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Presidential Prediction: The Strategic Construction and Influence of Expectation Frames

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Presidential Prediction: The Strategic Construction and Influence of Expectation Frames

by

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Dedication

For the future presidents who will make the "he's" in this research obsolete.

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Presidential Prediction: The Strategic Construction and Influence of Expectation Frames

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Serving as the national soothsayer for citizens and political elites alike, the President of the United States looks to and predicts the future. When presidents try to gain influence today, they predict tomorrow. Expectations, or future-oriented statements made by the president, are a prominent attribute of presidential communication. This dissertation engages "future talk" by examining how presidents construct expectation frames as well as how the public reacts to presidential discussions about the future. I answer two main questions in this research. First, how often and under what circumstances do presidents construct expectations? Second, how do expectations affect the citizens who encounter them?

I employed a multi-methodological approach to analyze the content and effects of expectation frames. First, I content analyzed a sample of State of the Union addresses and signing statements from the presidencies of Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, as well as a sample of tweets from the White House Twitter feed in the Obama administration. The analytic approach captured patterns of expectation emphasis and de-emphasis within a communication as well as accounted for variation across presidential communications due to external political and communicative factors. Second, I

conducted a between-subjects experiment to test the effects of expectation frames on individuals. I examined how the type of expectation frame influences perceptions about the future and the president.

This research uncovers that presidents strategically construct expectations and can influence how individuals think about the future. Presidents engage in deliberate actions to target the settings where expectations are framed, the agents responsible for the future, and the policies associated with tomorrow. In turn, citizens attend to how presidents frame the future and are influenced as a result of encountering future frames.

The results of this dissertation illuminate critical facets of presidential communicative leadership of public opinion as well as elite influence within government. The president's prominence in American life should force our attention to how the chief executive divines and shapes the future for citizens and intergovernmental agents.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The smoke was still rising on September 14, 2001. Climbing atop the bent steel that was the World Trade Center, President George W. Bush grabbed a bullhorn. He bellowed to the crowd of rescue and recovery workers, "I can hear you! I can hear you! The rest of the world hears you! And the people – and the people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon!" (2001, September 14). Bush's prescient statement echoed through the next eight years of wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, enhanced interrogation practices, and executive orders and signing statements. In the rearview mirror of history, George W. Bush set an important expectation of what was to come following the September 11th terrorist attacks.

Serving as the national soothsayer for citizens and political elites alike, the President of the United States looks to and predicts the future. But presidents do not just make predictions in moments of crisis, as George W. Bush did from the remains of the World Trade Center. During the congressional debate over the Patient Protection and Affordable Care legislation, Barack Obama encouraged a public audience to envision a future where "If you like your plan, you can keep your plan. If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor" (2010, March 3). Whether during calm or troubled moments, citizens encounter these future-based exhortations from each occupant of the Oval Office.

Citizens are awash in talk of presidential expectations on a daily basis. A Google search for "Obama expectations" returns 65 million hits. News media personnel guess whether presidential statements and actions raise or lower public expectations. Presidents, themselves, mention expectations. George W. Bush talked of "the soft bigotry of low expectations" to advocate for his education reforms (2004, August 21). Barack Obama described how his education policies "helped raise expectations and performance" (2014,

January 28). Presidents use words other than "expectations" to summon the future – "you *can* keep" or "*will* hear all of us" include future-oriented language as well. In sum, citizens are no strangers to a message environment infused with future talk from the president.

But why might presidents engage in future talk? One answer is deceptively simple: Influence. When presidents try to gain influence today, they predict tomorrow. George W. Bush framed himself as *the* dominant leader in national and international affairs from the smoldering ruins of the World Trade Center. He described a certain future where the evildoers would "hear all of us." Barack Obama had to instill confidence in the future of healthcare and by default his domestic policy agenda in the final days of an acrimonious congressional healthcare debate. Obama positioned himself as a central actor in present and future national conversations about healthcare. Two different circumstances with one goal: constructing presidential influence over events that had yet to transpire.

Despite presidential use of future talk, chief executives often are overlooked as a *source* of individuals' beliefs about the future of politics and government. Instead, citizens' beliefs are the primary focus. Think the president should act like a paternal hero? Believe that the president will lower gas prices? Citizens are tagged by scholars as having lofty and unattainable beliefs about the future, including how the president should perform his job duties (Jenkins-Smith, Silva, & Waterman, 2005; Kinder, Peters, Abelson, & Fiske, 1980; Medvic, 2013; Simon, 2009). Cronin (1977) explains, "Our expectations of, and demands on, the office are frequently so paradoxical as to invite two-faced behavior by our presidents" (p. 69). It is "our" (citizens') beliefs that lead presidents to act in a particular manner. The president's role in constructing and instilling these future-based perceptions is inconspicuously downplayed.

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The lack of attention to the president's contribution to future-based perceptions is surprising. The President of the United States is *the* personification of the federal government (Hart, Jarvis, Jennings, & Smith-Howell, 2005) and a central figure in national politics. In many regards, the president is the ultimate opinion leader for media personnel and citizens. News media elites often privilege the opinions of official sources, like the president and members of his administration in news accounts (Bennett, 1990; Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2007; Cook, 2005). A majority of the political coverage on network television news, for example, is devoted to the president and members of the executive branch (Farnsworth & Lichter, 2006). Although news coverage of the president is often negative (Farnsworth & Lichter, 2006; Groeling & Kernell, 1998), coverage nonetheless paints the picture of a president-centered government (Cook, 2005). If journalists are covering a political voice, it is likely to be the president's.

The president is an important figure for citizens as well. From a young age, individuals are socialized to view the president as an authority figure (Easton & Dennis, 1973; Lane & Sears, 1964). School textbooks (Hart et al., 2005), family and social network discussions (Valentino & Sears, 1998), and frequent political campaigns (Bartels, 1988; Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960) familiarize citizens with images, actions, promises, and words of the president or those seeking the office. As individuals age, they develop specific beliefs about how the president should perform the duties of his office. According to Jenkins-Smith et al. (2005), citizens look to the White House first for leadership as well as for solutions to economic and international problems (see in addition Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954; Herzik & Dodson, 1982; Kinder et al., 1980). Individuals expect presidents to have integrity, charisma, goodwill, intelligence, and flexibility (Buchanan, 1987; Kinder et al., 1980). Citizens have strong opinions about what the American president should do and how he should act.

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The centrality of presidents to American culture and politics makes chief executives' role in constructing future-based perceptions worthy of study. Presidential communication has become synonymous with governance (Hart, 1987), serving to gain press and public attention (Jacobs, 2010). Although presidents are not always successful at using communication to move public opinion or the press agenda (Edwards, 2003; Eshbaugh-Soha & Peake, 2011), at times they can shape the criteria that individuals use to evaluate particular policies and performance (Druckman & Holmes, 2004; Miller & Krosnick, 1996; 2000). Regardless of the ultimate effect of presidential discourse, presidents devote considerable institutional and personal attention to public communications. For example, the executive branch has institutionalized presidential public relations to engage in strategic communications outreach (Kumar, 2007). As a prominent part of the modern presidency, presidential communications are an appropriate venue for investigating the construction of expectations.

This dissertation engages "future talk" by examining how presidents construct expectations in their communications as well as how the public reacts to presidential discussions about the future. I seek to answer how and when presidents talk about the future and how citizens may be influenced. This research sheds light on the boundaries of presidential communicative influence and the extent to which citizens respond to the visions presidents try to make dance in their heads. To accomplish this task and to ensure a clear understanding of the topic I analyze, the next section provides a definition of expectations and describes how expectations relate to research on presidential communication.

CONCEPTUALIZING EXPECTATIONS

A hallmark of human cognition is the ability to make predictions. To reduce uncertainty about the future, people construct beliefs about what will occur. Students make predictions about the grades that they will receive (Ogburn, 1934). Citizens make predictions about the likelihood that a nation will go to war (Granberg, 1969). Voters make predictions about which candidate will win a debate or an election (Bartels, 1988; Granberg & Brent, 1983; Granberg & Nanneman, 1986; Rothschild & Wolfers, 2013). And citizens make predictions about the future actions of the president (Simon, 2009).

Presidents seek to manage the uncertainty of tomorrow by constructing expectations in their communication. In this research, I define expectations as *future-oriented statements made by the president*. Although political expectations can be communicated by any number of political actors, including journalists and members of the public, I focus on the president given his important democratic role. Labeling expectations as *statements* reflects my approach of seeing the topic as a communicative process, a process which has the potential to affect citizens' beliefs about the future and the president. These statements are *future-oriented* in the sense that they encapsulate actions that have yet to occur, whether performed by the president or other agents in the political process.

By defining expectations as a communicative process, I diverge from past research that has a more attitudinal, citizen-based focus. In many instances, previous researchers have adopted an implicit argument that people recognize expectations when they encounter them; an approach which has left this field of study with "no identifiable research agenda for the future" (Simon, 2009, p. 135). Past research defines presidential expectations as "both probabilistic and evaluational" judgments which "might express what the President should do [evaluational], as well as what he is likely to do

[probabilistic]" (Seligman & Baer, 1969, p. 27). More recent research has categorized different types of expectations rather than offering a single definition. Ostrom and Simon (1985) argue that expectations can be about the institutional presidency and/or individual presidents. For example, although each president is expected to submit a budget to Congress (institutional), he also publicly commits to specific budget appropriations (individual). In his categorization of the existing literature, Simon (2009) explains that studies can be grouped by their focus on action- or image-based expectations. Simon's dichotomy builds on research arguing that presidents are expected to be knowledgeable (image) and to manage the domestic economy (action; see also Kinder et al., 1980). Although this prior research informs my project on expectations, I take a different approach. Rather than focusing on the contours of citizens' attitudes about future presidential behavior, I instead focus on a source of individuals' beliefs about the future – namely expectations communicated by the president. I illustrate in the process how presidents can attempt to exercise influence by constructing expectations.

EXPECTATIONS AS INFLUENCE

Contrary to citizens' beliefs that the president is influential, presidents often struggle to exercise influence. Cook (2005) explains that this struggle for influence reflects the visibility of and beliefs about the president compared to his actual constitutional powers. Presidents often have difficulty working with Congress (Kernell, 2007; Neustadt, 1990), attracting audiences for national public addresses (Baum & Kernell, 1999; 2007), and managing the press (Edwards, 2003; Groeling, 2010). Moreover, presidents must navigate the tensions and contradictions of being both a ceremonial and political leader (Medvic, 2013; Simon, 2009). Future talk may represent

an important means by which the president attempts to exercise influence with the public and other political agents.

Presidents can help to manage tomorrow's uncertainty. Herein lies an opening for influence. Edelman (1985) posits that political discussions of the future represent an underlying strategy "to win support for the governmental actions portrayed as the avenues to a brighter future" (p. 206). The future represents a vast, unclaimed territory. Presidents can exercise their influence by being the first to communicatively stake a claim and define the terms on which the future will be viewed, discussed, and debated. As Goffman (1974) explains, the first to frame reality sets the message. If presidents do not frame the future, it will be framed for (or against) them. This research explores how presidents can use future talk to make the future more amenable to their interests and to structure the thinking of individuals.

First, presidents may seek to make the future more amenable to their interests. One way in which presidents may project and protect their influence is through strategic expectation construction. By communicating particular types of expectations depending on factors such as whether the government is divided or unified and their popularity, presidents may exhibit a specific calculus in how they engage in future talk. For example, does divided government make presidents' communication more certain about the future? The types of expectations used may answer this question. If chief executives associate domestic issues with one type of future and foreign issues with another type, this behavior might illustrate how presidents view their policy influence. Presidents have opportunities to make these types of strategic decisions about future talk. The extent to which chief executives use future talk in a strategic manner is explored in this project by analyzing how expectations use varies.

Second, expectations may structure how individuals think about the future and the president. In their foundational study of public opinion, Lane and Sears (1964) observe that politicians seek "cognitive reorganization as will suit [their] ends" in the minds of citizens (p. 56). Presidents may construct expectations in order to influence how individuals perceive future policies and presidential actions. Do individuals think the president is more or less certain about a policy after encountering a particular type of expectation? Moreover, might citizens evaluate the president's job performance positively or negatively based on the expectation constructed? If presidents can indeed alter citizens' beliefs, the change would illustrate the influence that presidents can exercise in structuring individuals' thinking – a critical part of presidential leadership of public opinion.

Should presidents seek influence by framing the future in particular ways, citizens should know it. A representative democracy is predicated on citizens having relevant information to make informed choices and understand their interests (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996). Knowing the governing behavior of the President of the United States, including how he communicates, would serve to assist individuals in monitoring how the future is framed and changed to suit particular ends. Schudson (1998) argues that citizens should monitor the political environment for important shifts in policies or events. Unearthing when the president uses "will" versus "can" to describe the future may seem like a small change. Yet, this change could reflect the dynamics of a particular presidential strategy as well as influence how individuals think about the future. By coming to understand this behavior, citizens may better know their presidents.

If presidents are using expectations as a means to project and protect their influence, scholars do not know it. Systematic research on promises has focused mainly on political campaigns (Fishel, 1985; Hart et al., 2005), a different context from the

challenges presidents face in office. Presidential candidates do not need to deal with the realities of separation of powers and changing national circumstances when communicating promises; presidents do. Presidential candidates want to win an election; presidents seek to win reelection and shape their legacy (Buchanan, 2013). These factors make governing expectations different from campaign promises. Moreover, many scholars have remarked about, but have not empirically tested, the role that presidents may play in constructing future visions in their communications (Barger, 1984; Edwards, 1983; Hart, 1984a; 1984b; 1987; 2008; Hinckley, 1985; Neustadt, 1990; Ostrom & Simon, 1985). From theoretical and research perspectives, more ground needs to be covered to understand how expectations are constructed during presidential administrations.

Investigating presidential expectations can offer insights to the field of political communication. The role of elites in political life historically has been a prominent line of research for communication and political scholars. Foundational literature emphasizes how the President of the United States uses communication to sustain institutions of government (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008) as well as to enact a leadership role (Hart, 1987). The content of presidential communication continues to inspire research (Coe & Neumann, 2011; Neumann & Coe, 2011). Public opinion research focuses on how elites, particularly the president, can shape public attitudes (Druckman & Holmes, 2004; Edwards, 2003; Eshbaugh-Soha & Peake, 2011; Lane & Sears, 1964; Zaller, 1992). My research is situated in this tradition and illuminates critical facets of elite communicative leadership of public opinion as well as influence within government. The president's prominence in American life should force our attention to how the chief executive divines and shapes the future.

PLAN OF THE DISSERTATION

There are two main questions that guide this research project. First, *how often* and *under what circumstances* do presidents construct expectations? Second, how do expectations *affect* the citizens who encounter them?

Chapter 2 reviews the theoretical underpinnings of expectations, including the content and effects of future-oriented communications. The chapter situates expectations as a type of causal attribution frame. By re-orienting causal framing approaches to include future-based attributions, I theorize about how expectations construct agency associated with the future. As constructed in presidential communication, expectation frames may vary based on communicative and political factors. As an attribute of presidential communications, expectation frames may lead citizens to think differently about the future and the president. I review each of these possibilities in turn.

Chapter 3 details the multi-methodological approach I use to analyze the content and effects of expectation frames. I first discuss the details of a content analysis of presidential communications from the administrations of Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama. I focus on how my analytic approach captures patterns of expectation emphasis and de-emphasis within a communication as well as accounts for variation across presidential communications due to external political and communicative factors, like time in administration and divided government. I then move to detail the experimental design that I employ to test the effects of expectation frames on individuals. I change presidential speech vignettes to correspond to the three most prominent expectations ("will," "shall," and "can") in order to test whether the type of future frame influences perceptions about the future and the president.

Chapter 4 reveals the results of the content analysis of presidential communications across three administrations. By focusing on the presence and variation

of expectation frames, I investigate whether the construction of future frames reflects an underlying presidential strategy. I examine how presidents construct causal agents and policies alongside particular types of expectations, as well as whether expectations vary by political factors like divided government and presidential approval. The findings show that expectation framing involves some strategy on the part of presidents; these frames seem to be an important means by which chief executives attempt to communicatively project and protect their influence.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of an experiment testing the effects of expectation frames on individuals' beliefs about the future and the president. I focus on how the type of expectation ("will," "shall," or "can") can change perceptions of certainty about future policies, perceptions of the president's control over particular policies, perceptions of presidential traits including optimism, and attitudes about the president's job performance. Results show that the type of expectation frame does affect attitudes and beliefs, which illustrates how chief executives can exercise communicative influence by structuring individuals' thinking about the future and the president. This communicative influence is an important component of presidential leadership.

Chapter 6 concludes this project by placing the results in the context of the president's drive for influence in the American political system. I present the rewards and risks facing presidents when they engage in future framing. Moreover, I question the long-term implications for citizens who encounter future frames.

As these introductory remarks reveal, citizens and scholars have much to learn about how presidents engage in future talk. Awash in the language of tomorrow, we are surprisingly blind to *when* presidents invoke the future and *how* it may influence citizens. The answers to these questions will reveal much about the governing behavior of the American chief executive and the potentially real consequences for citizens.

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Chapter 2: Theoretical Underpinnings of Expectations

Expectations in presidential discourse act much like a controlled burn. Future visions are designed to "ignite" the fires of change and hope in an audience, according to former President Bill Clinton's political strategist Paul Begala (personal communication, September 22, 2013). Yet at the same time, presidents also attempt to extinguish flames that could get out of control. President Ronald Reagan, for instance, delivered an address to the nation on the Strategic Defense Initiative where he managed expectations of a nuclear weapons defense system: "It will take years, probably decades of effort on many fronts. There will be failures and setbacks, just as there will be successes and breakthroughs" (as quoted in Schlesinger, 2008, p. 332). Following this speech, Reagan echoed the tenor of his public expectations by remarking in his diary that "I made no optimistic forecasts – said it might take 20 yrs. or more but we had to do it" (p. 332). The tension to stoke future visions while simultaneously tempering them is apparent from Reagan's reflection. The 40th president reveals the calculus he used when framing the future.

Accounts like President Reagan's have been left largely unexamined. Although Reagan's story exists as anecdotal fodder in Schlesinger's presidential speechwriting book, Reagan's experience unearths deeper questions about the strategy behind discussing the future. Presidents may strategically frame expectations in a manner that enhances their executive influence. *How often* and *under what circumstances* do presidents construct expectations? Moreover, the strategic communication of expectations may influence how individuals think about future policy actions. How do expectations *affect* the citizens who encounter them? If presidents are calculated, citizens

and scholars have yet to understand it – a glaring blind spot in our conception of presidential influence.

President Reagan's approach to expectations illustrates why researchers should understand the content and effects of future talk. From a content perspective, Reagan used "will" several times. Why did he choose to describe the future in this manner, as opposed to saying that Americans "can" or "should" enact the defense system? Could political factors have shaped his statement? Perhaps his approval rating or the presence of a Democratic majority in the House of Representatives may have influenced Reagan's choice of words. Unfortunately, these questions have not been explored, leaving unknown a potentially prominent strategy in presidential communication. In an interview conducted as part of this research, Paul Begala explained that presidents "think about these things [expectations]" (personal communication, September 22, 2013). As one political actor among many in a democratic system, the president must actively shape communicative frames that will compete with the frames put forward by other actors (Chong & Druckman, 2007a; 2007b). Examining how presidents frame the future will illuminate how chief executives attempt to shape the narratives of their governance and leadership.

In addition to probing presidential use of expectations, this dissertation asks: How do citizens react to communicated expectations? Paul Begala argues that expectations are designed to spark "urgency and possibility" among members of the public (personal communication, September 22, 2013). Although Begala's account suggests that expectations have an effect, his claim has not been systematically tested. Researchers know that communicative frames structure modes of thinking by selecting, emphasizing, and deflecting aspects of reality (Carragee & Roefs, 2004; de Vreese, 2005; Entman, 1993; Lawrence, 2000; Scheufele, 1999). If individuals attend to how the future is framed

and change their thinking as a result, the president will have exercised considerable influence in structuring citizens' beliefs about future actions. Additionally, citizens may render judgment on the president's job performance based on how he discusses the future. Scholars to this point have focused on how individuals' beliefs are affected when presidents meet or fail to meet expectations (Bucy, 2000; Bucy & Newhagen, 1999; Sigelman & Knight, 1983; 1985; Sigelman & Sigelman, 1986; Stimson, 1976). Should individuals change their attitudes about the president based on communicated expectations, it would illustrate a possible means of democratic feedback between the chief executive and citizens (Buchanan, 2013; Druckman & Jacobs, 2009).

Prior research recognizes the role expectations play in presidential politics. Conceptually, expectations are verbalized promises (Fishel, 1985; Hart et al., 2005), evaluations and probabilities (Seligman & Baer, 1969), and statements of future intent (Boisson, 2012; Hoffman & Howard, 2010; Manheim, 1979). Research has yet to assess in-depth the role of presidential communication in strategically framing the future and influencing individual beliefs. The traditional theoretical approach treats expectations as pre-existing beliefs that citizens use to evaluate every president (Kinder et al., 1980; Ostrom & Simon, 1985; Simon, 2009). For example, individuals identify integrity, charisma, intelligence, and flexibility as important traits every president should possess (Buchanan, 1987; Kinder et al., 1980). This research demonstrates the importance of expectations, but does not examine how the beliefs were created in the first place. By shifting the theoretical focus, I illustrate the prevalence of expectations in presidential communication, how expectations vary based on governing and political factors, and ultimately how expectations influence the public.

To explore how expectations are constructed in presidential communication, I turn to framing theory. I argue that presidential expectations exist as a type of causal

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attribution frame, where an agent is responsible for a future action. I first explain what differentiates an expectation frame from other types of causal attribution frames, locating the difference in how a statement is constructed syntactically. Next, I discuss the components of an expectation frame as well as the contextual factors that may explain how presidents vary their uses of expectation frames. Once I have covered the theory supporting the content of expectations, I turn to how expectations may influence public perceptions of the future and the president.

EXPECTATION FRAMES

As communicated representations of reality, frames serve as a means to understand how presidents construct expectations. Presidents attempt to shape a future reality, whether for citizens or other political agents. Presidents can use their language to clarify an often complex future. This action is at the root of expectation setting.

Communicative frames are representations of reality, whether that reality has occurred or not (Goffman, 1974). Words and phrases, stylistic devices, arguments, and syntax come together to create a frame (Edelman, 1993; Gamson, 1992; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gitlin, 2003). One important type of frame involves causal attributions (Entman, 1993; Graber, 1984; Iyengar, 1991; Lawrence, 2004; Neuman, Just, & Crigler, 1992; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Broadly, a causal attribution frame is constructed in several ways. Argumentatively, a particular problem or effect – from obesity (Lawrence, 2004) to crime (Iyengar, 1991) to European integration (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000) – can be attributed to an individual or society at large depending on the packaging of the argument. Obesity, for instance, can be traced to biological, individual, or environmental causes (Lawrence, 2004). Lawrence finds that news coverage of obesity in *The New York Times* focused on systemic causes, including

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the availability and marketing of snack foods. Linguistically, causal attribution can be signaled by bridge words such as "because," "since," and "for" (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 61).

Expectation frames are a type of causal attribution frame. Causal attribution frames exhibit a cause-effect structure where responsibility for an effect is attributed to an agent. Therefore, each frame has a causal agent and temporal orientation. Expectation frames differ from traditional causal attribution frames in how the frame is oriented temporally (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Comparing Traditional Attribution and Expectation Frames

Past Cause   ←—————— Causal Attribution ——————   Present Effect

Causal Agent —————— Expectation Frame ——————→   Future Effect
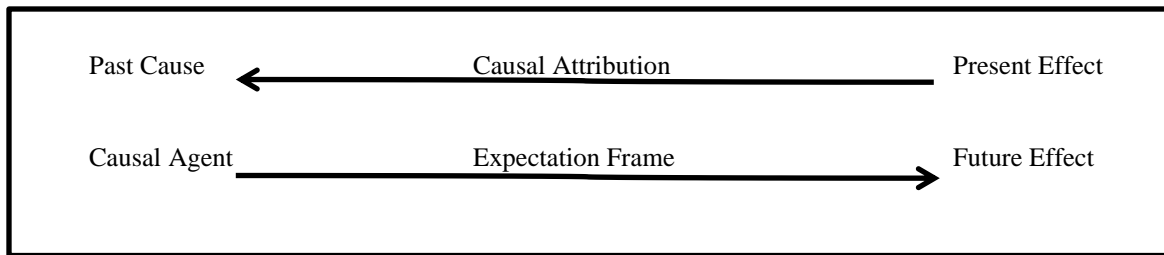
Figure 1 compares the temporal orientation of traditional causal attribution frames and expectation frames. Attribution frames traditionally have been understood as *past-focused* (Iyengar, 1991; Lawrence, 2004; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000): An observable present effect/event is framed within the context of past causal origins. For example, a terrorist attack can be causally attributed to a lone terrorist or a national/global network (Iyengar, 1991). As the arrow in the figure shows, the traditional attribution frame looks to the past to attribute responsibility. Although traditional causal attribution frames point to past causes to understand effects, expectation frames must be approached from a new angle.

Expectations are future-oriented statements and are constructed with a future-based word or phrase. Most commonly, this phrasing includes a future-based verb such as

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"will," "shall," or "can" alongside an action. Related to the broader class of causal frames (Entman, 1993; Iyengar, 1991), expectation frames are formed when a message communicatively positions an actor or entity as responsible for a future action. As the arrow in Figure 1 indicates, the expectation frame looks to the future when attributing responsibility. In a statement from the president that "I will cut the deficit in half," the future-oriented action ("will cut") is attributed to concrete presidential influence ("I"). A future-oriented verb phrase is the main difference between an expectation frame and the causal attribution frames studied in prior research. The following examples further illustrate this distinction:

1. *Past orientation.* Following the terrorist attack on the Boston Marathon in April 2013, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper Jr. stated in *The Washington Post* "We don't know yet whether the attack was planned and executed by a terrorist organization, foreign or domestic, or if it was an individual act" (Montgomery, Fisher, & Branigin, 2013). Refraining from formally attributing causal responsibility for the terrorist act, the *Post* nonetheless includes a quotation that syntactically constructs an effect ("the attack") as a result of an uncertain past cause.

2. *Future orientation.* When President Barack Obama addressed the people of Boston and the nation several days after the April 15, 2013 bombing of the Boston Marathon, the president predicted "That's the message we send to those who carried this out and anyone who would do harm to our people. Yes, we will find you. And, yes, you will face justice. We will find you. We will hold you accountable" (2013, April 18). Compared to the *Post* example, the frame is syntactically constructed such that a known collective "we" is responsible for a future act ("find," "hold you accountable").

Using the second example as an illustration, I theorize that an expectation frame consists of a future-oriented verb accompanied by a causal agent and an action/event (Figure 2). The future-oriented portion of the expectation frame is the primary focus of this research.

Figure 2. Expectation Frame Structure

Future Orientation
"will hold"

Causal Agent
"we"

Action/Event
"accountable"
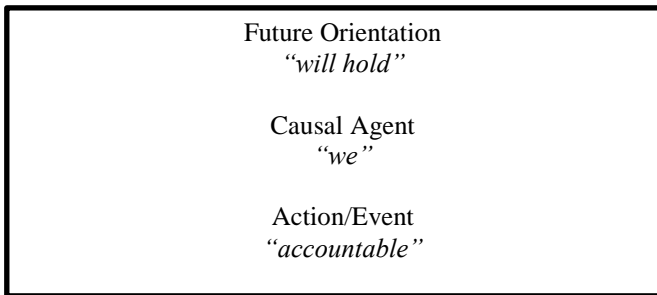
Expectations serve as a critical attribute of presidential communication. As Edelman (1985) argues, "Anticipation of future well-being or danger is critical in political language, which consists very largely of promises about the benefits that will flow from whatever cause, policy, or candidate the speaker favors" (p. 205). Broadly, research has identified the presence of future-centered discourse in political communication (Dunmire, 2005; Edelman, 1985; Hart, Childers, & Lind, 2013). Although scholars have studied the future focus of entire presidential speech genres, such as inaugural addresses (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008), as well as the future orientation of presidential messages (Boisson, 2012; Hoffman & Howard, 2010; Manheim, 1979; Manheim & Lammers, 1981), research has not addressed the framing, systematic use, and variation of future-oriented communication that constructs expectations for the public.

Presidents, invariably, construct the future out of both habit and strategy. Republican communication consultant Frank Luntz (2007) encourages the political use of "aspirational" rhetoric to relate messages to citizens; "It's not about creating false expectations, for that would diminish credibility. It's about encouraging the message recipient to want something better – and then delivering it" (p. 18). Presidential

candidates are expected to have a vision for the country (Wendt & Fairhurst, 1994), made apparent in discourse that predicts and promises (Campbell et al., 1960; Edwards, 1983; Fishel, 1985; Ostrom & Simon, 1985). As president, discussing and envisioning the future may be important for strategic governing purposes. Edelman (1985) argues that political figures frame the future to gain public support for unrealized future benefits. Whether a part of campaign or governing discourse, political officials attempt to use expectations to gain and protect their public influence.

