trend and wanted to take significant steps forward as a nation. This is potentially misleading because the nature of a crisis affecting every individual household may indicate a person-focused approach; however, if the crisis has permeated itself sufficiently into the lives of most Americans, an approach that conveys understanding of the levity and widespread nature of the crisis and looks to address the systemic cause will appeal more strongly to the voters than a candidate pledging to look at each individual case without solving the issue as a whole.

Hubert Humphrey, while employing certain pieces of each respective strategy, did not reflect a strong person-focused or country-focused approach as I had hypothesized. He implements the call to action that is indicative of a country focused response, but fails to instill national pride. He fails in a way similar to Jimmy Carter's inability to successfully appeal to the selflessness of the audience, in which Humphrey is unable to build up sufficient national pride to support his call to action. He then supplements this with person-focused rhetoric, in redirecting to idealistic portrayals of the state of the nation.

In the 1980 election the Iran hostage crisis was a hot topic in international affairs, and an issue for which the incumbent president Jimmy Carter took an affinity. This hostage crisis, while

a national issue that gripped the attention of the nation, was not a sufficiently salient issue within each individual American household to be able to produce a successful country-focused campaign. Thus, while Jimmy Carter ran a campaign based on an ask for selflessness and a drive to see the hostages free, the issue that Americans voted with on the forefront of their minds was the status of the economy and the promise of challenger Ronald Reagan to transform America's fiscal status. If the issue has been more disruptive to the lives and routines of the voting populus, the American voters would be much more likely to add the status of the hostages overseas into their voting calculus. However, due to the status of foreign affairs lacking salience in individual homes, a country-focused strategy characterized by an ask for selflessness was not a successful strategy for Jimmy Carter in 1980.

Ronald Reagan, by contrast, was able to appeal to the individual plights of each American voter while the incumbent president was bogged down by the national state of affairs. While performing my analysis I concluded that it would be more likely for a challenging candidate to emerge as using a person-focused strategy than an incumbent, as a challenger has a lot more freedom with how they can run their campaign and portray their take on policy. While an incumbent must battle their reputation in office as well as deal with public prompts from their position, the challenger can exploit the forced country-focused characteristics of their opponent and take advantage of a person-focused contrasting campaign. A person-focused strategy is more effective when the national crisis concurring with the elections is not a salient factor changing the lives of individual American households. In this case a foreign crisis is not as critical to the livelihood of the voters, and they are therefore less likely to respond to a call to action or ask for selflessness that they do not see themselves reaping personal benefits from. This leaves the audience better suited for a person-focused approach, in which they are led to feel as though the

issues that actually are plaguing their individual households are the ones being addressed by the presidency.

VII. Conclusion

This thesis began with the question:

What campaign strategies in elections concurrent with foreign violence allow a candidate to connect with their audience through the rhetoric of a public address, and how was this demonstrated in 1968 and 1980 respectively?

I hypothesized an answer to this question that came in three parts: two different strategies for a presidential campaign coinciding with a period of intense international relations, and a third hypothesis underlining that both strategies could be equally effective if implemented in the correct political environment. I chose case studies in the elections of 1968 and 1980, and utilized a rhetorical analysis of the addresses accepting the party nomination of either candidate in each election to characterize them according to the theories I had developed in my hypothesis.

I took inspiration from scholar Lynn Vavreck in her characterization of presidential candidates as representing one of two theories for the backbone of their campaign, and the idea that either strategy could yield a successful candidate depending on the political climate of the given election year. I implemented this into my design, choosing two different theories by which I based my analysis and characterized the speech patterns of my candidates. I then compared these different theories to the political environment in which they were used, and decided that both could be successful if they were calculated in response to the specific international affair concurring with the election.

I used my analysis to categorize each of the candidates from my case study, showing Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter to run country-focused campaigns, Ronald Reagan to run a person-focused campaign, and Hubert Humphrey's strategy to be unable to consistently represent one theory or the other. This analysis also yielded the conclusion that a country-focused campaign was more successful in Vietnam, and a person-focused campaign was more effective in response to the Iran hostage crisis.

Thus, throughout this thesis, I have utilized the three theories I developed in response to a presidential campaign running amidst a period of foreign crisis to answer my research question: A presidential candidate running concurrent with foreign violence can connect with their audience through the rhetoric of a public address through implementing either a country-focused or a person-focused approach. A country-focused approach was demonstrated in 1968 through Richard Nixon's prose highlighting national pride and unity in a surge for the end of the Vietnam War, and was successful because the international conflict was sufficiently salient to each individual American household.

A person-focused approach was demonstrated in 1980, when Ronald Reagan was able to connect with the individual needs of the voting populus and make each individual voter feel cared for. This approach was successful in 1980 as opposed to the country-focused rhetoric displayed by Jimmy Carter because a person-focused campaign appealed to the desire of the voters to be absolved from responsibility for the state of the economy. While Carter made a country-focused ask for selflessness, Reagan was able to offer a person-focused avoidance of responsibility for the state of the nation, which was much more appealing in the wake of an international affair that was not sufficiently salient to each individual household.

The discoveries highlighted at the denouement of this thesis hold future implications for the development of America's political environment in response to the overseas violence between Russia and Ukraine. As the beginning of the presidential election of 2024 looms closer, we must assess the state of the nation and ask what we want from our next presidential candidate in regard to the state of foreign affairs. I hope to have designed a method of observation of the public addresses given by presidential candidates and a basis upon which to categorize their approach to the status of international relations.

If President Biden is to run for president again in 2024, he will likely find himself in a Jimmy Carter-esque situation in which he is pigeonholed into a country-focused strategy because of the precedent he has set by his time dealing with the crisis in office. This leaves the opportunity for a challenger to emerge as a person-focused candidate; a candidate who is able to appeal to the American voters through a promise to improve their livelihood in the wake of an international crisis that is not sufficiently salient to individual American households.

Addresses to the public are one of the most primary avenues of communication between a presidential candidate and the voting populous. A rhetorical analysis of a candidate's spoken word serves to yield insight into the theory by which a candidate runs their campaign, and this can be implemented to understand how a presidential campaign is implementing a response to an international crisis.

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