The examples from President Obama on the Boston bombing and President Reagan on weapons defense illustrate that presidents construct expectation frames in their discourse. How prevalent these frames are in presidential communication is not known, however, which leads to my first research question.

RQ1a: How prevalent are expectation frames in presidential communication?

Although expectation frames broadly illustrate how presidents talk about the future, additional richness may exist in *how* presidents discuss the future. Is there a difference, from a content or effects perspective, between the president saying "America will prevail" and the president saying "America can prevail"? Does the president use "will" in one setting and "can" in another? Under what circumstances? This research delves deeper into expectation frames to examine how presidents use different verbs, including "will," "shall," and "can," to frame expectations. As the defining feature of an expectation frame, the type of future orientation may reveal how presidents envision the future and how individuals think differently as a result.

EXPECTATION TYPES: THE FUTURE ORIENTATION OF EXPECTATION FRAMES

Presidential expectations represent forward-looking statements about a future action. Pennebaker (2011) asserts that predictive verbs, including "would," "should," and

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"could," contrast the present and possible future conditions. This notion is critical for the expectation frame in presidential communication. The future is meant to inspire and challenge citizens, and can be used to strategically shift mass attention away from imperfect present circumstances (Edelman, 1985; Hart, 1987; 2008; Hart et al., 2013).

Future-tense verbs – "will," "shall," and "can," as well as their negation – are indicators of a speaker's future-oriented thinking (Pennebaker, 2011). An expectation frame's future orientation also can be constructed through explicitly predictive verbs. Presidents may signal the future by words such as "expect," "anticipate," "predict," "forecast," "foresee," "intend," or "commit." Although important, I focus here on "will," "shall," and "can" verb constructions as they are the three most common types of expectations.[1] Previous research conceptualizes the meaning of each type of verb construction (Boisson, 2012; Dunmire, 2005; Hart, 2000; Perkins, 1982; Pinna, 2007; Sarkar, 1998), yet does not test the extent to which individuals react to these verbs differently. Further, scholars do not how and when presidents vary these verbs when framing the future, a potential blind spot in understanding presidential governing behavior.

Presidents may attempt to temper future visions with "can" expectation frames. The "can/could" construction is thought to insinuate actions that are possible, but not necessarily probable. This type of future construction may signal the limits of a causal agent's ability to achieve a particular outcome (Perkins, 1982; Pinna, 2007). In President Bill Clinton's 1996 State of the Union message, for instance, he constructs the boundaries of America's future abilities in foreign policy by using "can't" and "can." "Of course, we

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[1] Although I examine the use of other future-oriented words in expectation frames in the content analysis, they comprise a small percentage of the expectations used by Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama (see Chapter 4).

can't do everything. But where our interests and our values are at stake, and where we *can* make a difference, America must lead" (1996, January 23; emphasis added). By framing "can't" and "can," Clinton tries to temper future visions of the country's abilities in foreign policy.

The "shall/should" future construction is theorized to communicate an agent's conviction or obligation, according to Dunmire (2005). It also may define a future ideal or goal, such as when scholars, politicians, and pundits discuss what the president should *do* and *be* for the people, the economy, or the world (Barger, 1984; Brace & Hinckley, 1991; Kinder et al., 1980; Seligman & Baer, 1969; Wayne, 1982). Further, legal professionals use the "shall/should" construction in legislative and legal directives (Gensler, 2010). When President Clinton concluded that "these initiatives are right for America, and we *should* keep them going" in his 1996 State of the Union, he seemed to outline an ideal course of action for his initiatives (1996, January 23; emphasis added).

Presidents stoke visions of the future with "will" expectations. A "will/would" future construction is thought to imply prediction (Sarkar, 1998). For presidents, use of "will" is conceptually linked to tonal certainty or assuredness about reality (Boisson, 2012; Hart, 2000). Pinna (2007) notes that presidential use of "will" may represent a binding commitment as well as intentionality. This certainty may meet the needs of an American public that expects confident, forward-looking leadership from the president (Gronke & Newman, 2003; Hart et al., 2013). For example, President Obama's statement that "Yes, we *will* find you. And, yes, you *will* face justice" after the Boston bombing offers a strong predictive outcome for the perpetrators of the attack (2013, April 18; emphasis added).

"Will," "shall," and "can" expectations are examined in this research.[2] I expand on the existing literature in two ways. First, I compare expectation types across presidential communication to evaluate whether and to what extent presidents use these verbs in a purposeful manner. Past research has employed fruitful, though more critical approaches to understanding presidential verb use. Pinna's (2007) critique of George W. Bush's use of future-based verbs from 2001-2003 examined how "will" and "can" verbs reflected Bush's ideological worldview and values. My focus is broader and empirically-focused on (a) understanding future-oriented verbs as a component of expectation frames, (b) establishing connections in frame use across several presidencies, and (c) analyzing whether expectation construction reflects an underlying strategic calculus. Second, I empirically test how individuals react to the three main types of expectations, "will," "shall," and "can." Effective leadership hinges on the president's ability to influence how individuals *think* about reality. Should presidents shape the ways individuals perceive the future, it could showcase how chief executives define and influence the boundaries of national conversations.

RQ1b: How prevalent are "will," "shall," and "can" expectations in presidential communication?

SUPPORTING EXPECTATION FRAME COMPONENTS

The supporting components of an expectation frame, including the causal agent and action focus, may vary depending on whether presidents use "will," "shall," or "can" expectations. Are citizen agents framed with a "will" future orientation or "can"? Do presidents link domestic issues with "shall" in expectation frames? Different patterns of

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[2] Although classified separately (see Pennebaker, 2011; Pennebaker & Lay, 2002), future-tense verbs ("will," "shall," and "can") and predictive/discrepant verbs ("would," "should," and "could,") both connote aspects of future actions. I therefore treat the dual construction of these verbs ("will/would," "shall/should," and "can/could") similarly for analysis in this research.

agent and action construction in an expectation frame could indicate the calculus that presidents use in building these future-oriented frames.

Causal Agent and Responsibility Attribution

The causal agent in an expectation frame is who, or what, is responsible for a future action or event. In traditional causal attribution frames (Iyengar, 1991), the causal agent exists temporally at some point in the past. Iyengar, for example, asked individuals to identify whether "low wages" and/or "loose morals" contributed to poverty (p. 153). In presidential expectation frames, causality is oriented toward the future. The agent becomes who or what the president names as responsible for a future action. In President Obama's Boston bombing speech, the phrase "We will hold you accountable" causally links the collective agent "we" to a future action "will hold you accountable." To understand the causal agents of future effects, I look to the subjects of sentences. The agents used by presidents and others have sparked scholarly attention (Beasley, 2004; Hart, 1984b; 1987; Hinckley, 1985; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Manheim, 1979; Neuman et al., 1992; Pennebaker, 2011; Pennebaker & Lay, 2002). I draw from this past literature to focus on three prominent categories of causal agents presidents may use in expectation frames: (1) government-based, (2) citizen-based, and (3) amorphous collective agents.

Government-based agents in expectation frames pin responsibility for future events on official actors, programs, and processes. These agents include the president, Congress and other non-presidential government agents (e.g. governors, bureaucrats), and government programs and concerns (e.g. Medicare, recession, unemployment). Starting during the campaign, presidential candidates use self-references in relation to the agendas they plan to accomplish in office (Jarvis, 2001). In office, presidents use self-references as well – a communicative behavior that has grown more frequent across presidencies

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(Hart, 1987; Lim, 2002).[3] Presidents mention other political agents as well in their communications. In their Saturday presidential addresses, presidents often construct Congress and its members as agents preventing legislative progress (Scacco, 2011). Further, a president may attribute future agency to a program (Medicare), a bill (the Affordable Care Act), or a concern of government (the deficit).

Presidents also can name citizen-based agents as causally responsible for future actions. During the campaign, presidential candidates construct citizens as agents in the voting process (Jarvis & Hahn, 2013) and invoke "the American people" more so than news media (Hart, Jennings, & Dixson, 2003). Citizens, in candidate invocations, are actively engaged in present and future actions (Hart et al., 2003; Hart & Johnson, 1999). This temporal construction may be important for understanding expectations constructed in office. If a candidate's habits of mentioning citizens continue into an administration, presidents may feature citizens prominently in expectation frames.

Amorphous collective agents build a broad community ("we," "us") or indirectly target citizen agents ("you") without clearly indicating the agents involved. The collective pronoun "we" has received the most scholarly attention. Some works discuss collectives from a community-oriented perspective by explaining the importance of "we" and "us" to constructing the nation, a presidential administration, or the mass public (Beasley, 2004; Hinckley, 1985; Pennebaker & Lay, 2002). Presidents use "we" more frequently the longer they hold office (Hart, 1984b). Teten (2003) finds presidents have used "we" and "our" more frequently in State of the Union addresses over time as well, a potential means of audience identification. "We" also can remove speaker agency by

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[3] Self-references, in general, have been linked to self-confidence (Keller & Foster, 2012), candidness (Slatcher, Chung, Pennebaker, & Stone, 2007), and personality (Hart, 1984b). References to oneself can humanize communication, which van Zoonen (2005) argues is important for a celebrity-centered American culture.

signaling a "diffusion of responsibility" (Pennebaker & Lay, 2002, p. 274) or "avoidance of personal commitment" (Weintraub, 1986, p. 288). As part of an expectation frame, collectives could obscure responsibility for future actions.

The causal agent in an expectation frame may reveal how presidents think about the future and assign responsibility for it. Do presidents privilege specific types of agents with a more assured, confident future in "will" frames? Are particular agents de-emphasized in "shall" expectations? If presidents pick-and-choose the agents that go with a particular *type* of future ("will," "shall," or "can,"), this action might reflect the calculated ways in which presidents attempt to convey future responsibility and control. RQ2a: How do causal agents (whether government, citizen, or collective-based) vary with "will," "shall," and "can" expectation frames?

Action/Event Referent

The action or event referenced in an expectation frame specifies *what* may occur at some point in the future. These referents are manifestations of the many role responsibilities that accompany the presidency. Every chief executive must manage and communicate amid institutional, contextual, and individual constraints (Mercieca & Vaughn, 2014). Mercieca and Vaughn argue that President Obama, for example, faced institutional (peace/war, economic growth), contextual (economic crisis), and individual (race) challenges upon entering office. Following World War II, the presidency became associated with managing national security, the economy, and the budget (Simon, 2009). Other scholars have noted that the president has come to be seen as central to the legislative process (Barger, 1984). Each president also faces his own "climate of expectations," or what the public believes he should do in office (Barber, 2009, p. 7). Early surveys of the presidencies of Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan showed that the

public expected Carter to deal with the energy crisis and Reagan to reduce the size of government (Sigelman & Knight, 1983; 1985).

Enduring role responsibilities associated with the institutional presidency and each president's unique contextual responsibilities are expressed frequently in the actions of an expectation frame. One way in which these referents could be categorized is whether they are *domestic* or *foreign*-focused.[4] Presidential agendas contain proposals and principles for each of these policy areas (Jones, 2005). When and how presidents act on their policy agenda is important for understanding how they interpret constitutional prerogatives. Wildavsky (1966) explained that two presidencies exist – the foreign policy presidency with explicit constitutional powers as Commander-in-Chief and the domestic policy presidency with murkier, shared powers of responsibility. Recent research has found that presidents speak differently on matters of foreign and domestic policy in their press conferences (Hart & Scacco, 2014). The extent to which presidents use expectations differently when talking about foreign versus domestic topics is not known.

Historically, presidents have greater authority with foreign policy. Congress, the public, and the press not only look to the president on foreign policy matters, but have significant difficulties challenging the president (see Bennett et al., 2007). Presidents can have success in shaping the public's foreign policy viewpoints (Druckman & Holmes, 2004), as well as in directing the media's foreign policy agenda (Eshbaugh-Soha & Peake, 2011). When they communicate on foreign policy in press conferences, presidents invoke more values and are less defensive compared to domestic issues (Hart & Scacco, 2014). A greater sense of control over foreign policy implementation could influence the president to use different types of expectations for foreign- and domestic-based topics.

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[4] Although there are other possible ways to classify the referents that exist in an expectation frame (e.g. ethnic/racial, gender, age), I use a policy-focused classification scheme to explore Wildavsky's (1966) "two presidencies thesis" from a communicative perspective.

The president has more limited constitutional powers with regard to domestic policy compared to foreign affairs, which could influence how expectations are framed. Presidential domestic influence is subject to greater challenge by Congress and citizens. Congressional bargaining is often critical (Neustadt, 1990), but not necessarily effective, nor attempted, on domestic issues (Kernell, 2007). The public expects presidents to serve as deft managers of the domestic economy (Buchanan, 1987; Jenkins-Smith et al., 2005; Kinder et al., 1980), and presidential public standing is tied to domestic economic health (Brody, 1991; Hinckley, 1985). Some evidence suggests that presidents give fewer public speeches and press conferences as the economy worsens (Hager & Sullivan, 1994; Ragsdale, 1984). Presidents thus face considerable challenges communicating about domestic-based topics.

How presidents frame policy actions with the type of expectation may indicate the control the president believes he has over domestic versus foreign-based actions. Chief executives' influence over international affairs may lead them to stoke confidence and assuredness in future foreign actions with "will" expectations. Conversely, presidents may indirectly express the challenges of managing domestic affairs by tempering future actions with "can" expectations.

RQ2b: How do mentions of foreign and domestic-based actions vary with "will," "shall," and "can" expectation frames?

THE PRESENCE OF EXPECTATION FRAMES: CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

Expectation frames, including particular types of constructions ("will," "shall," "can"), may be influenced by several contextual factors. Do presidents strategically pick-and-choose expectations based on the communicative venue? Might chief executives look to the administrative clock when deciding which type of expectation to use? I analyze

whether expectation frames vary by: (1) the communicative venue; (2) the political environment, including presidential approval and the presence of a divided government; (3) the time in an administration; and (4) individual president.

Communicative Venue

The venue for a presidential communication may determine the types of expectation frames a president employs. In a media environment featuring numerous media forms reaching niche audiences (Prior, 2007), it is important to assess the content of presidential discourse across multiple media. A more public address, such as the annual State of the Union message or a tweet on the White House Twitter feed, may attract both large audiences and media attention. Less public, non-spoken forms of communication intended for an intergovernmental audience, such as signing statements, may yield a different set of expectation frames. Extending upon prior research paying attention to each of these venues (Coe, 2007; Coe & Neumann, 2011; Jacobs, 2010; Kelley, Marshall, & Watts, 2013; Neumann & Coe, 2011, Scacco, 2012), I examine how presidents may be strategically using the fragmented communication environment to construct different expectations for different audiences.

The annual State of the Union address (SOTU) is a critical speech event for the president. Mandated by the Constitution, the State of the Union is an institutional expression of the president's authority and a reflection of a particular president's agenda (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008; Hart, 1987). Broadcast network channels allow the president to interrupt primetime television programming to give his remarks (Baum & Kernell, 1999; 2007) and journalists readily cover the event (Schudson, 1982). Communicatively, the public format of the State of the Union is a detailed list of proposals and policy alternatives presented to Congress (Hart, 1984b).

Signing statements represent a different set of communicative circumstances compared to State of the Union addresses. Used as official communications to intergovernmental actors when the president signs legislation, signing statements protect and demarcate the lines of presidential power (Beasley, 2010; Campbell & Jamieson, 2008; Kelley et al., 2013; Rudalevige, 2010). The statements are technical and intended for a non-public audience including Congress, the judiciary, and the executive branch (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008). A critical component in a government of separated powers (Neustadt, 1990), signing statements allow political and bureaucratic agents to better anticipate presidential actions, such as when a president indicates that he will enforce legislation in a certain manner (Rudalevige, 2010).

Digital media have inaugurated a new set of communicative tools for the president, including Twitter. The Obama administration's use of digital technology has enhanced the ability of citizens to engage with the president and for Barack Obama to reach scattered audiences (Jacobs, 2010; Scacco, 2012). Jacobs (2010) argues that President Obama's use of Internet technologies presents opportunities to connect with and mobilize the public. Twitter is an appropriate platform to examine the content of expectations in this regard. According to former Clinton State Department spokesman P. J. Crowley, Twitter can be both appropriate and inappropriate for governing communications (personal communication, September 18, 2013). Although the platform helps messages find particular audiences, the 140-character limit privileges direct, categorical statements. It may be an important venue for assessing whether official tweets, particularly direct quotations from the president, serve as expectation sound bites for audiences.

RQ3a: How do expectation frames, including "will," "shall," and "can" constructions, vary by communicative venue?

Political Environment

The president's governing environment, including his job approval and which party controls the U.S. House and Senate, may affect the type of expectations constructed. The public's approval of the president is related to his prestige within and outside of government (Neustadt, 1990). Higher levels of approval increase the governing options available to a president while lower approval levels threaten an executive's relevance to the governing process (Eshbaugh-Soha & Peake, 2011). Lower approval invites greater press scrutiny as well (Farnsworth & Lichter, 2006; Groeling & Kernell, 1998). For these reasons and more, presidents attempt to preserve their popularity by engaging in strategic communication. The presence and frequency of presidential communication has been linked to approval ratings (Johnson & Roberts, 2004; Lammers, 1981; Ragsdale, 1984), with higher approval prompting fewer communications overall. Presidents also may use their approval to gauge how to communicate the future.

Partisan control of the federal government is another important environmental variable that may influence expectations. Divided government, or one political party's control of the White House and an opposing political party's control of at least one house of Congress, is linked to higher presidential approval (Nicholson, Segura, & Woods, 2002), increased congressional opposition to major legislation (Edwards, Barrett, & Peake, 1997), and reduced legislative success for the president (Barrett, 2004; Canes-Wrone, 2001). There is evidence that presidential communication also is influenced. Presidents give fewer press conferences in divided government (Eshbaugh-Soha, 2003; Hager & Sullivan, 1994), but are more likely to "go public" with strategic communication appeals to target the constituents of moderate members of Congress (Hart, 1987; Kernell, 2007). The challenges posed by divided government may manifest in the types of expectations presidents use.

RQ3b: How do expectation frames, including "will," "shall," and "can" constructions, vary by presidential job approval and partisan division in the federal government?

Administrative Time

The amount of time a president has been in office may be an important predictor of which types of expectations he uses. Presidents look to administrative time when constructing their communications (Hart, 1987; Kumar, 2005; Manheim, 1979; Lammers, 1981; Scacco, 2011). The first year is most emblematic of this practice. Recent presidents have pushed an aggressive "100 days" agenda, the accomplishments of which are often featured in speeches (Scacco, 2011). A new chief executive has the political capital to push an administration's proposals (Eshbaugh-Soha & Peake, 2011). Presidents discuss future action more in press conferences during the "honeymoon period" compared to after it (Manheim, 1979). As an administration matures, presidents adopt more certain, complex, and institutionalized language that invokes the office more frequently (Hart, 1984a; McMillan & Ragan, 1983; Tetlock, 1981). These accounts suggest that presidential communication changes over the course of an administration. Building on these notions, I analyze if the types of expectations used differ depending on whether a president is in his first year, reelection year, or last year in office.

RQ3c: How do expectation frames, including "will," "shall," and "can" constructions, vary based on a president's time in office?

Individual Presidents

The personal influence and communicative style of each president also may be important for understanding expectation framing. Although presidential communication reflects institutional constraints and prerogatives (Hart, 2002; Mercieca & Vaughn, 2014), research also suggests that an individual president's style matters for tracking

communicative behavior (Eshbaugh-Soha, 2003; Hart, 1987). For example, President George W. Bush spoke with more tonal certainty than his predecessors (Hart & Childers, 2004). President Bill Clinton was more verbose in his weekly radio addresses than his successors, Presidents Bush and Obama (Scacco, 2012). Tracking individual divergences not only highlights the style of each president's expectations use, but clarifies institutional regularities across presidents as well.

RQ3d: How do expectation frames, including "will," "shall," and "can" constructions, vary by individual presidents?

THE INDIVIDUAL INFLUENCES OF EXPECTATION FRAMES

The content of the message environment is one half of the expectations story. To this point, I have discussed presidential expectation frames and the contextual factors that may affect how and when presidents use these frames in their communications. Ultimately, presidents use public communication in an attempt to influence others – the bureaucracy, Congress, or citizens (Druckman & Holmes, 2004; Edwards, 2003; Hart, 1987; Neustadt, 1990; Ragsdale, 1984). Presidents may wish to discuss expectations for any strategic number of reasons – to win an election (Campbell et al., 1960; Edwards, 1983; Fishel, 1985), to direct public attention away from current problems (Hart, 1987), or to buy time while proposals are finalized and implemented. Future visions could beget present consequences in how citizens judge presidential certainty and control over future events, his character traits, and his job performance.

When political strategist Paul Begala explained in an interview that expectations "ignite" hope and change, he was advancing an effects-based proposition that political figures can influence citizens' beliefs about the future. Outside of political campaign research (see Just et al., 1996), no works have focused on the power of presidential

communication to actively shape beliefs about the future. After encountering an expectation constructed by the president, are individuals more certain about the future? More apt to believe the president has control over the future? If presidential expectations serve to structure individual beliefs about future actions, it would illustrate how presidents can exercise influence with citizens. Moreover, should citizens judge the president based on how he frames the future, the judgment would illuminate one means by which citizens form attitudes about the chief executive's job performance.

The general assumption in prior research is that the violation of expectations, whether positive or negative, changes attitudes toward the president (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2005; Sigelman & Knight, 1983; 1985; Sigelman & Sigelman, 1986; Waterman, Jenkins-Smith, & Silva, 1999). This perspective has led scholars to place more focus on the effects of *broken* expectations. President Jimmy Carter's failure to meet public expectations to find a solution to the energy crisis led to drops in his approval (Sigelman & Knight, 1983). President Ronald Reagan's struggles to reduce the size of government after telling citizens to expect it resulted in a similar approval decline (Sigelman & Knight, 1985). Of concern in this research, and often overlooked by researchers, is the initial effect of communicated expectations. Did the phrase from President Obama that "if you like your [healthcare] plan, you can keep your plan" influence individuals' thinking about the future when it was uttered, before the public knew whether the pronouncement would come to pass? Do individuals judge the president and future based on the type of expectation they encounter in a speech?

The future orientation of an expectation differentiates the frame from the other causal attribution frames that dominate prior research. How different types of expectations – "will," "shall," and "can" – influence citizens is the crux of understanding the effects of these frames. I build upon the literature on the effects of small cues,

certainty, and causal responsibility framing to assess the potential influences of expectation frames on citizens (Gilovich, 1981; Iyengar, 1991; Kahneman & Tversky, 1984; Knobloch-Westerwick & Taylor, 2008; Morton, Rabinovich, Marshall, & Bretschneider, 2011; Patt & Schrag, 2003; Shah, Boyle, Schmierbach, Keum, & Armstrong, 2009). Although previous studies offer a firm basis for beginning to assess expectation frame effects, two limitations exist. First, traditional framing effects studies focus predominantly on news media messages. Comparatively few have studied frames attributed to non-media sources, such as popular culture figures (Druckman, 2001) and presidents (Gershkoff & Kushner, 2005). Broadening the scope of existing framing theory, I focus on the effects of an overlooked frame (expectations) in a critical context (presidential communication). Second, the framing literature does not address the possible link between expectancy judgments and subsequent belief changes. In other words, do individuals think differently about the future as well as levy judgment on the president for the expectations he constructs? Building on prior approaches to assessing indirect effects in communication research (Knobloch-Westerwick & Taylor, 2008; O'Keefe, 2003), I innovate traditional framing research by examining the direct effect of expectation frames on presidential approval and the indirect effect of the frames on approval through future certainty beliefs. Should a direct and/or indirect effect exist, it would illuminate a mechanism by which individuals respond to speech expectations by passing judgment on the president's job performance.

FRAME CUES ON PERCEIVED CERTAINTY AND CONTROL

Expectation frames may structure how individuals *think* about future actions. As Pan and Kosicki (1993) explain, frames establish "a cognitive 'window'" through which people view the world (p. 59). This notion that frames emphasize particular aspects of

reality for their audiences has been noted in additional framing studies (Chong & Druckman, 2007a; de Vreese, 2005; Iyengar, 1990; Sniderman & Theriault, 2004). Presidents may influence the thinking of individuals by directing them to envision the future where the president is certain, in control, and optimistic about policies to come. By structuring citizens' thoughts in this manner, the president can frame his leadership over future policies.

Changes in the type of expectation constructed by the president may bring about individual belief changes. For example, how might the expectations "I will" versus "I can" be interpreted differently by citizens listening to the president? Small changes can have noticeable effects (Edelman, 1993; Gilovich, 1981; Kahneman & Tversky, 1984; Knobloch-Westerwick & Taylor, 2008; Shah et al., 2009). One prominent area of framing research has examined how "small cues" or wording changes in a frame can influence how an audience thinks and acts. Gilovich (1981) finds that the use of phrases which draw attention to World War II ("Winston Churchill Hall") as opposed to the Vietnam War ("Dean Rusk Hall") affect attitudes in favor of military intervention. Other literature supports the importance of small framing choices. Kahneman and Tversky (1984) observe that changing a phrase to reflect a gain ("200 people will be saved") or a loss ("400 people will die") can influence whether a respondent becomes risk seeking or risk averse when making a decision (p. 343). Research continues to support the finding that the "accumulation of small elements" within a frame can have considerable effects (Shah et al., 2009, p. 228).

A small cues approach to examining the effects of presidential communication has considerable merit. Expectations are an attribute of communication. Whether finding noticeable effects or a lack thereof, studies often examine the influence of a whole presidential speech on outcomes like job approval without examining the effects of

particular components within a speech (see Druckman & Holmes, 2004; Edwards, 2003). This macro-level approach to speech effects may misrepresent important communicative influences on the public. Indeed, Druckman and Holmes (2004) concede in their study of George W. Bush's 2002 State of the Union address that they did not isolate aspects of "rhetoric" when testing for effects: "it is possible that any effects we discover stem from other aspects of Bush's rhetoric or from nonverbal communication" (p. 764). An attributes-based perspective isolates the effects of particular speech components. For example, in media technologies research, Eveland (2003) explains that effects are not caused by a medium (television) but attributes of the medium (interactivity). Thus, he argues research should use a "mix of attributes" approach that tests attributes of the medium, not the medium itself. Extending this attributes-based approach to expectations framing, I argue that experimentally testing different types of expectations can pinpoint whether future-oriented frames affect beliefs about future certainty, control, perceptions of presidential traits, and job approval.

Certainty

A change to the future orientation – "will," "shall," or "can" – of an expectation frame may change the beliefs citizens have about the certainty of future events. Clatterbuck (1979) explains that individuals attribute certainty based on their perceived confidence in available information. If information is perceived to be scarce or mixed, uncertainty will be higher. Conversely, if information is perceived to be abundant or clear, certainty will be higher. The type of expectation may communicate information about the certainty or likelihood of future events. Arguably, presidents hope to frame expectations in a specific manner so as to communicate their confidence about what is to come. If a president says "I will reduce the deficit," an individual might use "will" as

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information to assess the president's confidence and certainty about future deficit reduction. Moreover, the individual may use the "will" expectation as information when assessing their personal certainty about the future.

The research on certainty reveals two complementary ways in which scholars have measured the construct. Clatterbuck's (1979) work focuses on how individuals form personal certainty judgments based on information gleaned in communicative interactions. This literature taps a more personalized dimension of certainty by asking respondents "How confident are you of your general ability to predict how he/she will behave" or "how certain are you that he/she likes you" (p. 149). These personalized measures of certainty also are mirrored in recent climate change research. For example, to measure trend skepticism or the belief that an event is occurring, individuals responded to the phrase "I am uncertain that climate change is really happening" (Poortinga, Spence, Whitmarsh, Capstick, & Pidgeon, 2011, p. 1018). These measures represent an attempt to operationalize certainty as a personal assessment of one's beliefs. Extending upon these approaches to examine individual responses to communicated expectations, a citizen who encountered President Obama's "you can keep your plan" statement may have changed how certain she was about the future of her healthcare under the Affordable Care Act.

A second path researchers have pursued is to measure how individuals attribute certainty to other agents' beliefs about the future. In one climate change study, Corbett and Durfee (2004) manipulated global warming media stories to include additional contextual information (placing the story's topic in a broader research context) or dissenting opinions (a paragraph including disagreements among scientists). Certainty was assessed by gauging responses to "according to this news story, global warming is a scientific certainty" and "in this article, scientists are unsure whether global climate

change is occurring" (p. 139). Similarly, Poortinga et al. (2011) measured how individuals responded to the statement "Most scientists agree that humans are causing climate change" (p. 1018). By asking about other agents' certainty, these studies examined a second facet of certainty about the future. In the expectations context, these measures could be updated to measure how certain citizens believed President Obama was based on his "you can keep your plan" healthcare statement.

I employ both approaches in this research and assess personal and agent-based certainty beliefs. I examine *personal* certainty about future actions as well as assessments of the *president*'s certainty regarding future actions. Should either an individual's or assessments of the president's certainty change based on the type of expectation frame encountered, I will have established an important linkage between expectations communicated and certainty attributed.

Although the linkage between expectations and certainty has not been examined explicitly, past works illustrate that individuals respond differently to uncertain events based on small frame changes. Weather and climate change research show how small wording changes affect individuals' views of future events. In one experiment, Patt and Schrag (2003) framed a serious or non-serious event (hurricane or snow flurries) alongside an outcome manipulation (10% chance or unlikely). These small framing changes led to certainty miscalculations based on the severity of the framed event. Individuals attributed greater certainty to a hurricane landfall than snow flurries. In a study related to climate change certainty, Morton et al. (2011) made changes to statements taken from a mock global warming report. Certainty was varied to include statements high in uncertainty ("10-30% likelihood") as well as statements hyping positive future impacts ("It is 20% likely that global warming will not cause abrupt…," p. 105). Participants reported an increased likelihood of engaging in corrective actions to

prevent climate change with high certainty, future negative event frames (e.g. "It is 80% likely that global warming … will cause abrupt and severe changes," p. 105). These studies lend credence to using a small cues framing approach to study individual responses to future events.

Applying research on certainty (Clatterbuck, 1979; Morton et al., 2011; Patt & Schrag, 2003; Poortinga et al., 2011) to small cues research in political communication (Knobloch-Westerwick & Taylor, 2008; Shah et al., 2009), I argue that the type of expectation encountered in presidential communication may alter beliefs about future certainty. The empirical and theoretical research point to "will/would" verb usage as an indicator of future certainty and prediction (Boisson, 2012; Hart, 2000; Morton et al., 2011; Sarkar, 1998). Scholars, however, also identify the "shall/should" construction as an indicator of conviction and obligation (Dunmire, 2005; Gensler, 2010). Morton et al.'s (2011) climate change study included the verb "will" in the statements and then varied probabilities and frame valence. This study will be among the first to test the effects of future-oriented verbs on an audience's certainty beliefs. A relationship would illustrate that presidents exercise influence over citizens' thinking about future certainty, an important part of presidential rhetorical leadership (Hart, 2008).

RQ4: How does the type of expectation frame ("will," "shall," "can") influence assessments of personal and presidential certainty?

Control

Whereas certainty attributions are based on confidence in available information, control judgments are based on perceptions of an agent's influence on and ability to put intentions into action. How the future is framed in presidential communication may serve to alter beliefs about the president's control over future policy actions. Rotter (1990)

argues that individuals assign control to an external agent based on the perceived influence they have over an expected outcome. Knobloch-Westerwick and Taylor (2008) extend this definition by linking perceived control to intent. Influence and intent are critical for particular types of expectations. Pinna (2007) posits that "will" verbs connote intentionality. Similarly, former State Department spokesman P. J. Crowley explains that presidential use of "will" indicates a defined policy decision (personal communication, September 18, 2013). Therefore, citizens who encounter the phrase "I will keep America strong and prosperous" may judge the president's intentions and influence based on the "will" expectation when they assign control to the president. A change in the future orientation portion of the frame could influence perceptions of presidential control over future actions.

Although political communication research demonstrates that frame changes can influence attributions of responsibility and control (Iyengar, 1991; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Shields & Goidel, 1998; Valkenburg, Semetko, & de Vreese, 1999), the research takes an agent-based focus. Iyengar (1991) varied societal-level (i.e. business/industry) or individual agents in his examination of attributions of responsibility for poverty. In another study, Shields and Goidel (1998) varied a mock *New York Times* story where President Bill Clinton or Speaker Newt Gingrich claimed credit for the state of the economy. Participants then assigned causal responsibility for economic conditions to Clinton and Gingrich. These studies illustrate that varying the causal agent in a frame can influence assessments of agent responsibility. Assessing the effects of expectation frames on perceived presidential control requires a different approach, however.

As opposed to manipulating the causal agent in a frame, my research varies the future-oriented verbs and examines whether they affect perceptions of control. Although the focus is different, lessons from previous work on attribution framing apply.

Knobloch-Westerwick and Taylor (2008) find that variations in verb use can influence perceptions of control. Audiences exposed to news reports using active voice ("McInnis threw a party…") attributed more control over events to agents compared to a passive voice condition ("A party was thrown by McInnis…") (p. 730). The study highlights the importance of frame cues, including verb tense, for audiences forming causal attributions. I extend upon this with future-oriented verbs in expectation frames.

Much as active verbs increase perceptions of agent control (Knobloch-Westerwick & Taylor, 2008), the type of expectation constructed could lead individuals to assign different levels of control to the president. "Will" verbs, theorized to project assuredness and intentionality (Hart, 2000; Pinna, 2007), may insinuate greater control over the future. "Can," thought to insinuate possibility and limited ability, may communicate less control over future actions (Perkins, 1982; Pinna, 2007). With its tonal conviction (Dunmire, 2005) and greater use in legal discourse (Gensler, 2010), it is unclear how individuals may assign presidential control for "shall/should" constructions. RQ5: How does the type of expectation frame ("will," "shall," "can") influence assessments of presidential control over future events and actions?

The type of expectation frame may influence not only beliefs about certainty and presidential control, but also performance-based evaluations of the president. Could individuals assess the president's traits, such as his optimism, differently after encountering an expectation frame? Do citizens render judgment on the president's job performance based on how he frames the future? I examine these possibilities.

PRESIDENTIAL PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

The effects of expectation frames may extend beyond certainty and control to assessments of presidential character and performance. Suppose a person hears a

president state that he "will cut the deficit in half." An utterance like this could influence whether an individual feels that the president is optimistic. In this manner, the president could influence citizens' beliefs about his vision. Moreover, citizens may change their attitudes about the president's job performance based on how the future is framed. If this occurred, presidential future talk would have initiated a process of public judgment. Presidential performance outcomes, including character traits and job approval, thus may serve as important outcomes.

Presidential Traits

When citizens report pre-existing attitudes about how a president should act, they often are reporting trait-based performance evaluations (Simon, 2009). Trait-based judgments involve assessments of the president's personal character and image. Simon argues that past presidents, including George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, serve as benchmarks for character assessments of honesty and integrity. Other scholars note that the gold standard for a strong presidential image was set by John F. Kennedy (Barger, 1984).

The way in which a president frames the future may influence trait-based evaluations. Individuals consistently assign a constellation of traits to the president. Herzik and Dodson (1982) remarked over 30 years ago that citizens have developed a "consensus focused around general traits of personality, leadership and individual virtue" (pp. 172-173). Buchanan (1987) identified integrity, charisma, and goodwill as standards by which a president is judged. Kinder et al. (1980) found that regardless of political ideology, citizens look for honesty, intelligence, and flexibility in the president. Additional traits, like optimism and pessimism, are further assigned to the president (Kinder, 1986) as well as linked directly to favorability about the future (Hart, 1984b;

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Niven, 2000). If individuals respond to future-oriented frames, assessments of traits like optimism may change as a result of citizens' newfound inspiration.

Many campaign surveys have measured perceptions of presidential candidates' traits. Past American National Election Studies have asked respondents to evaluate candidates' leadership, knowledge, intelligence, honesty, and optimism. These critical traits can be used to evaluate the performance of all presidents (Buchanan, 1987; Herzik & Dodson, 1982; Kinder, 1986; Kinder et al., 1980; Simon, 2009), including assessments of the president's future vision (Hart, 1984b; Hart et al., 2013; Niven, 2000). How future-oriented framing influences perceptions of presidential character traits in general and optimism in particular is not known. Should presidents shape citizens' beliefs about their character based on the type of expectation framed, it would illustrate how chief executives use frames to focus individuals on critical traits associated with presidential leadership and future action.

RQ6: How does the type of expectation frame influence perceptions of presidential traits?

Presidential Approval

Public attitudes regarding presidential job performance are a prominent democratic indicator for elites and citizens alike (Neustadt, 1990). Albeit an imperfect mechanism, public opinion is one means by which citizens can register and presidents can experience democratic feedback (Buchanan, 2013). How might citizens judge presidents for talking about the future? The prior literature offers two contradictory possibilities, each of which I review.

A lack of scholarly consensus exists on the effect of presidential communication on job approval ratings. Some researchers argue that presidential communication has little effect on the public (Edwards, 2003; Simon & Ostrom, 1989). Edwards' (2003)

book *On Deaf Ears* tracks public approval following major presidential speeches. He concludes that presidential communication has little to no effect on approval ratings. Yet other research disagrees. Some scholars show that presidents can use their communication to alter perceptions of their performance (Druckman & Holmes, 2004; Miller & Krosnick, 1996; 2000; Ragsdale, 1984). Druckman and Holmes (2004), for instance, made participants watch the 2002 State of the Union and then evaluate President George W. Bush's job performance. Refuting Edwards' (2003) main argument, Druckman and Holmes (2004) find that presidents can focus the audience's attention on certain issues (e.g. foreign affairs) so that the public evaluates the president more favorably overall. More recent findings argue that presidents can move approval at a local and statewide level by engaging in coordinated message campaigns to influence the tone of local news coverage (Cohen, 2010).

Testing the effect of expectation frames on job approval has merit in the context of prior research. There is a relationship between presidential approval and attained or unattained expectations. Citizens hold presidents accountable for a promised future that did or did not occur. At its most basic, unmet expectations beget drops in presidential approval (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2005; Ostrom & Simon, 1985; Sigelman & Knight, 1983; 1985; Waterman et al., 1999). In one experiment, Sigelman and Sigelman (1986) gave participants a description of a hypothetical hawkish or dovish president on foreign affairs. Each participant then was told that the president either supported or did not support military intervention in Angola. For half the participants, therefore, the president violated expectations. In response, more pacifist participants punished a dovish president who acted as a foreign policy hawk. Studies like this unearth a judgment mechanism that citizens use for met or unmet expectations, but do not analyze the influence of expectations themselves on approval. In addition, research has shown that some instances

of presidential communication move approval (Cohen, 2010; Druckman & Holmes, 2004; Ragsdale, 1984).

Building on this literature, I examine whether attributes of presidential communication like expectation frames move job approval. Hart (1987) argues that presidential communication is a form of governance. Compared to individuals who do not encounter future frames, expectations may direct individuals to think more about the future and the president's future governance. If the future is perceived favorably, individuals may evaluate the president's job performance more positively. This result would mean that "will," "shall," and "can" expectations all influence approval. Another possibility is that different types of expectations have different effects. "Will" expectations may communicate imminent presidential action, which could lead to a change in job approval. "Can" expectations may insinuate the president's efforts to work toward a possible outcome, another way approval could be influenced. I examine these possibilities.

RQ7a: Does the type of expectation frame directly influence presidential job approval?

Traditional frame effects research focuses on the direct effect of frames on an outcome (Scheufele, 1999). Based on past scholarship that encourages communication researchers to test for indirect effects (O'Keefe, 2003), including in framing research (Knobloch-Westerwick & Taylor, 2008), I also test the indirect effect of frame type on job approval as mediated by certainty perceptions (Figure 3). Notions of certainty are theorized to align closely with different types of future-oriented constructions in an expectation frame (Boisson, 2012; Hart, 2000; Morton et al., 2011; Sarkar, 1998). I test whether the type of expectation ("will," "shall," or "can") may affect how certain people are about future policy actions, which will, in turn, influence their approval of the president's job performance. Should personal and/or presidential certainty serve as a

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mediator, it will illuminate a mechanism by which citizens judge the president for the future he frames.

RQ7b: Does the type of expectation frame indirectly influence judgments of presidential job approval through certainty attitudes?

Figure 3. Proposed Mediation Model for Presidential Approval
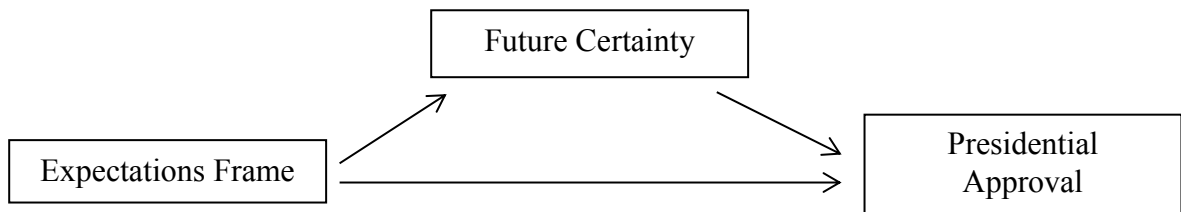
THE CONDITIONING ROLES OF PARTISANSHIP AND POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE

Individuals' political partisanship and levels of political knowledge may moderate the influence of expectation frames. I explore each of these possibilities in this project.

Partisanship

Political partisanship may condition the effects of expectation frames. In general, an individual's pre-existing attitudes and beliefs act as a lens to interpret frames (Chong & Druckman, 2007a; Sniderman & Theriault, 2004). Past research illustrates that the effects of political messages, and in particular frame effects, are moderated by the partisanship of the message recipient (Iyengar, 1991; Lane & Sears, 1964; Shields & Goidel, 1998; Zaller, 1992). One's partisan identification not only influences message acceptance or rejection, but also assessments of presidential approval and character (Zaller, 1992). In his work on episodic and thematic framing of messages, Iyengar (1991) uncovered that societal-based framing (thematic framing) of issues like poverty and crime had larger effects among Democrats than among Republicans.

In the context of expectation frames, an individual's partisanship also should play an important role. Lane and Sears (1964) observed half a century ago that individuals' views of leaders are based partly on partisan ties. In later assessments of the "expectations gap" between an ideal president and President Clinton, scholarship also found a partisanship effect. Democratic respondents were more likely to report that Clinton came closer to ideal traits and actions compared to Republican respondents (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2005). Attributing an expectation frame to President Obama also may activate partisanship. Based on this literature, the effects of expectation frames on certainty, control, trait assessments, and job performance may be conditioned by an individual's partisanship.

RQ8a: Does political partisanship moderate the effects of expectation frames?

Political Knowledge

An individual's knowledge of the political system also may condition the effects of expectation frames. The presidential performance and framing literatures offer contradictory possibilities for how knowledge may condition expectation frame effects. The past literature is mixed on the effect of political knowledge and education on future-based beliefs about the president. Some scholars posit that less knowledgeable individuals have higher performance-based standards for the president (Stimson, 1976; Wayne, 1982). Other research disagrees, finding no relationship between education and presidential performance standards (Presser & Converse, 1976). Still other scholarship finds a relationship between higher levels of education and greater future-based beliefs about what the president will do in office (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2005; Sigelman & Knight, 1985). This area of research paints a mixed picture on the influence of education and knowledge on beliefs about the president.

I overlay this prior research with a framing perspective. Two possibilities emerge from the frame effects tradition: political knowledge may enhance or inhibit frame effects. The first possibility is that greater amounts of political knowledge could enhance expectation frame effects. Scholars have found that higher levels of political knowledge strengthen frame effects because pre-existing information is necessary to process incoming messages (Chong & Druckman, 2007c; Druckman & Nelson, 2003; Nelson, Oxley, & Clawson, 1997). To have effects, frames must be interpreted through existing stores of knowledge, according to Chong and Druckman (2007c). Other research disagrees. Greater amounts of stored information could be used to challenge or counter-argue the president's future frames (Zaller, 1992). This possibility means that more knowledgeable individuals would be less likely to accept a future-based message.

The presidential beliefs and frame effects literatures do not offer a clear picture of *if* and *how* political knowledge may influence the effects of expectation frames. I examine these contradictory findings in this study.

RQ8b: Does political knowledge moderate the effects of expectation frames?

INVESTIGATING EXPECTATION FRAMES

Expectations are an important attribute of presidential communication. From anecdotal accounts of President Reagan's speech on the nuclear weapons defense system to strategist Paul Begala's reflection on President Clinton's strategic messaging, we know that presidents create expectations in their communication. Researchers, however, have yet to assess how prevalent various types of expectations are in presidential communication, how expectations vary based on political and administrative factors, and how different types of expectations influence individual beliefs. By theorizing expectations as a future-oriented attribution frame, research can assess how expectations

are constructed in presidential communication and how they affect certainty about future policy actions, perceptions of presidential control, trait assessments, and job approval judgments. These findings will advance scholarly and practical understandings of the possible strategy behind expectation construction, illuminating important aspects of presidential governing behavior for citizens. Moreover, the results will answer whether the president can influence how individuals think about future actions through public communications. Should presidents help structure beliefs about the future, it will illustrate the role of presidential communicative leadership in directing public perceptions.

The theoretical approach to expectation frames advanced in this chapter is the basis for the dual methodology described in Chapter 3. To examine the construction of expectation frame types in presidential communication and how various frames influence individual attitudes, I conducted a content analysis of communications across three presidencies and fielded an experiment on public reactions to "will," "shall," and "can" expectation frames. This dual approach sheds light on the expectation message environment and how individuals respond it.

Chapter 3: Method

Expectations exist as future-oriented frames in presidential communications. To trace how expectation frames are constructed and how these frames may affect individuals' beliefs, I first employed a content analysis of presidential communications over a 20-year period. The content analysis served as an important diagnostic tool for examining a portion of the expectations message environment attributable to the president. To then analyze the effects of expectation frames on individuals' beliefs, I conducted an experiment to explore reactions to a speech text varying the types of expectations ("will," "shall," "can"). This chapter details the design of the content analysis and experiment.[5]

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS

The content analysis of presidential communications sought to answer three main research questions. First, how prevalent are expectation frames (RQ1a) as well as the three expectation frame types (RQ1b)? Second, what factors predict the construction of the type of expectation in presidential communication, including causal agents (RQ2a) and policy actions (RQ2b)? Third, how do expectation frames vary by communicative venue (RQ3a), political factors (RQ3b), administrative time (RQ3c), and individual

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[5] I also conducted two exploratory interviews as part of this research. I sought to understand how individuals who worked with or close to the President of the United States viewed expectations. On September 18, 2013, I interviewed P. J. Crowley, former State Department spokesman for Secretary Hillary Clinton in Washington, D.C. The interview lasted for approximately one hour. On September 22, 2013, I interviewed Paul Begala, former political strategist for President Bill Clinton in Tysons Corner, VA. The interview lasted for approximately one hour. Interviews were moderately structured (Stewart & Cash, 2011). I gave interviewees flexibility and freedom to respond to questions and lead the conversation. I prepared a question schedule for the interviews (located in Appendix C), but the schedule served more as guide to encourage natural conversation to develop. Begala and Crowley consented to have comments attributed to them. No formal qualitative analysis techniques were used with the interview data. I include insights from each of the interviews throughout this research project.

factors (RQ3d)? The variables coded, as well as how I analyzed the data, reflected my interest in the *presence* and *variability* of expectations in presidential communication.

The research design advances prior approaches looking at the content of presidential candidate and governing communications (Coe, 2007; Coe & Domke, 2006; Coe, Domke, Graham, John, & Pickard, 2004; Fishel, 1985; Hart et al., 2005; Hart & Scacco, 2014). No research to date has directly examined the content of expectations in governing presidential communications. I extend upon scholarship on presidential candidate promises (Fishel, 1985; Hart et al., 2005) as well as the content of presidential communications (Coe, 2007; Coe & Domke, 2006; Coe et al., 2004; Hart & Scacco, 2014) to design this study. First, research has examined the content of presidential candidate promises. Fishel (1985) divided winning candidates' promises into those that maintain the status quo, seek change, articulate goals, and detail future policies. The scholarship, however, does not code promises that lack clear specificity (e.g. "I will make America the most prosperous country to do business in the world"). I broaden Fishel's approach to include these types of statements in my analysis as they are future-oriented statements. Hart et al. (2005) looked for the linguistic variations of "promise" and the word "pledge" across 12 presidential campaigns. Using keyword-in-context computer analytic methods, the Hart et al. study further examines the subject (self or other) attached to each promise. These studies offer evidence that presidents employ the components of expectation frames in their campaign communications. I also look for the causal agent associated with each expectation while extending on Hart et al.'s (2005) approach to include additional agents, including government and citizen-based ones.

Second, recent research has analyzed the content of presidential communications for the presence of values, religious references, and oppositional/binary language (Coe, 2007; Coe & Domke, 2006; Coe et al., 2004; Hart & Scacco, 2014). This research offers

a path forward for sampling and reliably coding executive texts. Although these perspectives show how presidents use and vary rhetorical and stylistic components of their communication, the research does not account for variation that exists both within and across speech texts. Important factors may influence how a president frames his communication both within a text and across multiple texts. For example, the causal agent in a sentence may covary systematically with a particular future orientation. As another example, the president's approval rating may influence how presidents frame expectations across multiple texts. Recognizing that the structure of presidential communication is hierarchical (sentences within a communication), I employ a unique analysis approach using hierarchical linear modeling. This statistical approach has yet to be applied to content analyses in presidential communication.

The first part of this study content analyzed State of the Union addresses and signing statements from the presidencies of Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, as well as a sample of tweets from the White House Twitter feed in the Obama administration. Each of these presidents faced governing circumstances that may have led to similar strategic approaches to expectations. First, presidencies following the end of the Cold War had to confront and articulate an uncertain future outlook for the United States with no clear counterweight to American economic and international influence. This environment may have inspired Clinton, Bush, and Obama to construct a unique set of expectations compared to their Cold War predecessors. Second, these presidents witnessed the means of public communication quickly changing during their terms in office. Whereas presidents during the Cold War could rely on traditional means of mass communication – including radio and television – to communicate messages, President Clinton and his successors had to navigate a new media environment of cable programming, talk radio, and the Internet (Davis & Owen, 1998). According to Baum

and Kernell (1999; 2007), network television no longer guaranteed the president airtime for primetime speeches. As media outlets and platforms proliferated, these presidents had to use every means in their communicative arsenal to reach the public – including speaking to local audiences (Cohen, 2010), giving regularly scheduled Saturday addresses, or setting up an online presence to create a seemingly ubiquitous presidency (Scacco, 2011; 2012). A diverse media environment could yield similar communicative strategies by Clinton, Bush, and Obama (Farnsworth, 2008). Third, each president faced similar circumstances when working with Congress – periods of divided and unified government, increasingly contentious relations punctuated by investigations or impeachment proceedings, and more ideological members of Congress (Poole & Rosenthal, 2007). Similar governing circumstances could affect how these presidents set expectations. In sum, I chose these presidencies to examine both similarities and differences across administrations while holding constant, as much as possible, environmental variables that could affect presidential communications.

Each official communication was analyzed for the presence of expectation frames and their associated components (causal agents, policy foci). Because research has yet to focus on the content of presidential expectations in official communications, I detail my procedure for collecting data, coding expectation frames, and achieving inter-coder reliability.

Data Collection and Sample

I first identified the population of annual messages and signing statements. State of the Union addresses and signing statements were collected from the archives of the American Presidency Project (APP) affiliated with the University of California Santa Barbara. The APP houses these communications for the Clinton, Bush, and Obama

administrations. From January 1993 through January 2014, presidents gave 22 State of the Union addresses[6] and issued 572 signing statements. These communications constituted part of the population used in this analysis. For White House Twitter messages, all direct tweets from @whitehouse during a five month time frame from June 2013 to November 2013 constituted the population ($N = 1,261$).[7] This time period was chosen to capture two key events during President Obama's fifth year in office: the preparation and administrative roll out of the Affordable Care Act healthcare marketplace as well as the government shutdown in October of 2013.

The communications examined were derived from the population of interest. All State of the Union addresses were included ($N = 22$). To generate a subset of signing statements for analysis, I randomly selected 100 each from the Clinton and Bush presidencies as well as all 27 signing statements issued by President Obama ($n = 227$). In a similar manner, 500 tweets were randomly selected from the population of @whitehouse tweets collected.

Each sentence (or tweet) in a presidential communication constituted the unit of analysis ($n = 11,167$). Although recent research has content analyzed White House texts at the level of the communication (Kelley et al., 2013), paragraph (Coe et al., 2004), or single word (Coe, 2007; Coe & Domke, 2006), the sentence level was chosen to fully identify the structure of expectation frames and to detect potential expectation shifts. Pan and Kosicki (1993) argue that while there are different ways of coding texts, a sentence-level approach allows for more nuanced interpretations for framing approaches. The

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[6] Since President Reagan's administration, the first annual message has not been labeled as a "State of the Union" address. New presidents do address a joint session of Congress in a similar style to the State of the Union, however (Peters, 2014). For labeling consistency, the first annual message also is referred to as a State of the Union address.

[7] Re-tweets (RTs) were excluded from the population of interest.

sentence level allowed me to examine use and variation of the components in an expectation frame (causal attribution + future orientation + policy type) (Gamson, 1992; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gitlin, 2003; Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Table 1 details the population of interest and communications chosen for analysis.

Table 1. Data Collection for Content Analysis

President	Communication Type	Population of Communications	Studied Communications	Total Sentences Analyzed
William J. Clinton	State of the Union	8	8	3,091
	Signing Statements	383	100	1,722
George W. Bush	State of the Union	8	8	2,173
	Signing Statement	162	100	1,047
Barack H. Obama	State of the Union	6	6	2,251
	Signing Statement	27	27	383
	@whitehouse Tweets	1,261	500	500
Total		1,855	749	11,167

Coding Procedures and Variables

The data for analysis exhibited a hierarchical structure. Sentences were nested within a text for State of the Union addresses and signing statements, meaning that sentences could not be considered independent of each other.[8] To account for potential variation among sentences and across communications, I examined variables associated with presidential communication at the text level and expectation variation at the sentence level. This hierarchical approach to coding and analyzing presidential communications improves upon prior analysis approaches in this research area.

Communication-Level Variables

For each of the 249 State of the Unions and signing statements, I included variables for the president responsible for the communication, the type of communication, the political context (Coe, 2007) including the composition of Congress

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[8] Tweets are not hierarchical, as they are independent of other tweets and are not nested within a second level grouping.

as well as presidential approval, and major time markers in a presidential administration (first year, reelection, last year).

President. This variable represented the president responsible for each communication, whether Clinton, Bush, or Obama. Across State of the Unions and signing statements, 43.4 percent of the speeches each were from Bill Clinton and George W. Bush while 13.3 percent were given by Barack Obama.[9]

Communication type. Each communication was coded for whether it was a State of the Union address or a signing statement.

Divided government. One variable assessing political context is the political composition of the United States Congress versus the White House. Divided government is a variable often used to assess variations in presidential communication (Kernell, 2007), including signing statements (Kelley et al., 2013) and press conferences (Eshbaugh-Soha, 2003; Hager & Sullivan, 1994). Divided government was operationalized as one political party's control of the White House and an opposing political party's control of at least one house of Congress. Using records compiled by historians in the U.S. House and Senate,[10] I matched partisan division of the U.S. government with the date of each communication. Across annual messages and signing statements, 58.2 percent occurred during divided government.

Presidential approval rating. A president's national approval rating is a political metric often linked to the occurrence of presidential communication (Hart, 1987; Johnson

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[9] The imbalance in Barack Obama's communications compared to his predecessors can be attributed to two factors. First, this analysis includes communications from five years of his administration (six annual messages) compared to a full eight years for Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. Second, Barack Obama has issued fewer signing statements overall compared to his predecessors.

[10] Party divisions of the House of Representatives: 1789 – present. Office of the Historian. Retrieved from http://history.house.gov/Institution/Party-Divisions/Party-Divisions/
Party divisions in the Senate: 1789 – present. Senate Historical Office. Retrieved from http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/history/one_item_and_teasers/partydiv.htm

& Roberts, 2004; Lammers, 1981; Manheim & Lammers, 1981; Ragsdale, 1984). Using Gallup approval ratings compiled by the American Presidency Project,[11] I matched the approval scores corresponding to the dates a survey was fielded with the date a communication was issued. If a survey was not in the field at the time a communication was issued, I used the most recently reported approval score preceding the date of the communication. Across presidents, the average approval rating was 54.17 (*SD* = 12.11, *Range* = 27 to 87).

Administrative time. Variations in presidential communication have been associated with major time points in an administration (Kumar, 2005; Manheim, 1979; Lammers, 1981; Tetlock, 1981). Indeed, presidents are cognizant of the governance clock when making policy and communicative decisions (Hart, 1987; Scacco, 2011). To account for this possibility with presidential expectations, I coded for the first year, reelection, and last year in office. Fifteen percent (14.9%) of annual messages and signing statements occurred during a president's first year in office, 16.5 percent during the reelection year, and 8.8 percent in the final year.

Sentence-Level Variables

Next, the 10,667 sentences associated with the State of the Union addresses and signing statements and 500 tweets from the White House Twitter feed were coded (see Appendix A). Krippendorff's alpha (2013) was used to calculate reliability among three trained coders who analyzed a minimum of 10 percent of sentences and tweets.

Future orientation. Each sentence (tweet) was coded for whether it contained a firm, definitive, and unqualified characterization of the future. The keywords used to indicate a future orientation included: "will," "would," "shall," "should," "can," "could,"

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[11] Peters, G. (2014). Presidential job approval: F. Roosevelt (1941) – Obama. The American Presidency Project. Retrieved from http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/popularity.php

"expect," "anticipate," "forecast," "foresee," or "predict."[12] In some cases, coders delineated between present and future uses of these keywords by looking for temporal markers to indicate the present ("today") or the future ("tomorrow"). Across all sentences, 29.7 percent contained a future orientation (Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.97$). To operationalize the future orientation as central to the presence of an expectation frame, this variable served as a clearinghouse code. Sentences not containing a future orientation were not coded for other elements of an expectations frame.

Type of future orientation. Sentences were coded for the type of future orientation: "will/would," "shall/should," "can/could," or another future word. Future orientations were not considered mutually exclusive, as some sentences contained more than one type of future orientation. Of sentences containing a future orientation, 58.9 percent contained "will/would" (Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.97$), 20.9 percent "shall/should" (Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.99$), and 25.9 percent "can/could" (Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.88$). A small number of sentences contained other future-oriented words (1.4%, Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.68$).

Causal agent. The causal agent associated with the future orientation in a sentence also was identified. Each sentence containing a future focus was coded for the type of causal agent: the president, political but non-presidential agents (e.g. Congress, foreign governments), government programs or issues (e.g. recession, Medicare), private citizens or groups of citizens (e.g. doctors, Jane Smith), collectives which include the president (i.e. "we," "us," "our"), and collectives which excluded the president (i.e. "you"). Of sentences containing a future focus, 17.3 percent included the president as causal agent for future actions (Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.89$), 8.4 percent included other

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[12] Coders were told to associate the future-oriented action with its associated clause, as some sentences contained a mix of time orientations.

political agents (Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.70$), 26.5 percent contained a government program or issue agent (Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.80$), 13.7 percent included a citizen agent (Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.81$), 24.7 percent included a "we" agent (Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.93$), and 2.7 percent a "you" agent (Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.85$).

Policy action orientation. Building on the classification scheme developed by Hart and Scacco (2014) for coding public policy mentions in presidential press conferences, coders classified each sentence as domestic and/or foreign-focused. A sentence could contain both domestic and foreign designations ("New plug-in hybrids roll off our assembly lines, but they will run on batteries made in Korea." Obama, 2009, February 24) or neither designation ("Free people are not drawn to violent and malignant ideologies, and most will choose a better way when they're given a chance." Bush, 2007, January 23). Almost two-thirds (63.7%) of expectations contained a domestic-focused reference (Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.82$) while 20.7 percent contained a foreign-focused reference (Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.82$). One-fifth of the total expectation sentences coded (20.4%) did not contain an explicit policy reference whereas 4.7 percent contained both policy references.

Obama direct quotations (tweets only). Each tweet from the White House Twitter feed was coded for whether it contained a direct quotation from President Obama ("President Obama: 'Insurers can extend current plans that would otherwise be cancelled into 2014.' #Obamacare"). Direct remarks were considered anything with quotations ("") as well as a dash/colon with some signifier that the remark was made the president (e.g. Barack Obama, Obama, BO). Of the 500 tweets analyzed, 38.3 percent contained a direct quotation from President Obama (Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.99$).

Reliability

I calculated code reliability using Krippendorff's alpha, a measure of reliability that accounts for chance agreement among coders (Krippendorff, 2013). Modeling previous content analyses of presidential communications (Coe, 2007; Coe & Domke, 2006; Coe et al., 2004), I randomly sampled a minimum of 10 percent of sentences/tweets from each sample of State of the Union addresses, signing statements, and White House tweets.[13] This modified form of cluster sampling ensured a balanced representation from each communication type for reliability coding. Three trained coders analyzed the communications for the aforementioned variables. In an iterative process, we discussed coding disagreement as well as modified the codebook as needed. All codes, in general and present within each communication type, achieved a minimum acceptable reliability of 0.67 (Krippendorff, 2013). As Table 2 illustrates, 79 percent of the codes achieved a reliability of 0.80 or greater with 45 percent at or above 0.90.

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[13] A total of 1418 sentences and tweets were analyzed in the reliability phase, constituting 12.7 percent of the full sample. Within each communication type, 12.3 percent of State of the Union address sentences were analyzed ($n = 923$), 12.5 percent of signing statement sentences were analyzed ($n = 395$), and 20 percent of tweets were analyzed ($n = 100$).

Table 2. Code Reliability (Krippendorff's Alphas) and Exemplars

Code and Exemplar	Overall	SOTU	SS	Tweet
Future Orientation	0.97	0.96	0.97	0.96
"Will/Would" "My Administration will use all the tools at its disposal to ensure that as much of this funding as possible is directed toward terrorism preparedness and prevention."	0.97	0.97	1.00	0.94
"Shall/Should" "The Director of OPM shall prepare forthwith for submission to the Congress recommended legislation to conform statutes related to the CSRS Board of Actuaries to the Appointments Clause."	0.99	0.98	1.00	1.00
"Can/Could" "We can save millions of lives together, and we ought to do it."	0.88	0.87	0.93	0.92
Other Future "To the extent possible, I intend to consolidate information in these reports with the information concerning Iraq submitted to the Congress pursuant to previous, related resolutions."	0.68	0.73	a	a
Causal Agent				
Presidential Self-Reference "I pledge to you that I will do my best to see that business and labor and Government work together for a change."	0.89	0.71	0.99	1.00
Other Political Agent "I have signed this bill … that the courts can and will interpret these provisions of section 104 in accordance with this ideal."	0.70	0.67	0.83	0.80
Gov't Issue or Program "USA accounts will help all Americans to share in our Nation's wealth and to enjoy a more secure retirement."	0.80	0.82	0.76	0.85
Citizens "One million students will continue to be served by the Reading Excellence Initiative and 375,000 more students than last year will have access to 21st Century Community Learning Centers."	0.81	0.80	1.00	0.84
Collective "We" "We should be working to provide more and better data to parents, teachers, and policymakers, not less."	0.93	0.93	1.00	1.00
Collective "You" "You should, and I hope you will."	0.85	0.83	a	1.00
Policy Focus				
Domestic "RT if you agree: Every kid in America should be able to afford a higher education. #MakeCollegeAffordable	0.82	0.84	0.73	0.92
Foreign "The United States is committed to a world in which the people of all nations can live in freedom, peace, and security."	0.82	0.80	0.84	0.77
Direct Obama Quotation (Twitter-Specific) "President Obama: 'Insurers can extend current plans that would otherwise be cancelled into 2014.' #Obamacare"	--	--	--	0.99
[a] Code did not appear in the analysis [14]				

[14] Because the code did not appear in the analysis, the reliability was equal to zero. All codes across communications allowed for the overall Krippendorff's alpha to be calculated.

Data Analysis

I modeled the data in two ways to account for the variability in expectations, including the types of expectations "will," "shall," and "can." First, to predict the presence of each of these expectation frame types in State of the Union addresses and signing statements, I used logistic hierarchical linear modeling (HLM). This statistical technique accounts for the unique hierarchical structure of the data by analyzing variation within a communication as well as across communications. HLM also is used when data are nested. In this instance, sentences were nested within State of the Union addresses and signing statements. To account for potential variation among sentences and across communications, I examined the aforementioned (a) "communication-level variables" at a macro level and (b) "sentence-level variables" at the sentence level. The model then predicts a dichotomous outcome (expectation type = 1 or 0) based on this set of macro (across communication) and micro (within communication) factors. For instance, divided government is considered a macro or across-communication factor. Government-based agents are considered a micro or within-communication factor. Second, to predict the presence of each expectation frame type in White House tweets, I used logistic regression modeling. Tweets do not exhibit the same data structure as State of the Union addresses and signing statements, meaning that non-hierarchical statistical techniques (e.g. chi-square tests, regression) are appropriate. The tweet models predict a dichotomous outcome (expectation type = 1 or 0) based on the aforementioned "sentence-level" variables, including the addition of an Obama direct quotation variable.

ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF EXPECTATIONS

The content of the expectations messaging environment is one half of the story of how presidents discuss the future. How individuals respond to expectation frames is the other half. The outcomes of interest reflect my focus on examining whether and to what

extent small changes in the future-oriented portion of an expectation frame (the expectation type) can lead to changes in an individual's beliefs about the future and the president. The effects portion of this research sought to answer how "will," "shall," and "can" expectation frames influence impressions of individual and presidential certainty (RQ4), assessments of presidential control (RQ5), judgments of presidential traits (RQ6) and ratings of presidential job approval (RQ7), as well as how these effects may be conditioned by political partisanship (RQ8a) and political knowledge (RQ8b). The answers to these questions will illuminate how expectation frames influence citizens' thinking about the future and the president.

To answer these research questions, I conducted a between-subjects experiment with four conditions. The experimental design, including procedures and measures, was influenced by experimental studies examining presidential expectancy violations, survey research on citizen beliefs about the president, and literature on certainty as well as future-based messaging in climate change communication.

From an experimental perspective, a small set of studies examines how citizen judgments of the president are influenced by the violation of a pre-existing belief about the president. These works, however, do not account for the possibility that individuals form perceptions based on how the future is framed. For example, some of the prior experimental research relies on appropriateness norms that citizens hold of presidential behavior, such as when a president should smile, to determine what actions violate these norms (Bucy, 2000; Bucy & Newhagen, 1999). Other studies have supplied information to citizens (the president is a pacifist) that is later contradicted (the president supports military action) (Sigelman & Sigelman, 1986). These studies assess the influence of expectancy violations on a particular outcome, such as trait ratings (Bucy, 2000) and approval scores (Sigelman & Sigelman, 1986).

The experimental research provides a compelling argument that beliefs about the president matter. My research expands on the literature in two ways. First, I focus on communicated expectations, not their violation. This focus has not been a topic of prior research. Although Bucy (2000) and Bucy and Newhagen's (1999) research uses the violation of visual communication norms as a starting point for their analysis, their analysis does not account for how the norms were established in the first place. My research examines the first step in the expectations process, namely how beliefs about the future are shaped when presidents communicate expectations. Second, I build on previous experimental research by including measures of presidential certainty and control in addition to trait ratings (Bucy, 2000) and approval scores (Sigelman & Sigelman, 1986). These outcomes broaden the scope of expectations effects research while providing a benchmark for how scholarship can assess political beliefs about the future.

The present research also builds upon prior survey-based studies that have examined pre-existing citizen beliefs about how the president should perform his job duties (Herzik & Dodson, 1982; Jenkins-Smith et al., 2005; Kinder et al., 1980; Ostrom & Simon, 1985; Seligman & Baer, 1969; Sigelman & Knight, 1983; 1985; Stimson, 1976; Waterman et al., 1999; Wayne, 1982). Applying the results from these studies for statistical control in the analysis models described below, my approach extends prior experimental work by capturing variance due to these pre-existing beliefs.

This study's experimental design and measures of certainty draw from research about climate change and weather communication. Recent research investigations in assessments of climate change certainty (Poortinga et al., 2011) and how certainty about future climate events is communicated (Corbett & Durfee, 2004; Morton et al., 2011) are advancing clear approaches to measuring future certainty as well as how to manipulate it

experimentally. Past experimental work subtly changed the certainty of climate messages to examine how individuals respond (Morton et al., 2011). Individuals saw statements high in uncertainty ("10-30% likelihood") or certainty ("It is 80% likely…") (p. 105). I rework this approach for presidential communication by varying the type of expectation in each experimental condition. Additionally, the climate change literature focuses on climate skepticism (see Poortinga et al., 2011) as well as how individuals ascribe certainty to the findings of climate science studies (Corbett & Durfee, 2004). The measures adapted from previous research offer a good foundation for analysis in political communication to determine how individuals judge their own certainty about the future as well as the president's.

The experimental design and measures used to assess expectations reflect foundational research in political communication as well as literature in political science and climate change communication. The procedure and measures I outline next illustrate the innovative approach this current research takes to understanding the individual effects of communicated expectations on citizens.

Procedure

After consenting to participate in the study, participants answered a series of questions about the frequency with which they follow politics as well as their beliefs about the president's job responsibilities (Appendix B). After answering these questions, all participants were presented with a paragraph from a fictitious Associated Press article (Figure 4). The excerpt reported on a speech President Obama gave about "a national effort to put an American on Mars by the end of the decade." It did not include any type of expectation frame. The paragraph served as the baseline contextual information for all study participants about the Mars policy announcement.

Figure 4. Fictitious Associated Press Article Paragraph

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) – President Obama announced today a national effort to put an American on Mars by the end of the decade. Unveiling the spaceflight proposal at a White House event, the president said the renewed focus on the Mars mission strengthens the United States' commitment to space discovery after years of budget cuts to space programs. The president's fiscal year 2015 budget includes an additional $150 million in funding for the Mars mission.

Once all individuals had read the AP story excerpt, they were randomly assigned to one of four conditions. In three of the conditions, participants read a short speech vignette attributed to President Barack Obama that discussed plans for a future space mission to the planet Mars. The three conditions each used one type of expectation – "will/would," "shall/should," or "can/could." To integrate ecological validity into the study, the speech vignette was manipulated to mirror the content of expectations messaging. As I discussed earlier in this chapter, 29.7 percent of sentences in the presidential communications analyzed contained an expectation frame. I used this proportion to ensure that five sentences (out of 17) in each of the speech conditions contained at least one expectation. The future-oriented verbs in these five sentences were the only attributes of the speech that I changed across the three conditions. In total, 29.4 percent of the sentences in the speech vignette contained an expectation frame. The speech vignette was modeled after President John F. Kennedy's "We Choose the Moon" speech to Rice University (1962, September 12). Spaceflight policy was selected because it has enjoyed bipartisan support in past national surveys (Kohut, Doherty, Dimock, & Keeter, 2011).[15] Participants read the following vignette:

"For the eyes of all still gaze into space, beyond the moon to Mars and to planets afar. I vow that it be explored under a banner of freedom and

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[15] According to a Pew Research Center survey from June 2011, 58 percent of participants said American leadership in space was essential, including a majority of Republicans (67%), Democrats (54%), and Independents (57%) (Kohut, Doherty, Dimock, & Keeter, 2011).

peace. Yet my vow (will/should/can) only be fulfilled if we are first again to make this leap, and, therefore, America (will/shall/can) be first.

"We set sail on this new sea because there is new knowledge to be gained and used for the progress of all people. We choose to go to Mars. We (will/should/can) set foot on Mars in this decade, not because it is easy, but because it is hard, because that goal (would/should/could) serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one we gratefully accept, one we are unwilling to delay, and one which we (will/shall/could) achieve.

"It is for these reasons that I regard our efforts in space as among the most important decisions that I (will/shall/can) make during my term in office.

"America (will/should/can) undertake this effort to Mars, and we (will/should/can) pay what needs to be paid. I have given this program a high national priority. This year's budget request for NASA increases spending for Mars spaceflight by $150 million.[16] Space technology will see targeted spending increases as well. These spending increases are paid for by streamlining 20 government programs. With an improving economy, this investment is responsible, sustainable, and targeted. As long as I hold this office, I (will/shall/can) ensure this mission is accomplished before the end of this decade.

"Mars is within our grasp. We are going to touch it while igniting new hopes for knowledge and scientific advancement. As we set sail, we ask for our Creator's guidance on this next great adventure to uncover the opportunity that lay within our sight."

Microsoft Word readability statistics for each speech were the same across all three conditions.[17] To ensure some exposure in each of the speech conditions to the stimulus, individuals were required to stay on the vignette page for 30 seconds before they could advance the survey. Time (in seconds) with the speech was unobtrusively tracked (M=74.72, SD=81.67). There were no significant differences between expectation

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[16] Although small compared to the total cost of a spaceflight mission, the $150 million number reflected a one-year cost estimate included in the president's budget. A smaller figure was chosen so as increase the believability of the proposal.

[17] The speeches were 297 words and 18 percent of sentences were passive. The Flesch reading ease was 65.2 percent and the Flesch-Kincaid grade level was 8.7.

experimental groups on time spent with the speech (F [2, 253] = 0.06, p = 0.94). The fourth condition contained no speech vignette and constituted the control group.

Following the experimental manipulation, participants answered questions about their own personal certainty and confidence in the Mars mission, their perceptions of President Obama's certainty and confidence in the Mars mission, their perceptions of how much control the president had over three policy objectives discussed in the vignette, approval of President Obama, perceptions of Obama's presidential traits, and believability of the Mars program. Individuals then answered a battery of six political knowledge questions and concluded the survey by responding to political orientation and demographic questions.

Participants

Participants (n = 346) were recruited in March 2014 through Amazon Mechanical Turk (mTurk), an online service that allows individuals to complete Human Intelligence Tasks (HITs) for a small cash incentive. The mTurk platform allows for participation from a broad cross-section of citizens in survey research (Buhrmester, Kwang & Gosling, 2011; Paolacci, Chandler & Ipeirotis, 2010).[18] Although the sample attained is not demographically representative of the population, participants were more diverse than traditional experimental samples comprised of college students. A more diverse sample ensured a potentially broader representation by age, education, political knowledge, and partisanship – important factors in the prior literature on presidential beliefs (Dennis,

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[18] There are some limitations to using the mTurk platform for experimental research. Participants exhibit a high level of attention to surveys (Clifford & Jerit, 2012). Clifford and Jerit found that mTurk subjects take six political surveys a week on average. Past research has illustrated that political awareness and attention are relatively low in the general population (Zaller, 1992). Demographically, Clifford and Jerit (2012) observed that mTurk workers are younger, more liberal, and more highly educated than the general population. Although some political factors differentiate mTurk workers from the population of United States citizens, my experiment's random assignment ensured that all possible demographic and political factors were controlled for when examining the results.

1976; Jenkins-Smith et al., 2005; Sigelman & Knight, 1985). Participants had to be United States citizens who were 18 years of age or older to participate in the study and were compensated 0.50¢ for successful completion.

Respondents were 48.1 female, 83.6 percent White, 7.9 percent African American, and five percent Hispanic. In terms of age, 40.4 percent of the sample was between 39-49 years old and 31.6 percent was 18-29 years old. More than a third of individuals (34.1%) reported earning a four-year college degree and 25.9 percent reported some college education. Individuals reported relatively left-leaning political backgrounds. Democrats comprised 46.9 percent of the sample, followed by Independents (31.5%), and Republicans (16.0%). Ideologically, 55.1 percent of respondents described themselves as liberal, 23.3 percent conservative, and 21.6 moderate. A chi-square test found significant differences between experimental conditions by gender ($\chi^2[3] = 8.26$, $p < 0.05$). Subsequent analyses included this factor as a control. Cross-tabulations and ANOVAs confirmed that no significant differences existed on the other demographic and political orientation variables.[19]

Dependent Variable Measures

Presidential Certainty

Citizens may hold perceptions of how certain and confident the president is about the future after encountering an expectation frame. This possibility implicates how individuals may attribute certainty to "other" agents. Adapting measures from the climate change literature that ask respondents to rate how "unsure" (Corbett & Durfee, 2004)

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[19] Manipulation checks for success of random assignment: White: ($\chi^2[3] = 4.66$, $p = 0.20$); Hispanic: ($\chi^2[3] = 1.16$, $p = 0.76$); Liberal: ($\chi^2[3] = 1.15$, $p = 0.77$); Conservative: ($\chi^2[3] = 1.76$, $p = 0.62$); Moderate: ($\chi^2[3] = 0.67$, $p = 0.88$); Democrat: ($\chi^2[3] = 2.59$, $p = 0.46$); Republican: ($\chi^2[3] = 0.71$, $p = 0.87$); Independent: ($\chi^2[3] = 1.34$, $p = 0.72$); Age: ($F[3, 338] = 1.15$, $p = 0.33$); Education: ($F[3, 339] = 0.08$, $p = 0.97$)

scientists are about climate change as well as whether "most scientists agree" on climate change causes (Poortinga et al., 2011, p. 1018), presidential certainty was examined with two measures. The first measure asked respondents to rate the confidence of "President Obama in the Mars mission program to put an American on the planet Mars by 2020" from "very unconfident" (1) to "very confident" (4). The second measure asked individuals to respond from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5) that "President Obama is certain that the United States can put an American on the planet Mars by the end of the decade." Responses were standardized to account for differences in the scales. Responses then were averaged to create a measure of presidential certainty ($r = 0.69$, $p < 0.001$, two-tailed; *Range* = -3.13 to 0.91).

Personal Certainty

Personal notions of certainty concern how an individual assesses her own perceptions of the future. Clatterbuck (1979) focused on how certain and confident an individual felt about an interactional partner engaging in a future behavior. In the climate change literature, researchers examine personal certainty beliefs that a climate event will occur in order to measure trend skepticism (Poortinga et al., 2011). Extending upon previous research on interactional certainty (Clatterbuck, 1979) and climate change certainty (Poortinga et al., 2011), a respondent's own certainty about the future was assessed in two ways. The first question asked respondents to rate how confident they were in their "general ability to predict what will happen with the Mars mission program" from "very unconfident" (1) to "very confident" (4). On average, individuals reported some confidence in their predictive ability ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 0.74$). Respondents then responded to a statement that "I am certain that the United States can put an American on the planet Mars by the year 2020" from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5).

On average, agreement with the statement was 2.98 (SD = 1.16). The two measures were analyzed separately due to a weak correlation (r = 0.01, p = 0.92, two-tailed).[20]

Presidential Control

When individuals assign causal attribution for an action, they make an assessment of the agent's perceived control (Knobloch-Westerwick & Taylor, 2008). Since expectation frames construct an agent's causal relationship with future actions, the type of expectation may influence perceptions of future control over such actions. Based on open-ended survey questions of responsibility attribution from Iyengar (1990) as well as public opinion survey questions of presidential control, individuals were asked to rate from "no control at all" (1) to "a great deal of control" (4) how much control President Obama had over "the Mars mission budget," "streamlining programs to pay for the Mars mission," and "landing an American on the planet Mars by the end of the decade."[21] Each of these areas corresponded to a direct policy reference made in the speech vignette. Responses were averaged to create a measure of presidential control (Cronbach's α = 0.77). On average, individuals rated President Obama's control over these policies a 2.69 (SD = 0.66).

Obama Presidential Traits

Building on the literature regarding "ideal" presidential traits (Kinder et al., 1980), as well as survey research from the American National Election Studies, individuals were asked to describe how well each of the following traits described

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[20] Future research should assess why the personal certainty measure exhibited no internal consistency compared to the presidential certainty measure.

[21] Control questions were based partly on past public opinion questions obtained from the Roper Center Public Opinion Archives iPoll Databank. Survey questions were found from a keyword search for "Control" with the following excluded keywords: "birth" OR "election" OR "win" OR "won" OR "majority" OR "House" OR "candidate" OR "gain" OR "regain" OR "party."

President Obama: "provides strong leadership," "knowledgeable," "intelligent," "honest," and "optimistic." Individuals answered on a scale from "not well at all" (1) to "extremely well" (4). Responses were averaged together to create a measure of presidential traits (Cronbach's α = 0.90).[22] On average, individuals reported that the traits described President Obama "well" (M = 2.97, SD = 0.78). Given Niven's (2000) notion that political optimism represents a positive belief about future events, I isolated the presidential optimism measure and examined it separately by expectation type (M = 3.23, SD = 0.79).

Job Approval

Respondents were asked to rate whether they "approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president" from "strongly disapprove" (1) to "strongly approve" (5). On average, individuals approved of the president's job performance (M = 3.03, SD = 1.38).

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[22] Some scholarship treats the trait measures separately for analysis. Kinder (1986), for example, found that 24 trait judgments loaded separately on five latent traits in a confirmatory factor analysis. These traits were labeled competence, leadership, integrity, empathy, and negativity. Since this analysis uses a smaller five-item traits battery from the American National Election Studies survey, I did a principal components analysis (PCA) to determine the efficacy of creating one measure of presidential traits. After establishing a minimum eigenvalue of one, the PCA extracted one component greater than one that explained 71.22 percent of the total variance. All factors loadings on the component were greater than 0.70: Strong leader (0.86), Knowledgeable (0.88), Intelligent (0.88), Honest (0.88), and Optimistic (0.70). The PCA and corresponding reliability analysis (Cronbach's α = 0.90) confirmed the appropriateness of one traits measure.

Control Variables[23]

Presidential Responsibilities

Adapted from survey research on the "ideal" responsibilities citizens assign to presidents (Herzik & Dodson, 1982; Jenkins-Smith et al., 2005; Kinder et al., 1980; Waterman et al., 1999), individuals were asked about the importance of five of the president's job responsibilities on a scale from "not at all important" (1) to "extremely important" (5). These responsibilities included "exhibit sound judgment in a crisis," "deal effectively with foreign countries," "have high ethical standards," "work well with the U.S. Congress," and "ensure strong growth of the U.S. economy." Responses were averaged to create a beliefs measure of presidential responsibilities (Cronbach's α = 0.77). On average, individuals rated the importance of these responsibilities a 4.35 (SD = 0.73).

Political Knowledge

To control for the possible influence of political knowledge on assessments about the president and the future, individuals were asked six questions about politics and government. These questions were modeled after those used in prior research (see Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996). Respondents were asked which political figure is President of the Senate (29.3% correct), who decides the constitutionality of laws (87.7% correct), the constitutional amendment authorizing the vice president as successor to the president (13.1% correct), who has the constitutional power to declare war (61.7% correct), who nominates judges to the federal courts (83.0% correct), and the majority required to override a presidential veto (84.4% correct). Responses were averaged to create a

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[23] Manipulation checks for success of random assignment: Presidential Responsibilities: (F [3, 338] = 0.76, p = 0.52); Political Knowledge: (F [3, 339] = 0.60, p = 0.62); Follow Politics: (F [3, 339] = 0.64, p = 0.59); Mars Believability: (F [3, 339] = 0.85, p = 0.47)

measure of political knowledge (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.55$).[24] On average, individuals answered 3.57 questions correctly ($SD = 1.32$).

Follow Politics

The frequency with which individuals follow politics was assessed with one question: "Some people seem to follow what is going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there is an election or not. Others are not that interested, or are interested in other things. Would you say you follow what is going on in government and public affairs…" "hardly at all" (1) to "all or most of the time" (4). On average, individuals reported following politics some of the time ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.80$).

Mars Program Believability

To control for the fictitious nature of the speech vignette, individuals were asked to assess whether "After having a chance to read about the Mars mission program, would you say that the program is…" "extremely unbelievable" (1) to "extremely believable" (4). Respondents rated the believability of the program as 2.48 on average ($SD = 0.90$).

Data Analysis

To examine whether individuals are influenced by the type of expectation frame in a presidential speech, I first used OLS regression to predict certainty, control, trait ratings, and approval by experimental condition, controlling for political orientations and demographic factors. To examine the indirect effect of expectations type on job approval through certainty beliefs, I use Hayes' (2013) PROCESS program to model the indirect

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[24] Although the Cronbach's alpha was lower than traditionally acceptable levels for scale reliability (DeVellis, 2012), I included the measure because it was significantly correlated with commonly associated demographic and political factors. Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) note that political knowledge should be significantly correlated with following politics (positive), level of education (positive), and female gender (negative). The knowledge measure performed as expected when correlated with the "follow politics" variable ($r = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$, one-tailed), level of education ($r = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$, one-tailed), and female gender ($r = -0.17$, $p < 0.001$, one-tailed).

relationship. This program not only allows researchers to make judgments on direct effects, but also provides bootstrapping techniques for confidence intervals to determine the significance of indirect effects.

THE CONTENT AND EFFECTS OF EXPECTATION FRAMES

A multi-methodological approach was needed to assess the content of the expectations message environment during the Clinton, Bush, and Obama presidencies as well as the effects of expectation frames on individuals. The results of the content analysis, including the proportion of presidential communications that contain expectations, served as a valuable means for integrating ecological validity into the experimental design portion of the study. Experiments often are critiqued for lacking externally valid elements in favor of testing causal relationships. Although generalizability was not the goal of the experiment in this study, ensuring that the speech vignettes hued as closely as possible to the expectations message environment was a goal of this research. This methodological tie between content and effects distinguishes the present research from literature that has focused on either content (Fishel, 1985; Hart et al., 2005) or effects (Bucy, 2000; Bucy & Newhagen, 1999; Sigelman & Sigelman, 1986) of expectations-related topics.

Based on the methodological outline provided here, I move next to report the results of the content analysis in Chapter 4 and then the experiment in Chapter 5. The message environment for expectations is complex. As I soon show in Chapter 4, however, the patterns reveal presidents to be strategic actors in a dynamic process of constructing expectations for the public.

Chapter 4: The Content of Expectations

In the final days of the 1992 presidential campaign, Bill Clinton was thinking about the future. With public opinion polls showing an impending victory, the future he envisioned became tempered by the weight of the office he might win. Promises had to be qualified. As Clinton explained to his strategist Paul Begala, "You know, we just might win. And where would we be?" As Begala explained during an interview I conducted in September of 2013, the campaign's communication shifted to reflect a more cautious approach in order to quell the expectations bonfire Clinton had created. By including phrases such as "We didn't get into this [economic difficulty] overnight" in his speeches, the former Arkansas governor attempted to prepare the American people for future challenges (personal communication, September 22, 2013).

Sixteen years later, President-elect Barack Obama adopted a similarly cautious tone on election night 2008. Declaring victory in Chicago's Grant Park, Obama prepared the public for the difficult task of governing through a recession and two wars. Obama warned of "setbacks and false starts" and foreshadowed that "The road ahead will be long. Our climb will be steep. We may not get there in one year or even in one term, but America, I have never been more hopeful than I am tonight that we will get there. I promise you: We as a people will get there" (2008, November 4). Combining the language of "promise" with expectations for his administration, the president-elect's language was certain, hopeful, cautious, and reflective of the challenges confronting the country and his incoming administration.

The Clinton and Obama accounts illustrate a tension that presidents face in communicating expectations. One tendency is to state that an administration and aggressive leadership "will" change things for the better – a strategy used to ignite hope

and excitement among citizens, according to Paul Begala (personal communication, September 22, 2013). Presidents may project aggressive leadership with "will" expectations. The theorized marker of certainty, "will" may illustrate how presidents project an assured, confident view of the future (Boisson, 2012; Hart, 2000). Framing a clear future has benefits. Presidents enter office with support garnered partly by the promises made during the political campaign (Brace & Hinckley, 1991). Campaign promises become governing agendas (Fishel, 1985; Hart et al., 2005). Downsides exist, however. The most apparent is the linkage, believed by both scholars and political officials, between unmet expectations and declines in presidential approval ratings (Brace & Hinckley, 1991; Sigelman & Knight, 1983; 1985; Stimson, 1976). The constant use of "will" expectations could construct unattainable expectations. Jenkins-Smith et al. (2005) worry that some forms of presidential communication can engender high expectations by encouraging "the public to look first to the White House for leadership" (p. 693). To stoke visions of the future thus represents a high risk, potentially high reward strategy for the White House.

The other tendency – to temper visions to reflect a possible future – illustrates the unique circumstances of the presidency. Multiple types of agents challenge presidential influence in the political system. Citizens hold great and contradictory beliefs about how the president should act, look, and communicate (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2005; Kinder et al., 1980; Medvic, 2013; Simon, 2009; Waterman et al., 1999). News media often interpret presidential actions with a negative tone (Edwards, 2003; Farnsworth & Lichter, 2006; Groeling, 2010). Congress may have difficulty working with the president (Kernell, 2007; Neustadt, 1990). These challenges may constrain how presidents envision the future. Therefore, presidential communication should adjust as a result. Instead of providing assurance of what they "will" do in the future, presidents may shift to more

tentative language, such as describing what they "can" possibly do in the future given constraints on their influence and abilities. If presidents make this shift, they may use more "can" expectation frames as opposed to "will" ones. By painting possibilities without certainty (Dunmire, 2005; Pinna, 2007), presidents try to preserve their influence. In an interview, former State Department spokesman P. J. Crowley explained that presidents communicate more cautiously the longer they hold office (personal communication, September 18, 2013), potentially a result of socialization to the office or challenges to executive influence. Manheim (1979) argues that presidential press conferences during the honeymoon period include more references to the future compared to the post-honeymoon period. More recent research suggests that presidents are cautious communicators by nature (Hart, 1984b; Hart & Childers, 2004). Scholars and practitioners recognize that presidents, at times, use more cautious communication – potentially a byproduct of challenges to their influence.

This tension exists because presidents must talk about the future. The future is a possible path to projecting and preserving influence. But circumstances challenge presidents. Their communication about the future may strategically change as a result. Both political professionals and scholars suggest that presidents construct expectations in two different manners: one is more certain and forward-looking (Begala personal communication, September 22, 2013); the other is more cautious and caveat-filled (Hart, 1984b; Hart & Childers, 2004; Manheim, 1979). This chapter investigates the tension as well as the possibility that presidents strategically navigate it by constructing different types of expectations. How presidents navigate this tension may illuminate how they seek to gain, preserve, and project influence in a competitive political messaging environment. I report the results of a content analysis of over 11,000 sentences in State of the Union addresses and signing statements from 1993-2014, as well as tweets from the Obama

White House's Twitter feed. I analyzed each sentence for the presence of an expectation frame. In addition, I collected contextual information about each State of the Union address and signing statement. These data included the state of the federal government (divided or unified), presidential approval, time in administration (first year, reelection, last year), and the president who issued each communication.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, I examine the general presence and variation of expectation frames in State of the Union addresses and signing statements. Second, I compare the relative presence and variation of the *types* of expectations found in these presidential communications. Developed in the literature review (see Chapter 2), these types include "will," "shall," and "can" expectations. Third, I examine how President Obama has used expectations on the White House Twitter feed. Each section reports descriptive percentages alongside statistical models predicting the probability of the president using a particular expectation frame. The first section, which I turn to now, "General Presence of Expectations," examines the overarching presence of expectation frames in presidential discourse.

THE GENERAL PRESENCE OF EXPECTATIONS

Research question 1a asked about the relative presence of expectation frames in presidential communication. Expectations are a prominent attribute of presidential communication.[25] In State of the Union addresses, future-oriented frames are included in just over a quarter (27.17%) of the sentences spoken by the president. As Figure 5 illustrates, Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama employ expectations similarly in their annual messages across each administration. Almost 30 percent of sentences in Barack

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[25] Percentages reflect unweighted values. Percentages reported should be interpreted with caution because (a) presidents with more sentences and (b) longer speeches will be weighted more heavily.

Obama's State of the Union addresses contained an expectation, followed by Bill Clinton (27.03%) and George W. Bush (26.96%).

Figure 5. Expectation Frames in State of the Union Addresses
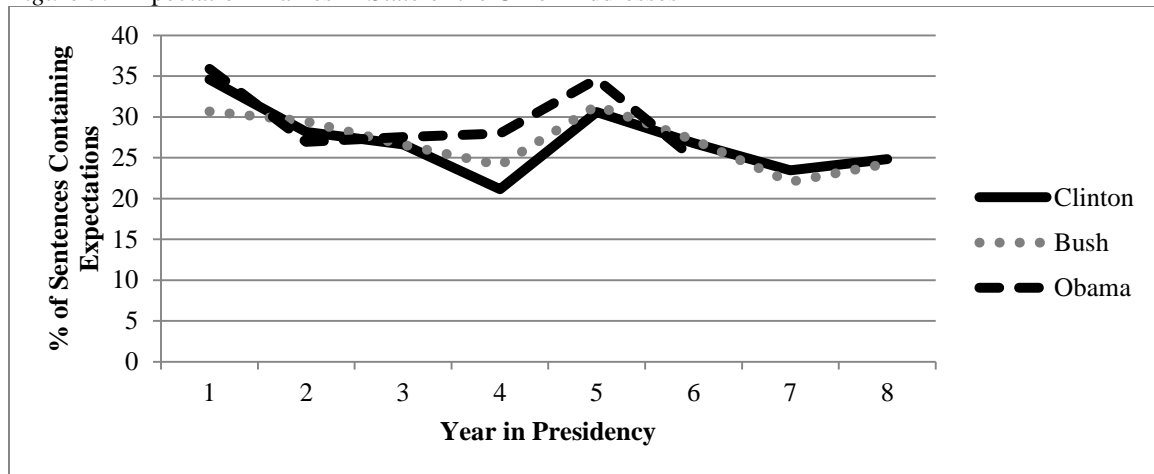
The overall pattern is telling and illustrates the calculus behind expectations construction. Across administrations, presidents begin with a high percentage of expectations in their first annual message.[26] This percentage ebbs during the first term, peaks at the beginning of the second, and then ebbs again toward the conclusion of each administration. Each president constructs their peak percentage of State of the Union expectations in year one and year five of their administration. President Clinton's first annual address had expectation frames in 34.59 percent of the sentences, similar to President Obama's 35.89 percent of sentences in his first address. President Bush's peak was in his year five State of the Union with 31.38 percent of sentences containing an expectation. Bush's first year speech had the second highest percentage of his presidency (30.69%).

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[26] Since President Reagan's administration, the first annual message has not been labeled as a "State of the Union" address. New presidents do address a joint session of Congress in a similar style to the State of the Union, however (Peters, 2014). For labeling consistency, the first annual message also is referred to as a State of the Union address.

Expectation use in signing statements exhibits less cross-presidency consistency compared to annual messages (Figure 6). Just over a third of sentences (35.10%) in these intergovernmental messages included an expectation frame. Barack Obama had the highest percentage devoted to expectations (40.94%) followed closely by George W. Bush (39.54%). Bill Clinton lagged behind his successors in the percentage of sentences including expectations (29.08%).

Figure 6. Expectation Frames in Signing Statements
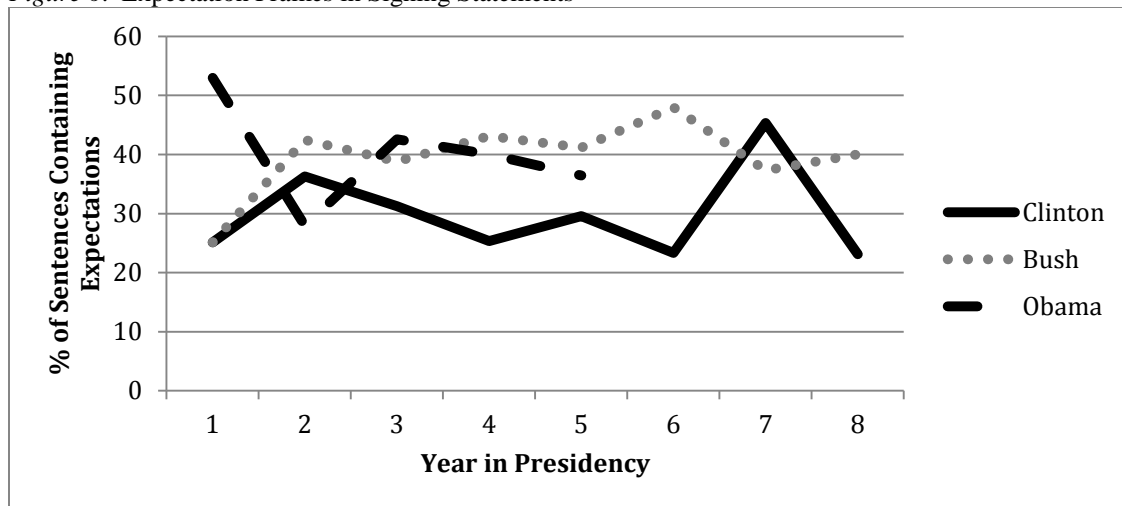
Figure 6 illustrates the average percentage of expectation statements used by each president in his signing statements.[27] Presidents Clinton and Bush began their administrations with a relatively low percentage of expectations, with peak percentages occurring in year six for Bush (47.98%) and seven for Clinton (45.31%). President Obama began his presidency with a high percentage of expectations with subsequent declines in later years of his administration.

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[27] These averages are unweighted and reflect the number of signing statements analyzed per year of a presidency. Because Barack Obama issued 27 signing statements, the averages for his administration will be affected by the smaller sample size compared to Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.

These overall findings illustrate that expectations are an important component of presidential communication in State of the Union addresses and signing statements. As Figures 5 and 6 capture, however, important variation exists in how expectations are used by presidents. Research question three asked how the use of an expectation frame varies by the communicative venue (State of the Union address, signing statement) (RQ3a), political climate (divided government, presidential approval) (RQ3b), administrative time (RQ3c), and individual presidents (RQ3d). To statistically examine how the overarching expectation frame varies by the aforementioned factors, I used logistic hierarchical linear model (HLM) to predict the probability of a sentence containing an expectation frame in a State of the Union address and signing statement (Table 3).[28] Based on the different patterns appearing in Figures 5 and 6 for how expectations vary by communication type and time in an administration, I included three interaction variables as a post hoc assessment of these visual trends.

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[28] This technique reflects the structure of the data (sentences nested within a communication, by which I mean a signing statement or State of the Union address). Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) accounts for variation within a communication as well as across communications. The HLM model for predicting the likelihood of an expectation frame includes a dichotomous outcome with a Bernoulli distribution (expectation = 0 or 1). Based on procedures outlined by Hayes (2006), the intercept was estimated as a random effect to examine variation among level 2 units. Full maximum likelihood estimation was used.

Table 3. Predicting the Presence of an Expectation Frame
Logistic HLM Model, State of the Union and Signing Statement Sentences

	Coefficient (SE)
Intercept	-1.15***
	(0.15)
Communication Type (1=SS, 0=SOTU)	0.52***
	(0.07)
First Year in Office	0.16
	(0.12)
Reelection Year	-0.15
	(0.10)
Last Year in Office[29]	-0.04
	(0.08)
Divided Government	-0.16*
	(0.08)
Presidential Approval	0.003
	(0.002)
George W. Bush	0.18**
	(0.08)
Barack Obama	0.22**
	(0.08)
Type x First Year	-0.68***
	(0.17)
Type x Reelection Year	-0.02
	(0.15)
Type x Last Year	-0.39*
	(0.19)
Variance of Random Effects	0.02
Chi-Square	$\chi^2(237) = 309.95, p < 0.001$

*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$
sentences = 10,666; communications = 249

Communication Venue and Administrative Time

Presidents use expectations differently depending on both the communicative venue and time in an administration. As shown in Table 3, presidents bookend their administrations with expectations (or a lack thereof). Venue significantly interacts with administrative time to influence the predicted probability of a sentence containing an expectation in the annual message and signing statements. The first (B = -0.68, SE = 0.17,

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[29] Calculations for the last year in office made in all HLM models reflect available data for the Clinton and Bush administrations.

$p < 0.001$) and final ($B = -0.39$, $SE = 0.19$, $p < 0.05$) years of an administration significantly interact with the type of communication to influence the probability of an expectation frame. Converting the coefficients to probabilities and holding all other variables in the model constant at their mean or modal values, the probability of a sentence containing an expectation in the first annual message is 0.27 compared to 0.21 in the reelection year and 0.23 in the final year. In signing statements, the probability of a future-oriented frame in the first year is 0.24 compared to 0.31 in the reelection year and 0.26 in the eighth year.[30] These findings complement the trends found in Figures 5 and 6. Across presidents, there is a greater likelihood of expectation use in the first year annual message compared to first year signing statements. Conversely, presidents exit office by constructing more expectations in the intergovernmental communications of signing statements than the annual message.

Political Factors

Political factors relate to presidents' use of expectation frames. In general, divided government is an important factor for understanding citizen, presidential, and congressional behavior (Edwards et al., 1997; Nicholson et al., 2002). For presidential expectations, the partisan division of government matters as well. Divided partisan control of government significantly reduces the odds of an expectations statement ($B = -0.16$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < 0.05$). Holding all other variables constant, the probability of an expectations statement in divided government is 0.35, a 0.04 decrease from unified government. A second political factor linked to the presence and frequency of presidential communication is job approval ratings (Johnson & Roberts, 2004; Lammers, 1981; Ragsdale, 1984). Although looked to as a means to gauge presidential public

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[30] Outside of the first, reelection, and last years of an administration, the probability of an expectation in State of the Union addresses is 0.24 and in signing statements is 0.35.

prestige (Neustadt, 1990), the president's approval does not have a significant effect on the use of an expectation frame.

Individual Presidents

The construction of expectation frames reflects the influence of both institutional and individual factors. Although each president constructs expectations similarly in certain contexts, each chief executive takes personal initiative at other moments. Compared to President Bill Clinton, Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama were significantly more likely to include expectation frames in their State of the Union addresses and signing statements. A communication from President Bush increases the probability of an expectation by 0.04 ($B = 0.18$, $SE = 0.07$, $p < 0.01$) relative to President Clinton. A communication from President Obama similarly increases the probability of an expectation by 0.05 compared to Clinton ($B = 0.22$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < 0.01$).

The Presence and Variation of Expectation Frames

That presidential use of expectations varies across time and political circumstance offers the first indication that context matters for when and where presidents talk about the future. For State of the Union addresses, patterns of expectation use across presidencies are remarkably similar (see Figure 5). Presidents increase and decrease expectation use at various points in a presidency, indicating some strategic calculus as to why presidents frame the future when they do. At the outset of a presidency, chief executives seem eager to frame their future governance for citizens and political agents in the State of the Union. This could be a means of shaping a broader leadership narrative and establishing influence. These findings reveal that presidents are framing the future more at some points than others, not whether presidents are stoking hopes of tomorrow's certainty or tempering expectations of future possibility. To more closely examine this

tension as well as the presence of types of expectation frames (RQ1b) and the variability in their use (RQ2a, RQ2b), I move next to compare presidential use of the specific types of expectations in discourse – "will," "shall," and "can" constructions.

USE AND VARIATION OF EXPECTATION TYPES

How do presidents negotiate the tension to stoke and temper visions of the future? The three main types of expectations – "will," "shall," and "can" – illustrate the flexibility that presidents have when constructing the future in their communications. RQ1b asked about the prevalence of each of these frames. Looking at only those sentences containing an expectation reveals how presidents prioritize different types of frames. Across State of the Union addresses and signing statements, the vast majority, 59.29 percent, of sentences containing an expectation included a "will" future orientation.[31] The second most used future orientation, "shall," was employed in 30.84 percent of the expectation framed sentences. "Can" expectations appeared in 17.07 percent of the future-oriented sentences.

Comparing the trends in the types of expectations used by communicative venue and president illustrates both recurring patterns of communication across presidencies as well as individual differences. The State of the Union, an expression of institutional authority, has particular patterns of expectation use. Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama default to constructing "will" expectations in State of the Union addresses (Figure 7). Each president began with a high percentage of expectation frames including a "will" future orientation. In general, the percentage ebbed over the course of the president's first term (except for George W. Bush), increased slightly at the beginning of the second term, and remained constant toward the eighth year.

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[31] Percentages reflect unweighted values. Percentages reported should be interpreted with caution because (a) presidents with more sentences and (b) longer speeches will be weighted more heavily.

Figure 7. "Will" Expectation Frames in State of the Union Addresses
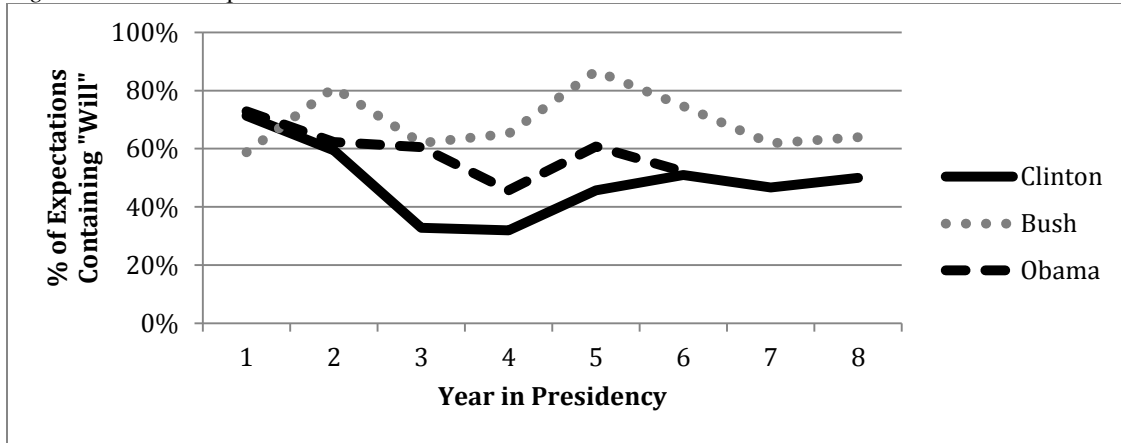
"Shall" expectations were the least used frame in State of the Union addresses and most reflective of individual presidential style (Figure 8). Although President Bush rarely used "shall" expectations, Presidents Clinton and Obama used them more frequently at particular times in each administration (Clinton year 3; Obama year 4).

Figure 8. "Shall" Expectation Frames in State of the Union Addresses
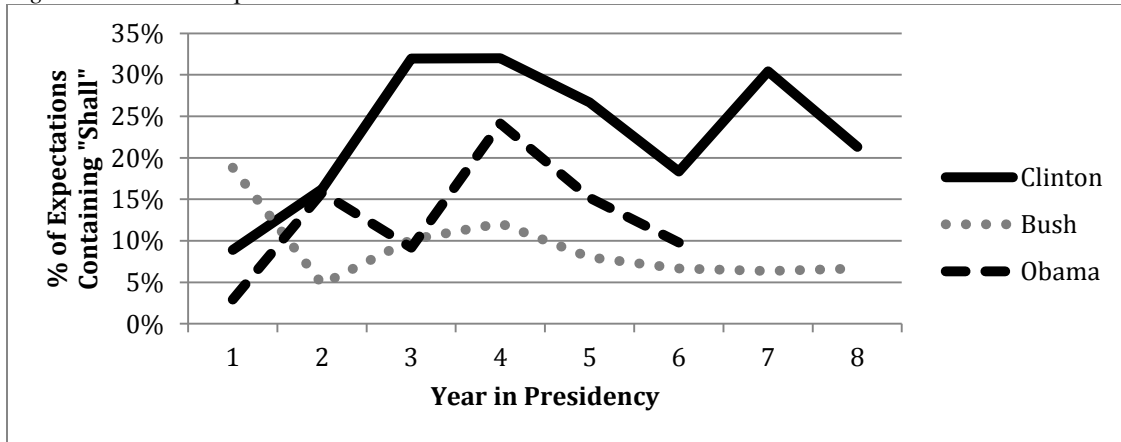
The "can" expectation is the second most used frame overall in State of the Union addresses (Figure 9). Again, George W. Bush follows a different pattern of use during the first five years of his presidency compared to his Democratic counterparts.

Figure 9. "Can" Expectation Frames in State of the Union Addresses
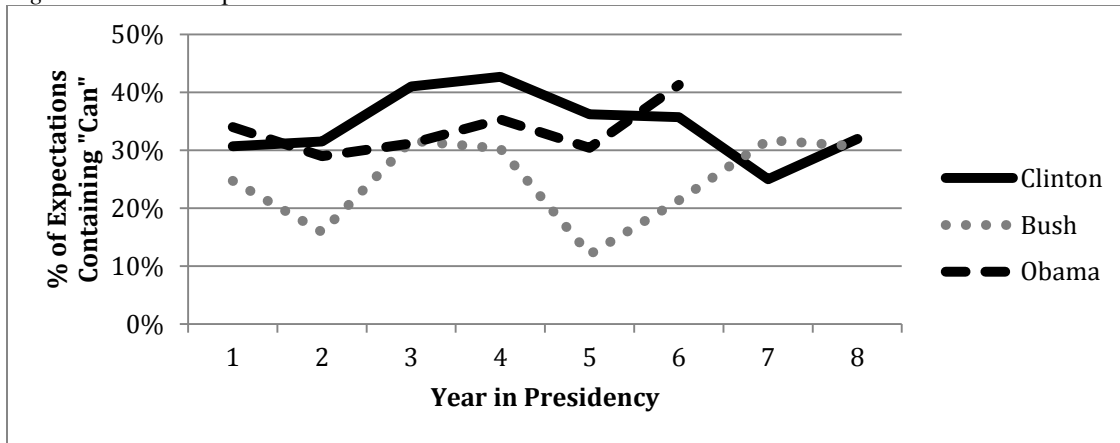
Signing statements are reflective of an individual president's approach to directing specific types of expectations at intergovernmental agents. Bill Clinton and Barack Obama preferred "will" expectations (78.87% Clinton, 74.08% Obama) while George W. Bush did not (37.03%). Figure 10 illustrates these differences. Each president began his administration with a high percentage of "will" expectations, similar to the annual message. Although this percentage ebbed during the first term across presidents, it fell at a sharper rate for George W. Bush. The "will" percentage rebounded in the seventh year for both Clinton and Bush.

Figure 10. "Will" Expectation Frames in Signing Statements
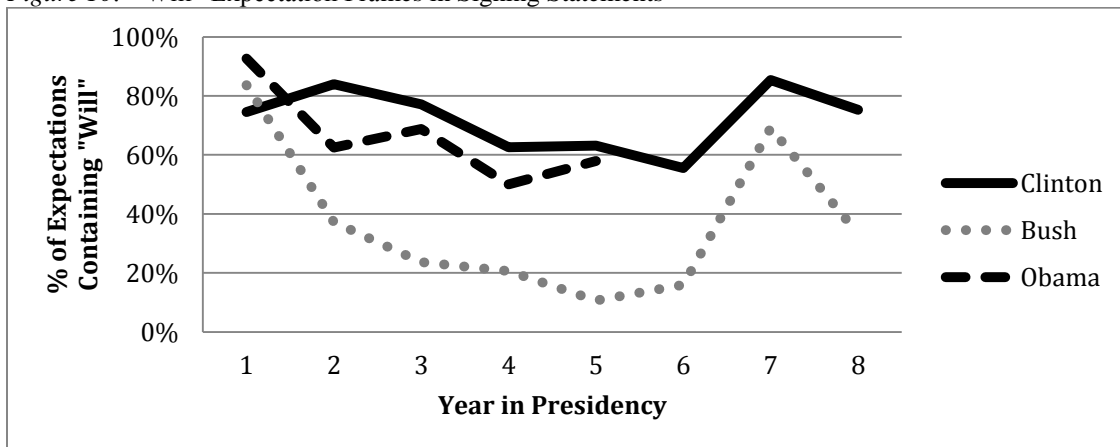
Turning to "shall" expectations, President Bush included this future orientation in 62.67 percent of his expectation frames, almost seven times more than his Democratic counterparts (6.84% Clinton, 9.26% Obama). This vast disparity is highlighted in Figure 11. Clinton and Obama rarely used "shall" expectations while Bush approached 100 percent of expectations with this construction in his fifth year.

Figure 11. "Shall" Expectation Frames in Signing Statements
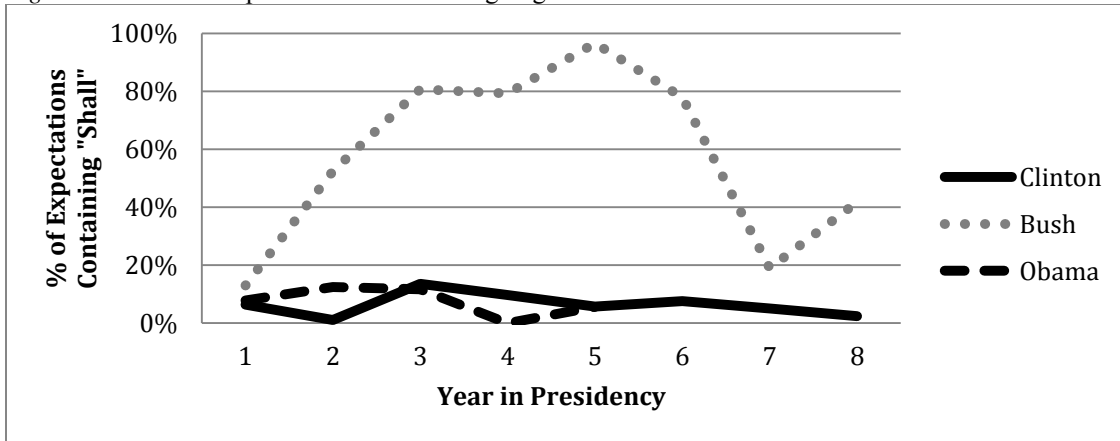
For "can" expectations, each president included this future-oriented construction in around 15 percent of the frames (Figure 12). No clear trends predominate. For Presidents Bush and Obama, use increased during the first three years of the administration while maintaining a constant level for President Clinton. Beyond this time point, usage of "can" diverged across presidencies.

Figure 12. "Can" Expectation Frames in Signing Statements
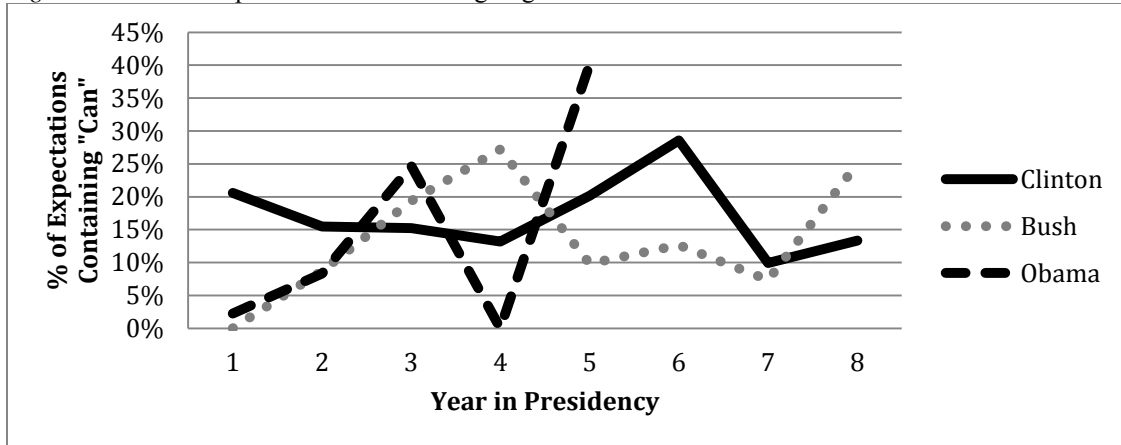
These charts illustrate diverse patterns over time and across presidencies. To look further at the variation in the types of expectations used, I modeled the predicted probability of each type of expectation in a logistic HLM analysis (Table 4).[32] These models provide a systematic picture of how a "will," "shall," or "can" future-oriented frame is predicted based on the same factors as the previous HLM model (Table 3). The models also include the associated frame components: the causal agent and policy focus. I include these frame components to examine whether they consistently appear with a specific type of expectation. Further, I model three interaction variables for communication venue and time in administration as a post hoc assessment of the visual trends found in Figures 7-12.

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[32] The HLM models includes (a) within communication factors at Level 1 representing the relative presence of additional frame components including causal agents and policy foci as well as (b) a set of cross-communication factors at Level 2 including approval, divided government, and time in an administration. The HLM models for predicting the likelihood of a "will," "shall," or "can" expectation statement include a dichotomous outcome with a Bernoulli distribution (expectation = 0 or 1). Based on procedures outlined by Hayes (2006), the intercepts were estimated as a random effect to examine variation between level 2 units. Intercepts associated with level 1 units were fixed. Restricted maximum likelihood estimation was used due to a reduced sample size ($n = 3,180$).

Table 4. Predicting the Presence of an Expectation Type (Will, Shall, Can)
Logistic HLM Model, State of the Union and Signing Statement Expectation Sentences

	"Will"	"Shall"	"Can"
	Coefficient (SE)	Coefficient (SE)	Coefficient (SE)
Intercept	-0.15 (0.60)	-1.78* (0.71)	-0.90** (0.35)
Comm. Level Factors			
Communication Type (1=SS, 0=SOTU)	-0.64* (0.28)	0.99** (0.37)	-0.18 (0.15)
First Year in Office	1.37*** (0.30)	-1.24*** (0.37)	0.10 (0.12)
Reelection Year	-0.28 (0.30)	0.52 (0.36)	0.28** (0.09)
Last Year in Office	0.27 (0.36)	-0.38 (0.55)	0.11 (0.09)
Divided Government	0.57* (0.24)	-0.82** (0.29)	0.02 (0.10)
Presidential Approval	0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01* (0.005)
George W. Bush	-1.77*** (0.23)	2.40*** (0.28)	-0.24* (0.10)
Barack Obama	-0.31 (0.26)	0.27 (0.34)	0.08 (0.10)
Type x First Year	*n.s.*	*n.s.*	-1.12** (0.39)
Type x Reelection Year	*n.s.*	*n.s.*	-0.31 (0.28)
Type x Last Year	*n.s.*	*n.s.*	-0.37 (0.35)
Sentence Level Factors			
Causal Agent: President	0.81*** (0.22)	0.18 (0.23)	-0.37 (0.20)
Causal Agent: Gov't Program	1.11*** (0.14)	-0.68*** (0.19)	0.08 (0.20)
Causal Agent: Citizens	-0.33** (0.10)	0.14 (0.15)	0.89*** (0.12)
Causal Agent: Collective "We"	-0.60*** (0.16)	0.51* (0.22)	1.00*** (0.16)
Causal Agent: "You"	-0.40 (0.39)	0.43 (0.38)	1.01*** (0.29)
Domestic Oriented	0.11 (0.10)	0.05 (0.15)	0.05 (0.12)
Foreign Oriented	0.50** (0.17)	-0.60** (0.20)	0.15 (0.15)
Variance of Random Effects	1.09	1.65	0.03
Chi-Square	$\chi^2(227) = 995.76$, $p < 0.001$	$\chi^2(227) = 1019.78$, $p < 0.001$	$\chi^2(224) = 251.25$, $p = 0.10$

*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$ sentences = 3,180; communications = 236
Note: *n.s.* represents a non-significant interaction

Frame Components

Understanding the frame components associated with the type of future orientation in an expectation frame may illustrate what the president deems important (as well as unimportant) for a future reality (Edelman, 1993; Goffman, 1974).

Causal Agents

Research question 2a asked whether the causal agents vary across expectation frames. As the results show, each expectation type is characterized by a set of causal agents. The "will" expectation is infused with government-based agency. The "shall" expectation is notable for the presence of the collective "we." The causal agents associated with "can" expectations are largely citizen-based (Table 4).

The "will" expectation is constructed in a frame that privileges government agency. Presidential self-references and government programs are both agents that increase the likelihood of a "will" expectation. A government program or issue agent in a sentence containing an expectation significantly increases the probability of a "will" expectation by 0.21 ($B = 1.11$, $SE = 0.14$, $p < 0.001$). For example, the phrase "USA accounts will help all Americans to share in our Nation's wealth and to enjoy a more secure retirement," is illustrative of this frame construction (Clinton, 1999, January 19). Presidential self-references, including "I" and "my administration," also significantly increase the likelihood of a "will" expectation in State of the Union addresses and signing statements by 0.18 ($B = 0.81$, $SE = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$).

By emphasizing government-based agents, "will" expectations rarely include citizen-based agents. As Table 4 illustrates, invoking citizens ($B = -0.33$, $SE = 0.10$, $p < 0.01$) and the collective "we" ($B = -0.60$, $SE = 0.16$, $p < 0.001$) significantly reduce the likelihood of a "will" expectation. Including citizens as the causal agent reduces the

probability of a "will" expectation by 0.08 and a causal "we" reduces the probability by 0.15.

The predominant agents responsible for the future in a "shall" expectation frame differ from those of a "will" expectation (Table 4). More amorphous agents ("we") are included in the "shall" frame while government agents are excluded. The collective "we" significantly increases the likelihood of a sentence with a "shall" expectation in a State of the Union address or signing statement by 0.06 ($B = 0.51$, $SE = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$). This is the reverse pattern from "will" expectations.

Political agents, including the president and government programs, become infrequent agents associated with a "shall" future. Government issues and programs significantly reduce the likelihood of a "shall" expectation ($B = -0.68$, $SE = 0.19$, $p < 0.001$) and presidential self-references have no significant effect ($B = 0.18$, $SE = 0.23$, $p = 0.42$). Again, these results are the reverse of the results for "will" expectations. Including government programs in an expectation frame reduces the probability of a "shall" future orientation by 0.05.

"Can" expectation frames are infused with citizen agency (Table 4). Citizens ($B = 0.89$, $SE = 0.12$, $p < .001$), the collective "we" ($B = 1.00$, $SE = 0.16$, $p < 0.001$), and "you" ($B = 1.01$, $SE = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$) all significantly increase the likelihood of a sentence containing a "can" expectation. The predicted probability of the president using a "can" future-oriented frame increases by 0.17 with citizen agents and 0.20 with the collective "we" as well as the citizen-directed "you." When President Clinton remarked in his 1995 State of the Union, "America has always been a land of opportunity, a land where, if you work hard, you can get ahead," he used this "you-can" frame construction (1995, January 24). Presidential self-references reduce the likelihood of a "can" expectation, but the effect is only marginally significant ($B = -0.37$, $SE = 0.20$, $p = 0.06$).

Answering RQ2a, these results reveal that presidents build expectation frames differently by emphasizing particular causal agents. "Will" expectation frames emphasize government agents and exclude citizens. "Shall" expectation frames privilege an undefined collective "we" and deflect government-based responsibility. "Can" expectation frames causally belong to citizen agents.

Action/Event

The action or event in an expectation frame provides context for *what* is intended to occur at some point in the future. Research question 2b asks how domestic and foreign-based actions vary by frame type. Results reveal that two presidencies exist when examining the domestic or foreign policy focus of an expectation frame. Across expectation types, foreign policy issues affect the use of "will" and "shall" expectations (Table 4).

Foreign-based topics are a significant predictor of the likelihood of an expectation frame containing a "will" future orientation in State of the Unions and signing statements ($B = 0.50$, $SE = 0.17$, $p < 0.01$), increasing the probability of a statement by 0.10. Domestic policy topics did not have a similar discriminating effect ($B = 0.11$, $SE = 0.10$, $p = 0.28$).

Whereas foreign policy statements increased the odds of a "will" expectation, they significantly reduced the likelihood of a "shall" expectation ($B = -0.60$, $SE = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$). Foreign policy issues reduced the predicted probability of a "shall" future orientation by 0.05. Domestic policy topics did not have a similar effect ($B = 0.05$, $SE = 0.15$, $p = 0.75$).

No action type analyzed significantly predicts the likelihood that a president will construct a "can" expectation frame. Neither foreign-focused ($B = 0.15$, $SE = 0.15$, $p = $

94

0.31) nor domestic-focused ($B = 0.05$, $SE = 0.12$, $p = 0.68$) topics predict the likelihood of "can" expectations in State of the Union addresses or signing statements.

Across the Clinton, Bush, and Obama presidencies, foreign-focused expectation statements were more likely to include a "will" future orientation and less likely to include a "shall" orientation. Domestic-focused expectations did not have the same discriminating effect.

Communicative Venue and Administration Time

Research question 3a asks how the type of expectation frame varies by communication venue. Presidents construct expectations differently based on the communicative venue. Examining the HLM models in Table 4, the type of communication issued by the president significantly influences all three types of expectations. A signing statement significantly increased the probability of an expectation frame containing a "shall" future orientation by 0.07 ($B = 0.99$, $SE = 0.37$, $p < 0.01$). The opposite pattern appears for "will." Signing statements reduced the probability of a "will" expectation by 0.14 ($B = -0.64$, $SE = 0.28$, $p < 0.05$) compared to a State of the Union address. For "can" expectations, the picture is more complicated. Although no main effect appeared for the communicative venue influencing the presence of "can" frames, there was a significant interaction with a president's first year in office ($B = -1.12$, $SE = 0.39$, $p < 0.01$). The predicted probability of an expectation containing a "can" future orientation was 0.07 in a first year signing statement compared to 0.22 in a first year annual message. Figures 9 and 12 illustrate these trends.

Research question 3c asks how "will," "shall," and "can" expectations vary by administrative time. The legislative push of the first 100 days (Manheim, 1979; Scacco, 2011) is reflected in the language of State of the Unions and signing statements. Table 4

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illustrates that the first year of a presidency increased the probability that the president communicated expectations with a "will" orientation by 0.25 ($B = 1.37$, $SE = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$). Conversely, the probability of a "shall" construction declined by 0.08 in the first year of an administration ($B = -1.24$, $SE = 0.37$, $p < 0.001$). As noted previously, the first year interacted with the communicative venue to significantly affect the probability of "can" expectation use.

As a presidency ages, time remains a limited factor for the construction of "can" expectations. The reelection year significantly increased the probability of a "can" future orientation in expectation frames by 0.05 ($B = 0.28$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < 0.01$). The last year in office had no effect on "can" expectations. Neither the reelection year nor the last year in office had a significant influence on the presence of "will" or "shall" expectations.

The pattern of results answering RQ3a and RQ3c illustrates how presidents frame different types of expectations based on the communicative venue and administrative time. "Will" expectations were featured prominently in the more public State of the Union address as well as in the first year of an administration. "Shall" expectations were more likely to be found in the intergovernmental messages of signing statements and less likely to be used in the first year of an administration. "Can" expectations were more likely to be found in first year annual messages as well as reelection year communications.

Political Factors

The political environment, in terms of both partisan control of the federal government and presidential approval, can influence the types of expectations presidents use. Research question 3b asks how the type of expectation frame varies by these factors. Partisan divides in government change the calculus of expectation frames. When

presidents face-off against a majority opposition party in Congress, the likelihood of an expectation sentence containing a "will" future orientation significantly increases ($B = 0.57$, $SE = 0.24$, $p < 0.05$) (Table 4). Conversely, divided government reduces the likelihood of "shall" expectations ($B = -0.82$, $SE = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$). Having a president of one party and at least one house of Congress of another party increases the probability of a "will" future orientation in an expectation frame by 0.14 while reducing the probability of a "shall" construction by 0.11. "Can" expectations are unaffected by the state of government.

Although presidents seem to use the state of Congress as a metric for expectations construction, they rarely look to the standing of their own house. Presidential approval is not a significant predictor of "will" ($B = 0.01$, $SE = 0.01$, $p = 0.22$) or "shall" expectations ($B = -0.01$, $SE = 0.01$, $p = 0.43$). Approval is a significant predictor of "can" expectation frames, however. Higher presidential approval scores significantly reduce the likelihood of "can" expectations ($B = -0.01$, $SE = 0.005$, $p < 0.05$). Holding all variables constant at their mean and modal values, a ten point increase in the president's approval rating from the baseline average ($M=54.17$) reduces the predicted probability of a "can" expectation by 0.01. This probability change is notably small.

The political environment a president faces matters for expectations use. Across presidencies, when each administration faced the challenges of divided government, presidents increased the use of "will" expectations and reduced "shall" expectations. As administrations enjoyed higher approval ratings, presidents slightly reduced "can" expectations in State of the Union addresses and signing statements.

Individual Presidents

Research question 3d asks how use of "will," "shall," and "can" expectation frames varies by individual presidents. Patterns of communication across administrations vary by the political partisanship of the president. When compared against his Democratic colleagues, George W. Bush was significantly less likely to use "will" (B = -1.77, SE = 0.23, $p < 0.001$) and "can" (B = -0.24, SE = 0.10, $p < 0.05$) expectations. Conversely, Bush was more likely to construct "shall" frames (B = 2.40, SE = 0.28, $p < 0.001$). A Bush communication reduces the probability of a "will" expectation by 0.40 and a "can" expectation by 0.03. Conversely, Bush communications increase the probability of a "shall" expectation by 0.46. In sum, the results for RQ3d suggest that each president's individual communication style matters for the construction of specific types of expectations.

TWITTER EXPECTATIONS

One of the most recent media tools adopted by the White House for communications, Twitter, allows for contemporary examination of how President Barack Obama is constructing expectations for the public. Research question 3a asks how the type of expectation frame varies in White House tweets. To examine the nature of expectation use on Twitter over a five-month period in 2013, I first examined the presence and packaging of tweeted expectations. To accomplish this, I used a chi-square test to look at the association between tweeted expectations that did and did not contain a direct quotation from President Obama. Second, I modeled the predicted probability of each type of expectation in a logistic regression analysis (Table 5).[33] This model provides

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[33] The tweets analyzed are not structured hierarchically, meaning that each tweeted message is independent of another tweet. Traditional tests of association and significance (e.g. chi-square, regression) are appropriate for use.

an understanding of how "will," "shall," and "can" future-oriented frames are predicted by their associated frame components (causal agent, action focus).

Much as expectations are a significant component of State of the Union addresses and signing statements, future-oriented frames also appear frequently in White House tweets. More than a quarter (26.8%) of @whitehouse tweets contained an expectation frame. Moreover, tweets serve as the categorical, sharp statements of presidential communications, according to a former State Department spokesman P. J. Crowley (personal communication, September 18, 2013). Direct presidential quotations may serve as a means for packaging these sharp statements about the future. My results support this idea. Thirty-four percent of tweeted presidential direct quotations contained an expectation frame. Comparatively, 22.4 percent of non-quotation tweets contained an expectation. This difference between quoted versus non-quoted expectation tweets was significant ($\chi^2[1] = 8.12$, $p < 0.01$). Although a majority of tweets (both quotation and non-quotation) do not contain expectations, these results illustrate that the president's *voice* is an important vehicle for tweeting expectations to @whitehouse's Twitter followers.

To examine the predicted probability of "will," "shall," and "can" future orientations in tweets containing expectations, I modeled each of these frame types in a logistic regression that included the additional frame components (causal agent, action focus) as well as tweeted Obama quotations as predictors (Table 5).[34] Due to the short five-month time frame in which the Twitter sample was collected, communication-level factors that were included in the previous models (i.e. divided government, presidential

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[34] Since the overall expectation frame includes the additional frame components by definition, these predictors would have represented a near singularity in a logistic regression analysis and rendered probability estimation impossible. For White House tweets, the overall expectation frame therefore is not modeled.

approval, and administrative time) did not change much or at all. This lack of variation would have made their estimation in the model inappropriate.

Table 5. Twitter Logistic Regression Models for Expectation Types

	"Will"	"Shall"	"Can"
	Coefficient (SE)	Coefficient (SE)	Coefficient (SE)
Constant	1.95 (1.13)	-2.64 (1.58)	-2.36 (1.42)
Causal Agent: President	1.06 (1.22)	a	0.12 (1.46)
Causal Agent: Gov't Program	0.71 (0.99)	-0.59 (1.0)	a
Causal Agent: Citizens	-2.23** (0.74)	-0.10 (0.81)	2.86** (1.09)
Causal Agent: Collective "We"	-2.55** (0.81)	0.57 (0.84)	2.82* (1.13)
Causal Agent: "You"	-3.25** (1.05)	a	5.09*** (1.48)
Domestic Oriented	-0.68 (0.88)	0.99 (1.38)	-0.22 (0.95)
Foreign Oriented	0.58 (0.92)	-0.57 (1.36)	-0.95 1.02
Obama Direct Quotation	0.33 (0.49)	0.29 (0.61)	-0.30 (0.53)
Cox & Snell R-Square ($n = 134$)	0.35	0.09	0.36

$*p < 0.05$, $**p < 0.01$, $***p < 0.001$; tweets = 500[35]
a Indicates that the coefficient and standard error could not be estimated because of quasi-complete separation.[36]

The "will" expectation frames used on Twitter are similar in some respects to "will" expectations constructed in State of the Union addresses and signing statements (Table 5). Citizen-based agents are less likely to be included in "will" expectation frames. Invoking citizens ($B = -2.23$, $SE = 0.74$, $p < 0.01$), the collective "we" ($B = -2.55$, $SE = 0.81$, $p < 0.01$), and the directed "you" ($B = -3.25$, $SE = 1.05$, $p < 0.01$) all significantly decrease the likelihood of a "will" expectation in a tweet. These findings indicate that

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[35] All Hosmer and Lemeshow tests were non-significant.

[36] Following procedures outlined by Allison (1999), the variable is retained for control purposes, an [a] is inserted, and the variable is not interpreted.

"will" expectation frames strategically emphasize some agents compared to others. Diverging from the patterns found for annual messages and signing statements, government-based agents do not predict the greater likelihood of a "will" frame. Foreign-oriented actions do not predict use of the "will" future orientation either.

"Can" expectation frames include similar causal agents to the frames found in State of the Union addresses and signing statements (Table 5). Citizen agents ($B = 2.86$, $SE = 1.09$, $p < 0.01$), the collective "we" ($B = 2.82$, $SE = 1.13$, $p < 0.05$), and the directed "you" ($B = 5.09$, $SE = 1.48$, $p < 0.01$) all significantly increase the likelihood of a "can" expectation in a tweet. These significant patterns linking citizen-based agents to "can" expectations occur across all the communications analyzed. Although a direct comparison between State of the Union addresses, signing statements, and tweets cannot be made due to the structure of the data, the pattern of significant findings is consistent. Expectation frames constructed with citizen-based agents are more likely to orient the audience toward a "can/could" future.

STRATEGIC EXPECTATION FRAMING

Presidents strategically construct expectations. The data reveal how presidents seek influence while managing the complex tensions and goals of public communication by stoking aspirations at particular points and tempering future visions at others. Presidents must navigate and become an institution imbued with the ideals of the American public; chief executives must aspire to greatness from the moment they take office (Buchanan, 1987; Brownlow, 1969; Dennis, 1976; de Grazia, 1969; Jenkins-Smith et al., 2005; Seligman & Baer, 1969; Waterman et al., 1999; Wayne, 1982). Chief executives use assured, confident language with "will" expectations, illustrating how presidents stoke visions of a surefire tomorrow. First year communications are

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emblematic of this approach. Yet, the realities and struggles of governing – as well as the importance of accomplishments for a legacy – lead presidents to temper expectations at other points. In these instances, like reelection year communications, presidents lean more on "can" expectations to trade aspiration for possibility.

Presidents face a stark choice: frame or be framed. If presidents do not frame the future on their terms, another political agent can. In a competitive political message environment, presidents hope to project and protect their influence by strategically picking and choosing their framing battles. As the data reveal, chief executives engage in deliberate actions to target the *settings* where expectations are framed, the *agents* responsible for future actions, and the *policies* linked to the future in order to project presidential leadership. I discuss each in detail in the following sections.

Settings for Expectations Framing

Presidents are deliberate about where and when expectations are framed. Their strategic calculus is reflected in how presidential expectations vary according to communicative venue, administrative time, and the state of the political environment. If presidents were not purposefully framing expectations based on setting, the pattern of significant or non-significant findings would be *constant* for each expectation type. As Tables 3 and 4 show, presidents frame expectations, including "will," "shall," and "can" constructions, differently depending on these external circumstances. For instance, presidents are more likely to construct "will" and less likely to use "shall" expectations in the first year, illustrating a strategic emphasis on assuredness. In turn, the reelection year increases the likelihood of "can" expectations compared to other expectation types. Trading future certainties for mere possibilities, presidents may recognize the limits of their influence after four years of political battles and temper the future as a result. This

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pick-and-choose framing behavior illustrates how venue, time, and the political environment affect the construction of different types of expectations.

The communication venue and time points in an administration influence how presidents construct expectations. Roughly three in ten sentences and tweets in State of the Union addresses, signing statements, and Twitter contain an expectation. Expectations are a critical attribute of presidential communication and illustrate a desire as well as a need to discuss the future. Considered alone, this proportion may suggest that presidents like to set expectations with reckless abandon. However, presidents are strategic about which communication venue sees what type of expectation and when it occurs.

Regardless of the type of future orientation used, expectation frames vary in annual messages and signing statements based on time in administration. Expectation frames appear most frequently in the annual message during the first year and decline over the course of a presidency. Signing statements exhibit the opposite trend, with increases in the probability of expectations at the midpoint and end of an administration compared to the first year. Whether by institutional custom or political motivation, the relatively opposing trend lines indicate how a president's goals coupled with the venue influence expectation construction.

Presidents have different goals at various points in an administration and they use the communicative venue to try and meet these goals. The goals of the first year require presidents to stoke hopes and optimism for the future under the new administration. Upon entering office, chief executives face their campaign promises (Fishel, 1985; Hart et al., 2005), high hopes set by the press during the transition period (Hart et al., 2005), lofty approval ratings linked to these hopes (Brace & Hinckley, 1991; Sigelman & Knight, 1983; 1985; Stimson, 1976), as well as a press and public who expect an aggressive

agenda from the president, especially during the first 100 days (Scacco, 2011; Simon, 2009). To "hit the ground running," presidents must reach the public and Congress. A president's first annual message responds with more expectation frames compared to other State of the Union addresses over the course of a term. Newly minted chief executives convey assuredness as well. First year communications are more likely to frame "will" expectations and less likely to use "shall" ones. By stoking the future, presidents try to strategically paint visions of aggressive leadership and influence for the public and members of Congress.

As an administration ages, presidents face the challenges of governance. The calculus by which expectations are framed changes. "Will" expectations popular in first year communications are traded for "can" expectations in the reelection year. An increase in "can" expectations only occurs during the reelection. There are several possible explanations for this increase. First, the increased use of "can" expectations during the reelection year may reflect a president's drive to persuade citizens that they have some ability to influence a possible future in a second term. As I note later in this chapter, presidents often link citizen agents to "can" expectations. This approach may be a strategic form of empowerment in a year when citizens vote. Second, "can" expectations may illustrate the president's desire to temper future progress in a second term. Socialization to the rigors of office and the political environment may limit the president's vision of the future (Hart, 1984b; Manheim, 1979; Olson, Ouyang, Poe, Trantham, & Waterman, 2012; Tetlock, 1981), meaning that the president exhibits more cautious communication. Potentially learning from unmet expectations and subsequent declines in public support (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2005; Sigelman & Knight, 1983; 1985; Sigelman & Sigelman, 1986; Stimson, 1976; Waterman et al., 1999), the president may exercise a more measured approach to future framing.

The expectations framed during the final year in office are emblematic of the strategic focus on a presidential legacy (Buchanan, 2013). Instead of framing the future for citizens in the more public State of the Union address during the eighth year, presidents are more likely to construct expectations in the intergovernmental messages of signing statements. This tact of using the signing statement venue compared to the State of the Union for expectations begins in the reelection year and continues at the end of the term. Despite Edelman's (1985) belief that political invocations of the future reflect a desire to gain public support, presidents also privately target members of the professional political class when it suits their interests. This approach becomes a less public means by which presidents preserve and perpetuate their influence as an administration comes to a close.

Signing statement expectations are a smart approach for presidents with legacy considerations. As part of their management of the executive branch, presidents take actions that seek to control how intergovernmental agents in the bureaucracy carry out public policies (Lewis & Moe, 2010). Lewis and Moe explain, "Any president who hopes to be a strong leader and put his stamp on the nation's public policy must control the bureaucracy" (p. 368). Presidents turn to signing statements expectations in an attempt to legally direct public policy implementation in the most ideal manner possible (illustrated by a greater likelihood of "shall" constructions compared to annual messages). By framing expectations more in signing statements compared to the State of the Union address in the eighth year, presidents may be expressing their "final wishes" for how bureaucrats should execute laws.

Targeting future-oriented communications within government via signing statements as opposed to the broader public via State of the Union addresses meets both structural and influence goals. Structurally, the president signaling what the executive

branch shall or shall not do with laws allows other political actors to better anticipate the president's actions (Buchanan, 2013; Neustadt, 1990). Relatedly, expectation setting by signing statement represents a play for influence on the part of the chief executive to unify executive branch actions by setting the direction of law implementation (Beasley, 2010; Campbell & Jamieson, 2008; Kelley et al., 2013; Rudalevige, 2010). Increasing political and congressional polarization has rendered unitary approaches to governing desirable for presidents attempting to implement an agenda and secure a legacy (Lewis & Moe, 2010; Poole & Rosenthal, 2007). This more bureaucratic approach to expectations setting may be emblematic of a unitary executive model interested more in preserving presidential influence and controlling executive branch behavior than public persuasion associated with the traditional rhetorical presidency (Beasley, 2010).

Moving toward the broader environment in which a president governs, the politics of divided government change the calculus by which presidents target expectations. Overall, the likelihood of the president constructing expectations declines. Although this result could be the president tempering future action due to challenges from Congress, the *types* of expectations presidents frame illustrate otherwise. Confronted by an oppositional majority in Congress, presidents must frame the future on their terms or risk having it framed by the opposing party. When presidents do engage in future talk, they increase the use of "will" expectations and decrease "shall" expectations. Presidents strategically opt for a future frame that communicates assuredness and intentionality. To preserve influence and project leadership vis-à-vis a defiant Congress, the president attempts to balance future certainty with the realities of divided governance. By illustrating the certainty of presidential and governmental influence, a chief executive seeks an advantage in a system of divided power (Neustadt, 1990). This stoking tactic, while potentially burnishing the image of a strong (and relevant) chief executive, is risky when

legislative accomplishments cannot be guaranteed. Indeed, legislative success decreases for the president during divided government (Barrett, 2004; Canes-Wrone, 2001). Nevertheless, the president balances these risks with the communicative leverage needed to exert the power of the presidency.

Agents in Expectation Frames

The future is not for everyone. Presidents causally frame which agents are responsible for what type of future. In a pluralistic system of government, chief executives govern by working with other agents who have specific powers and responsibilities (Dahl, 1961). Moreover, presidents must appear responsive to citizen feedback (Druckman & Jacobs, 2009; Medvic, 2013). These constraints are reflected in the causal agents referenced in expectation frames. The pattern observed for causal agents illustrates the targeted strategy of picking and choosing the agents responsible for the future. Government agents are framed with a "will" future orientation, amorphous "we" agents with a "shall," and citizen-based agents with "can." By parsing responsibility over tomorrow's actions, the president attempts to preserve and project his influence while also strategically identifying with the public.

Consider "will" expectations and government agents. Presidents frame themselves as well as government programs and issues as responsible for a certain tomorrow in State of the Union addresses and signing statements. Conversely, citizen-based agents are less likely to be associated with a "will" future orientation across all three communicative venues examined. Government-focused, "will" constructions are at the heart of ultimatums like President Obama's statement in his 2014 State of the Union address that "If this Congress sends me a new [Iran] sanctions bill now that threatens to derail these talks, I will veto it" (2014, January 28). Communicatively, government agents are less

concerned with what the nation "should" do (in the case of government programs significantly less so) or what government "can" do.

Stoking the embers of a surefire future with "I will" and "government will" expectations presents both risks and rewards. By linking government agents to a future of certainty, the president attempts to construct a clear future vision and project assured, strong leadership. Yet, risks remain. Chief executives place a great deal of faith in government programs and issues. Such assuredness and intentionality may come at a cost, both to the president and government as a whole. Any number of political factors, including divided government (Edwards et al., 1997) or the president's approval ratings (Eshbaugh-Soha & Peake, 2011), could influence whether or not governmental actions are accomplished. As architect and symbol of government (Hart et al., 2005), the president may be held responsible for a future that does not materialize. Moreover, this causal construction excludes citizens from the process, potentially creating criticism that the president's actions are insular.

"Shall" expectations invoke the future in an ideal state. These frames are a potential rhetorical manifestation of the ideals citizens associate with the presidential office (Buchanan, 1987; Brownlow, 1969; Dennis, 1976; de Grazia, 1969; Jenkins-Smith et al., 2005; Seligman & Baer, 1969; Waterman et al., 1999; Wayne, 1982). Presidents are both careful and targeted in showing deference to these ideals by using the amorphous "we." Government programs and issues are de-emphasized in the "shall" frame, illustrating how presidents strategically frame "will" and "shall" expectations differently. When President Clinton remarked in his 1995 State of the Union that "We should also curb the role of big money in elections by capping the cost of campaigns and limiting the influence of PAC's" (1995, January 24), he constructed the we-should frame to illustrate an ideal goal of the federal government.

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The use of an amorphous agent with a "shall" future orientation portrays a more tempered approach toward the future compared to government "will" frames. Presidents attempt to reap the advantages of invoking values and ideals while partially removing executive agency. Researchers explain that the collective "we" reflects community and the nation (Beasley, 2004; Hinckley, 1985; Pennebaker & Lay, 2002) while dispersing responsibility (Pennebaker & Lay, 2002; Weintraub, 1986). Although "we" in some instances indirectly invokes presidential authority, the amorphous referent allows for deniability as well. In this way, presidents can try to rhetorically protect their influence. Government agents, frequently associated with "will," thus become associated with future actions that are tangible and certain. By excluding government programs and issues from "shall" frames, the president invokes a broader community outside of government while attempting to empower a broad spectrum of agents.

"Can" expectations belong to citizens, at least according to the frame structure identified. Across all communications analyzed including annual messages, signing statements, and White House tweets, citizens, the directed "you," and the collective "we" all increase the likelihood of a "can" future orientation in an expectation. Although both "shall" and "can" expectations frequently occur with a "we" agent, the differences between the frame types are apparent. Presidents privilege citizen agency in "can" frames, a pattern not found in the other frames. Emphasizing the importance of mentorship in his 2003 State of the Union address, President Bush predicted that "One mentor, one person, can change a life forever, and I urge you to be that one person" (2003, January 28). By constructing a citizen-"can" frame, Bush communicates the ability of individuals to make a future impact.

Presidents seem to temper the future with "can" expectations. The "can" future orientation is theorized to insinuate possibility and limited ability (Perkins, 1982; Pinna,

2007). Empowering citizens to believe in future possibilities may incentivize engagement with elected officials, a key way presidents "go public" (Kernell, 2007). Moreover, presidents must strike a delicate balance between telling citizens what they "will" do versus suggesting what they "can" do in the future. Presidents cannot be certain that citizens "will" accomplish particular actions. Chief executives therefore temper expectations when constructing citizen agency for future actions. Simultaneously, presidents protect their influence by shifting agency to citizens and away from government. Linking government and executive authority to future possibility has risks. As opposed to the resoluteness of "will" expectations, "can" expectations may project indecision, weakness, or confusion if framed with presidential influence. The same expectation used as a call to supporters ("Yes, we can…") also could be used to question the dedication or power of the president.

The president engages in deliberate actions to frame *who* has agency over what type of future. Picking and choosing the causal agents linked to future actions allows the chief executive to deftly balance the stoke-temper tension of public communication. Presidents protect and project their influence and leadership in this manner. As symbolic leader of government (Hart et al., 2005), presidents place great faith in governmental power by linking government-based agents to a certain future. When invoking an ideal future state, presidents rely on the broader "we" community – giving agency to an amorphous collective while strategically removing (and protecting) direct presidential responsibility. To empower citizens, presidents frame the people's agency with future possibilities. This form of strategic identification also may benefit chief executives by inconspicuously removing presidential influence and tempering future outcomes.

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Presidents not only purposefully select the agents linked to a specific future, but the policy areas as well. To project presidential influence and leadership, chief executives frame international issues around a certain future.

Policies in Expectation Frames

Presidents are selective about the public affairs topics included in expectation frames. Modern chief executives govern in a political environment where citizens look to the White House to solve foreign and domestic policy problems, a result of the actions President Franklin Roosevelt and the federal government took during the Great Depression and World War II (Simon, 2009). To convey action to the public, presidents have turned increasingly to public communications as a form of governance (Hart, 1987). By strategically framing some policy topics in expectation frames more than others, presidents emphasize the most powerful roles of the constitutional presidency while deflecting other policy areas in which the executive branch has less influence. As a result, presidents stoke certainty in future foreign affairs actions more so than they do for domestic actions.

When framing the future in annual messages and signing statements, presidents are more likely to use "will" and less likely to use "shall" expectations with foreign-focused topics. Using this frame construction in his 2006 State of the Union address, President Bush conveyed a warning to international actors, "But our enemies and our friends can be certain: The United States will not retreat from the world, and we will never surrender to evil" (2006, January 31). Presidents are not as discriminating with expectations for domestic-focused topics. If presidents were not strategically matching issues with particular expectation frames, a non-significant pattern would appear across *both* foreign and domestic topics. However, the presence of a significant pattern of results

for foreign affairs, as well as the emphasis placed on "will" expectations over "shall" ones, illustrates that presidents vary their expectations construction for foreign policy topics.

Extending Wildavsky's (1966) two presidencies thesis to presidential communication, these results showcase how presidents speak differently based on the issues under consideration. This difference in communicating about foreign policy versus domestic affairs may emanate from two areas. First, presidents have greater constitutional authority and historically have had greater latitude from Congress, the media, and citizens on matters of international import (Bennett et al., 2007; Grossman & Kumar, 1981; Wildavsky, 1966) compared to domestic issues (Kernell, 2007). A greater sense of autonomous control in international affairs may encourage presidents to frame future certainty and as a byproduct project their constitutional power as the commander-in-chief. Alternatively, the power sharing and congressional bargaining involved with domestic affairs (Neustadt, 1990) may lead presidents to use a less apparent pattern of domestic expectations. Second, prior survey research indicates that citizens assign more responsibility to the president on foreign policy compared to domestic issues (Wayne, 1982). To rhetorically meet this responsibility, presidents have implemented specific foreign policy communication strategies, including joint press conferences with foreign leaders "to showcase the president as a foreign policy leader under conditions where there are a reduced number of questions" (Kumar, 2005, p. 190). Use of "will" expectation frames may be an outgrowth of this strategy to project the president's role as Commander-in-Chief. "Will" expectations suggest assuredness and confidence while calling attention to presidential leadership.

To stoke future certainty in foreign affairs comes with great risk. According to former State Department spokesman P. J. Crowley, "will" expectations in foreign policy

indicate a defined policy decision (personal communication, September 18, 2013). When President Barack Obama responded in a press conference that the movement or use of chemical weapons in Syria would cross a "red line," he explained how his policies would change as a result. "That would change my calculus. That would change my equation" (Kessler, 2013). Yet, when Obama's administration engaged in non-military means to pressure the Syrian government after evidence of chemical weapons use emerged, political figures and the press questioned the president's line in the sand. The same frame that communicates presidential power and resoluteness in foreign affairs also can yield significant drawbacks should the certain future framed not materialize.

Presidents are quite calculated when they frame foreign affairs issues as part of a certain future. In the process of projecting constitutional power and influence, presidents attempt to stoke beliefs that international action will (or will not) happen. On issues where power is shared and negotiated with other political agents, as is the case with domestic affairs, presidents do not engage in a clear pattern of expectation construction. The results illustrate the calculus involved with foreign policy expectations.

LIMITATIONS

The settings, agents, and policies presidents choose for specific types of expectations illustrate the strategic calculus to how Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama discussed the future. These findings should be interpreted within the context of the types of communications analyzed during three presidencies. Although important trends exist across presidencies and communicative venues, future research should assess whether similar framing strategies exist in other communicative venues and presidential administrations. For example, promising venues for examination could include the weekly presidential address (Scacco, 2012), press conferences (Hart & Scacco, 2014), or

the White House Facebook page. The results reported in this chapter offer a firm foundation for future exploration of these strategic framing approaches.

The results reported in this chapter also call attention to potentially unique framing strategies within presidential administrations. Although the purpose of this analysis was to uncover trends in expectation framing across presidencies, the findings illustrate that presidents can bring different approaches to future framing. President Bush preferred "shall" expectations in his signing statements compared to his Democratic counterparts, for instance. Where the results often point to some strategic calculus across administrations, whether by custom, politics, or other circumstances, it was more difficult to pinpoint individual presidential divergences in expectation construction because of the focus on three presidential administrations. Future research should expand the analysis to prior administrations to explore whether individual differences in expectation framing are based on factors like presidential partisanship or communication style.

The findings from this study present a broad overview of expectation frames used across three presidential administrations. As the first research study to directly examine governing expectations, I designed the content codes to reflect the need to capture broad trends as well as finer communicative details. This decision allowed for conclusions about the presence of expectations, as well as detected important shifts within communications as to how the future is framed. The coding scheme did not incorporate even finer distinctions for the valence of expectations or domestic-focused topics. Future research should account for whether an expectation is framed positively ("I will") or negatively ("I will not"). Although the constructions may convey the same level of assuredness to an audience, future research could locate whether presidents are more or less likely to include negative expectations at particular times, such as in periods of divided government. Presidents use "will" expectations more in divided government. Are

"will" constructions framed more based on what government will or will not do? Moreover, a finer amount of detail may be warranted for the coding of domestic-focused topics. It is possible that the non-findings for expectations and domestic issues may be the result of the number of topics coded as domestic. The domestic code included economic, healthcare, entitlements, and state-level issues. By disaggregating this code, researchers may uncover within-policy patterns of expectation framing.

The Twitter results reported in this chapter added considerable context to how the White House uses digital venues for expectation framing. For example, "can" expectations are framed with citizen-based agents similarly on Twitter as they are in annual messages and signing statements. More research is warranted with Twitter, as well as other digital venues where the president communicates (i.e. Facebook, Reddit). The five-month time period precluded a broader analysis of external factors that influenced the construction of expectations in annual messages and signing statements, including divided government and time in administration. The time period also limited the final sample of tweeted expectations ($n = 134$), meaning that some variables could not be analyzed due to sample restrictions. Future scholarship should assess White House tweets over a longer time frame to examine the influence of political and temporal factors. The findings from this study present a compelling first glance at how the Obama administration is (and is not) using Twitter to talk about the future.

EXPECTATIONS FRAMING IN PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATION

The picture of presidential expectations setting is more complex than popular conceptions of promises and pledges. The President of the United States must frame the future or risk having it framed against him. Chief executives must project confidence and assurance while raising hope about the future (Begala personal communication,

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September 22, 2013). As Hart (1984a) notes, "The mantle of the presidency is thus not meant for the shoulders of the nation's naysayers" (p. 254). But citizens, news media, and Congress challenge the president's influence. Presidents try to temper the future to reflect these challenges. Presidential communication reflects this tension by stoking certainty with "will" frames and constructing a possible future with "can" frames. By engaging in deliberate communicative actions that target the *settings* where expectations are framed, the *agents* responsible for future actions, and the *policies* linked to the future, presidents negotiate this tension and try to project and preserve their influence within and outside of government.

The presidential approach to expectations challenges pundits and some scholars who imply that presidents make promises with reckless abandon. As an article by Ron Fournier began shortly after President Obama's inauguration to a second term, "Here he goes again: Barack Obama is jacking up expectations to virtually unreachable heights" (2013, January 24). Or as Edwards (1983) explains about the motives of communicated expectations, "Contradictory expectations are by definition impossible to meet. All a president can do is rely on rhetoric and symbols to obscure perceptions enough to be all things to all people" (p. 199). The results here illustrate otherwise. Presidents strategically approach expectations: stoking a certain future when appropriate with foreign policy topics and during their first year in office; tempering the future by empowering citizen abilities in the reelection year. Chief executives target audiences carefully based on communicative venue and administrative time, all while balancing the demands of projecting presidential influence vis-à-vis Congress. A difficult task to do, but one approached with deftness and deliberateness.

Standing on the cusp of an historic defeat of an incumbent president, Bill Clinton recognized the expectations tension he would negotiate in the presidential office: build

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urgency and possibility while tempering anticipation about the future (P. Begala personal communication, September 22, 2013). Understanding how Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama have navigated this tension and strategically used future frames in their governing communications was the purpose of this chapter. I turn next to examine the extent to which citizens are attuned to and affected by the ways in which presidents frame the future.

Chapter 5: The Effect of Expectations

Popular and academic discussions about presidential expectations usually center on one notion: effects. Shortly after President Obama's election victory in 2008, *The Economist* predicted that "Mr. Obama's more ardent supporters will be let down—and in some cases they deserve to be" because of the "unreasonably great expectations" for his administration (Great Expectations, 2008). In a similar vein, academics in early studies of expectations were concerned that lofty visions of the president could produce "later disillusionment" (Stimson, 1976, p. 9) and that "expectations and popularity are *joint outcomes* of the effectiveness with which the president is thought to be handling his job" (Sigelman & Knight, 1983, p. 323). In other words, many political observers ask to what extent president expectations attained or left unmet influence the mass public. Fewer observers ask about the extent to which presidential discussion of the future, regardless of whether it materializes, affects citizens. This possibility means a potentially important means of presidential influence over individuals' thinking about the future has been left unexamined.

Although popular conceptions of how expectations affect citizens are prominent, these conceptions have gone untested. Most of what scholars know comes from work on political campaigns. Citizens' beliefs about which candidate will win a presidential primary can influence their vote choice (Bartels, 1988), meaning that expectancy attitudes can affect candidate attitudes. Closer to the purpose of this project, voters recall campaign promises and use these to evaluate presidential candidates (Just et al., 1996). But are expectations influential in the governing phase for a president as well? The content analysis in Chapter 4 showed that expectations are an important part of the White

House-produced political message environment. But to what extent are audiences attuned to presidential future talk? What are its effects?

This chapter analyzes the effects of presidential future talk, keying in on how individuals may attend to shifts in the president's future orientation, how citizens' thinking about the future and president may change based on the type of expectation ("will," "shall," or "can"), and how individuals judge the president's job performance as a result. First, I examine whether individuals attend to shifts in the president's future orientation. Although the small cues literature in framing emphasizes the effect of small frame changes on individuals (Knobloch-Westerwick & Taylor, 2008; Shah et al., 2009), many individuals often miss political messages in the communication environment (Zaller, 1992). I explore the extent to which presidents can cue citizens with future messaging.

Second, I look to how citizens' thinking about the future and president may change as a consequence of attending to expectation frames. In a competitive messaging environment, presidents seek to frame the future and the terms by which citizens view it. If presidents can alter the ways citizens think about the future, chief executives maintain their leadership over the national conversation about future policies and governance. I look to how individuals' certainty about the future, attributions of control, and assessments of presidential traits are affected by "will," "shall," and "can" expectations.

Third, I analyze the linkage between expectations communicated and presidential approval. Although scholars know that unmet expectations influence approval ratings (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2005; Sigelman & Knight, 1983; 1985), the literature has yet to uncover whether individuals pass judgment on presidential job performance based on the expectations contained in a speech. Public judgment is an important, yet often uncoordinated and imperfect form of democratic feedback in a representative form of

government (Buchanan, 2013). Should citizens judge presidential performance based on the future he constructs, the results would illustrate that citizens do not necessarily need expectations to be violated to levy public judgment. A president's future vision also is "fair game" for individuals to judge the president.

This chapter reports the findings of a between-subjects experiment ($n = 346$) designed to gauge the effects of different types of expectations. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions. In three of the four conditions, individuals read a short speech vignette attributed to President Barack Obama that discussed plans for a future spaceflight to the planet Mars. These three conditions each used one type of expectation ("will," "shall," or "can"). In the fourth condition (control), individuals did not encounter a speech. I analyzed participants' responses to the expectations treatment to study how the type of expectation framed in a presidential speech influences (a) certainty about an individual policy; (b) perceptions of the degree of control the president has over the future policy; (c) perceptions of presidential traits, such as optimism; and (d) presidential approval.

CERTAINTY

Expectation setting may involve a process of change in *presidential* and *personal* certainty. Here, I analyze *presidential* certainty as judgments of how confident and certain the president is about a future policy action. Individuals also can make judgments about their own *personal* certainty and confidence in future actions (Clatterbuck, 1979; Poortinga et al., 2011). I investigate these two kinds of certainty judgments based on the type of expectation frame encountered (RQ4) as well as whether the effects are conditioned by political partisanship (RQ8a) or political knowledge (RQ8b).

Presidential Certainty

President Barack Obama could use expectations to influence judgments of certainty. Individuals were asked to rate how confident President Obama was about the proposal he advanced in the speech ("the Mars mission to put a human on the planet Mars by 2020") and whether they agreed that Obama was "certain that the United States can send a human to the planet Mars by the end of the decade."[37] The type of expectation constructed in a presidential communication influences judgments of presidential certainty (Table 6). The final model predicting presidential certainty was significant (F [19, 320] = 5.79, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.26$). Controlling for political and demographic factors, individuals who read a speech excerpt with "will" expectations assigned higher levels of certainty to President Obama compared to individuals in the control condition ($B = 0.64$, $SE = 0.22$, $p < 0.01$). Certainty ranged from - 3.13 to 0.91, making a 0.64 change rather substantial. "Shall" expectations did not lead to a significant change in assessments of presidential certainty ($B = 0.12$, $SE = 0.22$, $p = 0.57$). "Can" expectations also exhibited a significant main effect on certainty in President Obama compared to the control condition ($B = 0.57$, $SE = 0.21$, $p < 0.01$), although as discussed shortly, this effect is conditioned by partisanship.

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[37] Responses were standardized to create a measure of presidential certainty ($r = 0.69$, $p < 0.001$, two-tailed). Regression coefficients reported should be interpreted on a z-score scale.

Table 6. Assessments of Presidential Certainty
OLS Regression Models

	Coefficient (SE)	
	Step 1	Step 2
Constant	-1.57*** (0.45)	-1.77*** (0.47)
Race (1 = White)	0.05 (0.13)	0.07 (0.13)
Age	-0.05 (0.06)	-0.04 (0.06)
Education	-0.13 (0.07)	-0.10 (0.07)
Gender (1 = Female)	0.26** (0.10)	0.24* (0.10)
Republican	-0.22 (0.14)	0.07 (0.28)
Democrat	0.09 (0.10)	0.19 (0.20)
Political Knowledge	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.04)
Pres Responsibilities	0.35*** (0.07)	0.35*** (0.07)
Follow Politics	-0.16* (0.07)	-0.17** (0.06)
Mars Believability	0.26*** (0.05)	0.27*** (0.05)
"Will" Condition	0.43*** (0.13)	0.64** (0.22)
"Shall" Condition	0.23 (0.13)	0.12 (0.22)
"Can" Condition	0.33* (0.13)	0.57** (0.21)
Will * Republican	--	-0.23 (0.38)
Will * Democrat	--	-0.36 (0.28)
Shall * Republican	--	0.02 (0.39)
Shall * Democrat	--	0.21 (0.28)
Can * Republican	--	-1.00** (0.39)
Can * Democrat	--	-0.20 (0.28)
Overall Model	(F [13, 326] = 7.29, $p < 0.001$)	(F [19, 320] = 5.79, $p < 0.001$)
R^2	0.23	0.26

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$
Note: Political knowledge is mean-centered in the model

Partisanship interacted significantly with expectations. Specifically, the interaction between "can" expectations and Republican partisanship was significant in step 2 of the model (B = -1.00, SE = 0.39, $p < 0.01$). Adding this interaction to the model leads to a significant increase in the model R^2 (F-change [6, 320] = 2.18, $p < 0.05$). A separate model including interactions for both partisanship and political knowledge did not contain significant interactions between expectation type and political knowledge.

Graphing each of the expectation conditions illustrates the interactive effect of political partisanship with "can" expectations on presidential certainty compared to "will" expectations (Figure 13). The first three columns, "will" constructions, illustrate how the frame led to greater assessments of Obama's certainty compared to the control condition regardless of partisanship. All partisans responded similarly to "will" expectations, leading to significantly higher levels of presidential certainty. This effect is shown by reactions that fall relatively close to the mean on the standardized scale compared to the control condition, where certainty assessments were below the mean. The second three columns correspond to "shall" constructions, where there were no significant differences from the control. The third set of three columns, "can" expectations, show how Republicans responded differently to "can" expectations compared to Democrats and Independents. Holding demographic and political orientation variables at their mean or modal values, judgments of Obama's certainty among Republicans are significantly lower compared to Independents and individuals in the control group. This effect is shown by Republican reactions which are -0.90 from the mean compared to Independent (0.03) reactions at the mean. The type of expectation frame individuals encounter matters for how certain they believe the president is about the future and whether partisanship is used as a lens when these judgments.

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Figure 13. Presidential Certainty by Experimental Condition
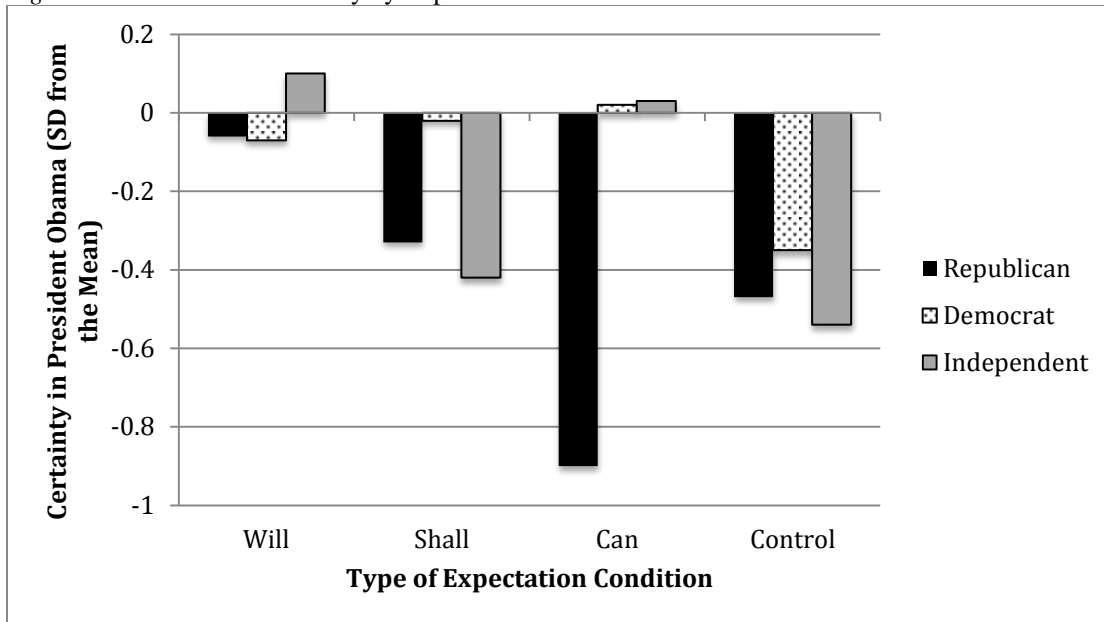
Personal Certainty

The effect of expectation types did not carry over into affecting individuals' personal confidence and certainty.[38] Examining first how confident individuals felt in their "general ability to predict what will happen with the Mars mission program," the overall model in the presence of controls for demographic and political factors was significant (F [13, 325] = 2.22, $p < 0.01$, R^2 = 0.08). However, none of the expectation frames exhibited main effects nor interacted with partisanship or political knowledge. Gender (B = -0.30, SE = 0.08, $p < 0.001$) and following politics (B = 0.13, SE = 0.06, $p < 0.05$) were the only controls to predict personal confidence.

The certainty individuals felt that "the United States can put a human on the planet Mars by the year 2020" also was unaffected by the experimental treatment. The OLS model predicting personal certainty was significant (F [13, 326] = 14.87, $p < 0.001$,

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[38] Due to the small correlation (r = .01, p = 0.92, two-tailed) between personal confidence and personal certainty, these measures were kept as separate outcomes for the OLS regression models.

$R^2 = 0.37$). The three types of expectations did not have significant main effects, nor did they interact with political partisanship or political knowledge. Believability of the Mars mission was the only control variable to significantly affect personal certainty ($B = 0.77$, $SE = 0.06$, $p < 0.001$).

Judgments of presidential certainty are influenced by the type of expectation frame (RQ4). Supporting the theoretical notion that a "will" future orientation communicates certainty, assuredness, and intentionality (Boisson, 2012; Hart, 2000, Pinna, 2007), perceptions of President Obama's certainty were higher in the "will" expectation condition compared to the control group. "Can" expectations also had an effect on certainty ascribed to President Obama, however, these results were conditioned by partisanship (RQ8a). Republican perceptions of Obama's certainty were significantly lower compared to Democrats and Independents and relative to the control condition. Personal certainty remains unchanged after encountering the three types of expectations in a presidential speech. Political knowledge had no conditioning influence on the effect of expectations on presidential or personality certainty (RQ8b). These findings are the first evidence that the type of expectation framed can influence beliefs and perceptions about the future and the president.

PERCEPTIONS OF CONTROL

How the president frames the future also may communicate the degree of control he has over it. Notions of responsibility and control are central to the traditional conceptualization of the attribution frame (see Iyengar, 1990; 1991). As a type of causal attribution frame, expectation frames could lead citizens to ascribe control based on perceptions of the president's influence over future policies.

Research question five asked how perceptions of presidential control are influenced by the type of expectation. Research question eight looked at whether the effects are conditioned by political partisanship (RQ8a) and political knowledge (RQ8b). Participants were asked about the amount of control President Obama had over (a) the Mars mission budget, (b) streamlining programs to pay for the Mars mission, and (c) landing an American on the planet Mars by the end of the decade. These three future-related events were explicitly mentioned in the speech. After averaging together these responses to create a measure of presidential control (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.77$), I examined whether responses differed by the type of expectation used in the vignette (Table 7).

Table 7. Presidential Control
OLS Regression Model

	Presidential Control Coefficient (SE)
Constant	2.08*** (0.32)
Race (1 = White)	-0.07 (0.09)
Age	-0.02 (0.04)
Education	-0.01 (0.05)
Gender (1 = Female)	0.01 (0.07)
Republican	-0.09 (0.10)
Democrat	0.08 (0.07)
Political Knowledge	-0.07* (0.03)
Pres Responsibilities	0.10* (0.05)
Follow Politics	-0.16*** (0.05)
Mars Believability	0.26*** (0.04)
"Will" Condition	0.13 (0.09)
"Shall" Condition	0.16 (0.09)
"Can" Condition	0.24** (0.09)
Overall Model	(*F* [13, 324] = 7.89, *p* < 0.001)
R^2	0.24

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$
Note: Political knowledge is mean-centered in the model.

The overall OLS regression model was significant (*F* [13, 324] = 7.89, *p* < 0.001) and accounted for 24 percent of the variance in presidential control. Controlling for demographic and political factors, people in the "can" expectation condition attributed greater amounts of control to President Obama for future events compared to those individuals in the control condition (*B* = 0.24, *SE* = 0.09, *p* < 0.01). Individuals in the "shall" expectation condition attributed higher amounts of control to President Obama

relative to the control condition, although this increase failed to achieve traditional levels of significance ($B = 0.16$, $SE = 0.09$, $p = 0.08$). "Will" expectations did not influence perceptions of presidential control ($B = 0.13$, $SE = 0.09$, $p = 0.15$) compared to the control condition. The type of expectation did not interact with partisanship or political knowledge.

The model also illustrates the importance of political knowledge and beliefs about the president's job responsibilities when examining perceptions of presidential control. Greater amounts of political knowledge significantly reduce perceptions of Obama's control over future events regardless of the type of expectation framed ($B = -0.07$, $SE = 0.03$, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, as individuals assign greater importance to a set list of presidential job responsibilities (sound judgment in a crisis, deal effectively with foreign countries, have high ethical standards, work well with Congress, and ensure strong economic growth), individuals assign greater amounts of control to the president ($B = 0.10$, $SE = 0.05$, $p < 0.05$).

The type of expectation framed can influence perceptions of presidential control (RQ5). "Can" expectations increase beliefs that President Obama had greater control over future events discussed in the speech vignette. Similar effects did not appear for "shall" or "will" expectations, nor were interactions with partisanship (RQ8a) or political knowledge (RQ8b) present.

PRESIDENTIAL TRAITS

Foundational literature has examined what traits the American public associates with the presidency. This research tradition has assessed the characteristics associated with the "ideal" president (Kinder et al., 1980). In a recent review of the literature, Simon (2009) explains that pre-existing attitudes of how a president should execute his office

include trait-based attitudes. Examining how the public interprets how a president *should* act is important then for understanding how people *expect* all presidents to act.

Research question six asked whether traits ascribed to the president would be influenced by the type of expectation communicated. I further examined whether partisanship (RQ8a) and political knowledge (RQ8b) condition the effects of expectation frames on traits. To determine how presidential traits are influenced by the type of expectation constructed in a speech, participants responded to phrases about President Obama's leadership, knowledge, intelligence, honesty, and optimism. I averaged the responses (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$) and regressed the measure of presidential traits based on expectation type as well as political and demographic factors (Table 8). The overall model was significant ($F\ [13, 323] = 17.88$, $p < 0.001$) and accounted for 42 percent of the variance in the traits measure. Neither the type of expectation nor interactions with partisanship or political knowledge influenced trait evaluations of President Obama.

Future-based language reflects not only degrees of certainty, but also degrees of optimism. Niven (2000) describes political optimism as a positive belief about some kind of future enjoyment. From an effects perspective, I was interested in whether individuals perceive the president to be more or less optimistic after encountering specific types of future-oriented frames. To determine whether this was the case, I isolated the optimism measure from the overall traits measure and regressed it separately by expectation type and the control variables (Table 8). The model was significant ($F\ [13, 325] = 5.57$, $p < 0.001$) and accounted for 18 percent of the variance in optimism scores.

Table 8. Presidential Traits
OLS Regression Models

	Presidential Optimism	Presidential Traits (Overall)
	Coefficient (SE)	Coefficient (SE)
Constant	2.13*** (0.40)	1.83*** (0.33)
Race (1 = White)	0.10 (0.11)	0.11 (0.09)
Age	-0.06 (0.05)	-0.08 (0.04)
Education	0.02 (0.06)	0.07 (0.05)
Gender (1 = Female)	0.13 (0.09)	0.15* (0.07)
Republican	-0.28* (0.12)	-0.55*** (0.10)
Democrat	0.36*** (0.09)	0.65*** (0.08)
Political Knowledge	0.06 (0.04)	0.03 (0.03)
Pres Responsibilities	0.18** (0.06)	0.08 (0.05)
Follow Politics	-0.09 (0.06)	-0.01 (0.05)
Mars Believability	0.14** (0.05)	0.14*** (0.04)
"Will" Condition	0.00 (0.11)	0.03 (0.10)
"Shall" Condition	0.00 (0.11)	0.02 (0.09)
"Can" Condition	0.24* (0.11)	0.11 (0.10)
Overall Model	(F [13, 325] = 5.57, $p < 0.001$)	(F [13, 323] = 17.88, $p < 0.001$)
R^2	0.18	0.42

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$
Note: Political knowledge is mean-centered in the model.

Table 8 includes the models for presidential optimism and overall traits. "Can" expectations led to a significant increase in perceptions of Obama's optimism ($B = 0.24$, $SE = 0.11$, $p < 0.05$). Main effects were not present for "will" and "shall" expectations. Neither political partisanship nor political knowledge moderated the effects of the expectation frames.

Assessments of President Obama's optimism were affected by the type of expectation frame (RQ6). "Can" expectations led to a significant increase in beliefs that the president was optimistic. The overall measure of presidential traits, which included assessments of leadership, honesty, knowledge, and intelligence, was not affected. Partisanship (RQ8a) and political knowledge (RQ8b) did not interact with the type of expectation frame to influence the effects.

PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL

One means by which the public can pass judgment on the president is by approving or disapproving of his job performance. Although unmet expectations have been linked to drops in presidential approval (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2005; Ostrom & Simon, 1985; Sigelman & Knight, 1983; 1985; Waterman et al., 1999), no relationship has been established between the types of expectations constructed in presidential communication and job approval. Prior research presents a mixed possibility, with presidential communication having a clear effect (Druckman & Holmes, 2004) or no effect (Edwards, 2003) on presidential approval.

Research question seven asked about whether the type of expectation constructed by the president directly (7a) or indirectly (7b) influences levels of public approval. Research question eight also was tested to determine whether partisanship (8a) or political knowledge (8b) conditioned the effect of expectation frames. In an OLS regression model including the type of expectation condition as well as political and demographic controls, the overall model was significant (F [13, 326] = 22.16, $p < 0.001$) and explained 47 percent of the variance in approval. Neither the type of expectation nor its interaction with partisanship or political knowledge, however, had a significant effect on approval of President Obama.

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Although the type of expectation used did not have a direct effect on approval ratings, expectations may indirectly affect approval based on the level of certainty an individual has in President Obama (Hayes, 2013). Based on the results for how "will" and "can" expectation frames influenced perceptions of presidential certainty (Table 6), I investigated whether these changed certainty perceptions then influenced President Obama's job approval ratings.[39] I examined this possibility with Hayes' PROCESS program. I constructed two models with PROCESS based on the effect "will" expectations had on presidential certainty as well as the effect the interaction of "can" expectations and Republican partisanship had on presidential certainty.

The first model tested the mediated effect of "will" expectations on presidential approval ratings through presidential certainty (Figure 14).[40] The model confirms that no direct effect exists between "will" expectations and presidential approval (B = -0.06, SE = 0.17, p = 0.73). To examine the presence of a significant indirect effect, Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007) recommend examining the bias corrected bootstrapped confidence intervals associated with the indirect effect. If the confidence interval does not include zero, the effect is significant. The indirect effect of "will" expectations on approval through perceptions of presidential certainty is significant (B = 0.05, SE = 0.03, 95% bias corrected CI: 0.003; 0.14). Using Preacher and Kelley's (2011) measure of effect size yields a Kappa-squared of 0.02 (SE = 0.01, 95% bias corrected CI: 0.001; 0.04). Although a small effect, the results reveal that the relationship between "will" expectations and job performance is explained by perceptions of presidential certainty.

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[39] Due to the non-significant findings for personal certainty reported in Table 6, a mediation analysis was not conducted.

[40] The structure of this model is based on Model 4 from Hayes (2013). Based on guidelines outlined by Preacher et al. (2007), 5000 bootstrap samples generated 95 percent bias corrected confidence intervals.

Figure 14. Mediation Model for "Will" Frames on Presidential Approval[41]
Coefficient (SE)
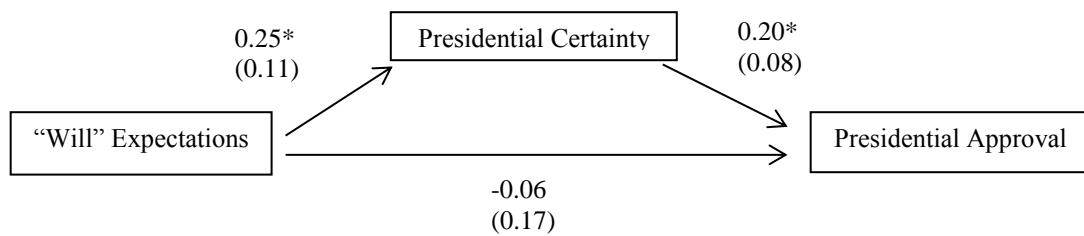
The second model tested the moderated mediation effect of "can" expectations on presidential approval ratings through Obama certainty conditioned by Republican identification (Figure 15).[42] No direct effect exists between "can" expectations and presidential approval (B = -0.12, SE = 0.17, p = 0.50). The conditional indirect effect of "can" expectations on approval through presidential certainty is significant at both values of the partisanship moderator (1 = Republican; 0 = Non-Republican). For Republicans, the indirect effect is significant and negative (B = -0.17, SE = 0.12, 95% bias corrected CI: -0.52; -0.01). For non-Republicans, the indirect effect is significant and positive (B = 0.04, SE = 0.03, 95% bias corrected CI: 0.002; 0.12). Republicans and non-Republicans encountering "can" expectations rate President Obama's certainty differently, leading to different effects on presidential approval as a result. Based on these results, the relationship between "can" expectations and job approval is explained by presidential certainty conditioned by political partisanship.

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[41] Path coefficients with an (*) are significant $p < 0.05$.

[42] The structure of this model is based on Model 7 from Hayes (2013). Based on guidelines outlined by Preacher et al. (2007), 5000 bootstrap samples generated 95 percent bias corrected confidence intervals.

Figure 15. Moderated Mediation Model for "Can" Frames on Presidential Approval[43] Coefficient (SE)
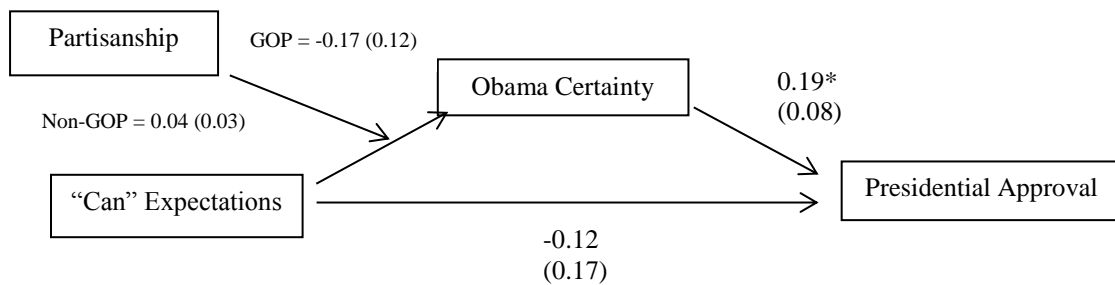
Partisanship		GOP = -0.17 (0.12)		

Obama Certainty   0.19*
                        (0.08)

Non-GOP = 0.04 (0.03)

"Can" Expectations   Presidential Approval

-0.12
(0.17)

The job approval findings illustrate that the ways in which presidents discuss the future can matter for presidential public standing, albeit in an indirect way (RQ7). For "will" expectations, there is an indirect effect on approval through levels of external certainty in President Obama. For "can" expectations, there is an indirect effect conditioned by Republican partisanship (RQ8a). Although approval increased with "will" expectations via certainty across all individuals, "can" expectations led, indirectly, to small drops in approval among Republicans and small increases in approval among non-Republicans.

THE INFLUENCE OF PRESIDENTIAL FUTURE TALK

This chapter traces the effect of expectation frames on individuals, focusing specifically on whether small changes in how the future is communicated influence citizens to think differently about the future and the president. In the process, the results engage a much broader issue that has vexed communication and political scholars: what effect can presidential discourse have on individuals? Although this question is often answered by examining the relationship between speeches and job approval (Edwards, 2003; Ragsdale, 1984; Simon & Ostrom, 1989), this chapter re-directed the traditional research focus to analyze the effects of (a) an attribute of presidential communication (expectation frames) as opposed to an entire speech on (b) citizens' beliefs about the

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[43] Path coefficients with an (*) are significant $p < 0.05$.

future and the president. By re-orienting the effects focus, I look at outcomes beyond approval to include how future talk structures citizens' beliefs about the future. Outcomes like perceived certainty, for instance, implicate presidents' ability to exercise influence by defining the future. This expression of influence is important for presidential leadership of the public.

The extent to which the president can shape the national conversation is critical to his communicative leadership. If the president imparts possibilities about what is to come, as Hart (2008) posits, individuals should *attend* to how future possibilities are framed and then *alter* their perceptions of the future as a result. The results reported in this chapter illustrate that citizens notice the different ways a president frames the future and, in some cases, alter their perceptions as a result. I discuss both conclusions in turn.

Attending to Expectation Frames

When the president talks about the future, citizens pick up on it. If citizens did not notice small changes in the president's future orientation, a consistent pattern of non-significant findings would have appeared across all of the experimental conditions. This did not occur. Instead, individuals responded *differently* based on whether they encountered a "will," "shall," or "can" expectation frame. For instance, all individuals perceived President Obama to be more certain with "will" frames compared to the control. Participants also reported greater amounts of presidential control and optimism with "can" expectations. These findings are telling when examined in the context of the subtle experimental manipulation. Five sentences (out of 17) were changed across conditions. Within these sentences, nine future-oriented verbs were altered (out of 298 words). Small changes to expectation frames matter.

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The fact that individuals respond to shifts in the president's future orientation builds on prior "small cues" framing research (Edelman, 1993; Gilovich, 1981; Kahneman & Tversky, 1984; Knobloch-Westerwick & Taylor, 2008; Shah et al., 2009). The "small cues" literature argues that subtle changes to a frame can have noticeable effects on individuals. Extending this literature to presidential communication illustrates the efficacy of examining attributes of presidential discourse as opposed to communications as a whole. Holistic approaches to presidential discourse effects may understate the communicative influence a president has on the public. An entire speech may contain elements designed to influence an audience differently. Attributes of a presidential communication can enhance and counteract one another, influencing the total net effect on citizens. In advocating for a small cues approach, Shah et al. (2009) argue that "framing effects represent an accumulation of small elements within a story, each of which may have a contribution, and some of which may offset one another" (p. 228). By employing an attributes-based approach (see Eveland, 2003) in this research, I isolated the differential effects of expectation frames on individuals. Although there is merit in evaluating how individuals react to an entire speech, as some research has done (Edwards, 2003), scholars have to be cautious in making conclusions about the effects of presidential communication because many attributes are contained within a given speech.

The results of this chapter also highlight that citizens do not need any specialized political or policy knowledge to attend to presidential future talk. Zaller (1992) has advanced the idea that the reception of political messages is in part a product of one's level of political awareness, or knowledge about and attention to public affairs. In no instance did an individual's level of political knowledge interact with the type of expectation to influence the effect. Some might surmise that inflated perceptions of certainty, control, and optimism would occur among those citizens most prone to be

"duped" by future-oriented discourse. Stimson (1976) hypothesized, but did not empirically test, that the "ill-informed segments" of society respond to future-based appeals by the president compared to more knowledgeable segments (p. 9). Past research disputed Stimson's hypothesis, showing that low levels of education are unrelated to future-based beliefs about the president (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2005; Presser & Converse, 1976; Sigelman & Knight, 1985). If Stimson's (1976) hypothesis was a possibility in my research, a different pattern of results would have appeared for the most and least knowledgeable participants. This pattern did not materialize.

Instead, one possible explanation for the findings in this chapter is that individuals can use their experiences of dealing with uncertainty to interpret presidential expectations. Individuals may attend to the future orientation in an expectation frame because anticipation and prediction are a part of human experience. Whether in political or non-political settings, individuals communicate and make predictions in order to manage future uncertainty (Berlo, 1960; Bucy, 2000; Bucy & Newhagen, 1999; Burgoon, 1993; Clatterbuck, 1979; Ogburn, 1934). The experiential knowledge needed to communicatively interpret how the future is constructed may be very different from the political knowledge needed to understand governmental policies. By testing individual political knowledge, as opposed to education, as a moderator with the type of expectation, my research extends upon past studies (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2005; Presser & Converse, 1976; Sigelman & Knight, 1985) to show that lower levels of sophistication do not influence the formation of future-based beliefs. People may use their everyday communicative experience to attend to small changes in future frames.

Altered Thinking Due to Expectation Frames

Citizens think about the future differently depending on the type of future constructed in an expectation frame. Frames set the boundaries for individuals' thoughts. These boundaries serve to select or hide aspects of reality (Carragee & Roefs, 2004; de Vreese, 2005; Entman, 1993; Lawrence, 2000; Scheufele, 1999). Expectation frames can emphasize aspects of the future and presidential governance that can be beneficial to the chief executive – certainty, control, and optimism. Beliefs about a future reality then affect how individuals judge the president.

Expectation frames direct individuals to judge the president as more or less certain about future events. In general, individuals are averse to uncertain situations and strive for information that will reduce uncertainty (Morton et al., 2011; Ogburn, 1934). Presidents can reduce future uncertainty with expectations. Beliefs that the president is certain about future actions are important for leadership and governance, namely the president's ability to direct a national conversation. This research empirically demonstrated for the first time that "will" communicates tonal certainty, assuredness, and intentionality (Boisson, 2012; Hart, 2000; Pinna, 2007). "Will" expectation frames led participants to believe the president was more certain about the Mars mission compared to the control condition. "Can" expectations, in turn, led Republicans to attribute significantly less certainty to President Obama compared to the control condition. "Shall" expectations had no effect.

Partisanship influences how expectation frames affect judgments of presidential certainty. Citizens use their partisan beliefs as an important lens for interpreting future talk. Republicans responded differently than Democrats and Independents to some expectation types. GOP participants perceived President Obama as significantly less certain with "can" expectations compared to the control condition and other partisans.

Yet Republican beliefs about presidential certainty are aligned with those of Democrats in the "will" expectations condition, where the differences were significant relative to the control condition and un-moderated by partisanship. By using the more certain "will" expectation, the president can direct opponents and supporters alike to perceive his certainty similarly. Although perceived certainty does not equate to support (or opposition) for presidential policies, it does unify supporters and opponents beliefs that the president is assured of what is to come, which establishes the president as both relevant and central to the national conversation and future policy actions.

The finding that partisans react differently to some expectations underscores an important theoretical dimension to the role of partisanship in future framing. The results support prior research that partisans can react differently to political messages (Iyengar, 1991; Lane & Sears, 1964; Shields & Goidel, 1998; Zaller, 1992). Yet, these results do not tell us why Republicans attributed less certainty to the president in the "can" condition. Two possibilities include: partisans may react similarly depending on the president's partisanship or there may be something unique about how Republicans react. First, both Democrats and Republicans may react similarly to "can" expectations from a president of the opposite party. "Can" verb constructions have been theorized to convey possibility and a limited future (Perkins, 1982; Pinna, 2007). Republicans thus responded in line with the prior research with lower levels of presidential certainty when given a speech attributed to President Obama. Those not sharing the president's partisanship may interpret "can" as indecisiveness and render a negative judgment of how certain the president is as a result. Those sharing the president's partisanship may interpret "can" statements differently. Second, "can" expectations may communicate greater ambiguity about the future, potentially affecting Republicans uniquely as a result. Psychological research has found that intolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty predict political

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conservatism (see Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). Thus Republicans may respond more to "can" expectations regardless of the partisanship of the president. Future approaches to expectations should examine (a) whether these results are similar for Democrats responding to a Republican president's "can" expectations and (b) if "can" expectations are viewed as more ambiguous and whether this ambiguity predicts different responses among Republicans and Democrats.

Some expectation frames also direct individuals to perceive the president as more in control of future events. Perceived control of the environment invokes management and independence, notions that encapsulate the power associated with myths about the presidency (Grabe & Bucy, 2009). "Can" expectations resulted in perceptions that President Obama had more control over various aspects of the Mars mission. These findings extend upon Knobloch-Westerwick and Taylor's (2008) work with verb tense and perceived control. By focusing on verbs, rather than causal attributions as Knobloch-Westerwick and Taylor have done, this research illustrates that judgments about control can change with the future orientation of a frame. Moreover, the results illuminate how presidents may attempt to strategically manage their influence over future events based on the type of expectation frame.

Future framing also affects perceptions of the president's optimism in some cases. Participants saw the president as more optimistic with "can" frames compared to the control condition. These results empirically test notions advanced by Hart (1984a) and Niven (2000) about the importance of optimism to presidential leadership and communication. Optimism is associated with the president's role "as the country's First Cheerleader, personally leading the national chant of hope and perseverance" (Hart, 1984a, p. 253). The trait also taps predictive beliefs about the future (Niven, 2000). The

evidence here supports these claims. Varying the future orientation of an expectation can influence assessments of presidential optimism.

Although "will" expectations strongly influenced perceptions of presidential certainty, "can" frames affected perceptions of presidential certainty, control, and optimism. What might explain the influence "can" expectations had on individuals compared to "will" and "shall" frames? In some ways, "can" is a lower threshold of certainty compared to "will" (Perkins, 1982; Pinna, 2007). Indeed, Republicans perceived the president to be significantly less certain with "can" expectations. But what explains the effect of "can" frames for presidential control and optimism regardless of partisanship? One possibility is that "can" might be perceived as a means of expectation management or tempering on the part of the president. As a consequence, participants may have interpreted "can" as more realistic compared to other types of expectations, a notion that warrants additional study. By defining the limits of future abilities and possibilities, the president may communicate a greater amount of control and awareness of his limitations. In this manner, citizens may come to know that their leader is anchored to realities, even as he discusses tomorrow. Another possibility is that "can" expectations seem to invite individuals to see possibilities as evidenced by greater beliefs in the president's optimism compared to the control condition. By communicating what is possible, but not necessarily certain, individuals may see the president as attempting to instill hope. Moreover, the "can" expectation construction has been connected prominently to President Obama from his political campaigns (the slogan "Yes we can" was chanted at his rallies). Future research should assess the extent to which judgments of optimism with "can" expectations are unique to Obama.

Whereas the type of expectation frame directly structured citizens' beliefs about the future, expectations did not directly influence job approval ratings. Instead,

individuals rendered an indirect form of public judgment on the president's job performance. "Will" expectations have a small indirect effect on approval while "can" expectations also lead to a small negative effect among Republicans and a small positive effect among non-Republicans. These findings demonstrate how presidential communications can lead to direct effects associated with the president's governing vision and smaller, indirect effects associated with job performance.

The magnitude of the effects for job approval versus the future-based vision measures (certainty, control, and optimism) illustrates the challenges and opportunities for presidential communicative leadership. If presidents speak in an attempt to move their approval rating, they may come up shorthanded in many cases (Edwards, 2003; Ostrom & Simon, 1989). Job approval scores are a product of national and personal factors, many of which are outside the president's influence (Brace & Hinckley, 1991; Brody, 1991). For instance, presidents cannot directly control many economic factors that might weigh on approval or the partisanship of individuals who disapprove by default (Brody, 1991). These factors do not preclude the influence of communication on approval, but do illustrate the challenges. In this research, the president could move his approval in a small, and indirect, way. Indeed, a change of nine verbs to "will" in a 300-word section of a speech indirectly moved approval by .05 on a five-point scale. A larger section of speech incorporating repetition of expectation frames might magnify the effects on job approval, a possibility worthy of additional study.

Citizens thus render judgment on the president, but not necessarily in the direct manner scholars traditionally examine. The beliefs examined in this chapter illustrate that alternatives to presidential approval must be used to assess the effects of presidential communications on attitudes and beliefs. Although citizens, elites, and scholars focus on job approval scores as *the* measure of a president's governing stature (Neustadt, 1990),

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this focus overlooks the other ways in which presidents can influence the public to view the future and their vision in a different manner. By framing the future, presidents can direct individuals to envision a tomorrow in ways that enhance presidential leadership.

LIMITATIONS

The results of this study demonstrate the effects of communicated expectations. Although these results illustrate a promising link between expectation frames and how individuals think about the future and the president, limitations exist.

First, the foundation of experiments is successful random assignment of individuals to treatment and control conditions. As I noted, random assignment failed with respect to gender. There were more women in the "will" and control conditions compared to the "shall" and "can" conditions. I mitigated this issue by controlling for gender in each OLS model for this study, but it remains a limitation. Other demographic and political factors included in this study were balanced across experimental groups.

Second, the purpose of this experiment was to establish a causal connection between expectations and a set of outcomes like certainty and control. This causal connection for expectations about a spaceflight policy was established. However, the stimuli reflected one speech about Mars spaceflight from President Obama. The results, therefore, cannot be generalized beyond the topic and the president. For example, the personal connection individuals have to economic issues (Just et al., 1996) could change how citizens react to economic expectation frames. The more indirect influence of foreign policy issues on individuals (Wildavsky, 1966) also could alter the effects of expectation frames. Future research should investigate these possibilities by examining whether the findings reported for spaceflight extend to other public policy topics. Moreover, the mTurk sample was not representative of the broader United States

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population, as it was overwhelmingly Democratic (46.9%), liberal (55.1%), and young (31.6% between 18 and 29 years old). The results should be interpreted within the context of the sample of participants. I attempted to mitigate some of these concerns about generalizability by integrating ecological validity with the written communications. I ensured that the proportion of the speech vignettes containing expectations mirrored the proportion found in the content analysis results (Chapter 4). The written communications hued as closely as possible to actual presidential speech texts.

Additionally, my focus was on the future-oriented verbs and syntactic constructions that form an expectation frame. This meant I had to test whether individuals attended to text-based shifts in the frame and how their thinking about the future changed as a result. In doing this, I made two decisions that enhanced internal validity at the expense of generalizability. First, I required individuals to stay on the survey page containing the speech vignette for 30 seconds. I used forced exposure to test the causal relationship between expectation types and the outcomes, which does not mirror the natural choices individuals have in the political environment (Baum & Kernell, 1999; 2007). Although forced exposure could inflate effects among individuals who would not otherwise attend to particular media naturally, forced choice designs also can discover the maximum possible effects for reference in later studies (Arceneaux & Johnson, 2013). Second, I chose a written speech text for the manipulation. I sought to examine whether individuals pick up on the syntactic construction of expectation frames. Individuals may attend or react differently to expectations framed in more visual or digital platforms, however. Many individuals encounter presidential communications in these platforms (Baum & Kernell, 1999; 2007; Scacco, 2012). Reading a speech with expectations versus seeing or hearing a speech with expectations could lead to different effects, a possibility that warrants additional attention. For example, Bucy and Newhagen (1999) argue that

audiences view negative visual displays from leaders as appropriate during speeches. A negative visual display coupled with a "can" expectation may change how individuals interpret the president's optimism for instance. Further scholarship should assess the extent to which presidential nonverbal communication may interact with verbal expectations to heighten or diminish the frame effect on individuals.

THINKING DIFFERENTLY ABOUT TOMORROW

Presidents lay the building blocks on which a future reality is built. Through strategic expectation framing, chief executives can structure individuals' thinking about future policy actions and the president. This influence is critical to presidential communicative leadership. As Goffman (1974) surmised, the individual who initiates a frame has a considerable advantage in influencing the discourse that follows. By structuring beliefs regarding presidential certainty, control, and optimism, the president frames the future around perceptions that highlight his leadership. Citizens, in turn, are left thinking about a future defined on terms the president has set.

Presidential influence over individual thinking does not diminish citizen agency, however. Individuals are not passive receivers of future-based communications, as this chapter reveals. One's political partisanship serves as an important lens, in some cases, for how expectations are screened. Moreover, citizens have the ability to pass judgment on the president's job performance. Although individuals do not assess presidential performance directly based on the type of expectation frame, they do use their beliefs about the president's certainty to evaluate his job performance in some cases. This mechanism illustrates how individuals can render public judgment, albeit indirectly, on the president's vision for the future. New structures of thinking created by expectations may be used to directly evaluate presidential performance at a later point should the

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future not come to fruition (see Jenkins-Smith et al., 2005; Waterman et al., 1999). If this is the case, the results in this chapter unearth the building blocks for future presidential success or disappointment.

How presidents talk about the future matters for citizens. When placed in conversation with how presidents attempt to manage the expectations message environment, a broader picture emerges of the president's drive for influence in a competitive (and often adversarial) political environment. Chief executives strategically frame expectations and can subsequently influence citizens' thoughts about the future. I discuss the implications for strategic messaging and effects in the final chapter.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

On August 2, 1994, President Bill Clinton was meeting with his advisors to prepare for a press conference. On the agenda was how to talk about the president's healthcare plan. Battered by vehement opposition to the legislation, the president sought to reclaim the healthcare frame by reassuring the public that they would not lose their existing healthcare coverage under his plan. "A lot of them [citizens] want to know they can keep their own plan if they like it" (Discussion of presidential, 1994). Though the expectation was never uttered in the press conference (Nather, 2014), the private account illustrates the calculation Clinton made in attempting to project confidence in and to reassure the public about the future of healthcare.

Nearly sixteen years later, President Barack Obama was delivering a speech in Washington, D.C. as the Congress debated the details of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care legislation. Seeking an advantage against Republican opposition to his healthcare plan, the president predicted, "If you like your plan, you can keep your plan. If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor" (2010, March 3). Whereas Bill Clinton and his advisors chose to refrain from setting this expectation, Barack Obama did not. Obama framed a future where citizens would have the ability to choose their healthcare options. The two accounts illustrate the choices presidents make in framing the future and how presidents seek influence by constructing expectations about their policies for citizens.

Influence is not a given for presidents. Although the perception exists that the President of the United States is influential, it is difficult for the president to exercise influence. Separation of powers often makes bargaining and compromise difficult between the president and Congress (Kernell, 2007; Neustadt, 1990). Increased media

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choices give citizens options other than attending to presidential national addresses and events (Baum & Kernell, 1999; 2007). News media often analyze and challenge presidential statements (Edwards, 2003), as in the case of President Obama's "you can keep your plan" statement. Journalists are more likely to report intra-party attacks on the president during unified government (Groeling, 2010), suggesting that even unifying power does not guarantee presidential influence. In sum, exercising influence can be difficult for chief executives.

The future is an opening for presidents to exercise influence with governmental and citizen agents. The vast, unclaimed territory that is the future allows presidential pioneers to stake a claim. Presidents answer the call to settle this future frontier. The first to frame sets the message, according to Goffman (1974). Whether attempting to signal to bureaucrats how they "should" execute a law in a signing statement or whether setting the public's perception of a certain future, the story of expectations is about how the president tries to establish relevance and dominance in the American political system. This research has explored how presidents construct expectations in their discourse as well as how citizens respond to them.

Two main questions have guided this research. First, *how often* and *under what circumstances* do presidents construct expectations? Second, how do expectations *affect* the individuals who encounter them? The answers to these questions illustrate how expectations are an important tool of the president's public influence. In this chapter, I show that unearthing how presidents exercise influence through expectation framing required extensions on and departures from prior literature. These approaches contribute to the field of political communication. Next, I describe how my main findings document presidents' efforts to strategically construct future frames as well as the presidents' ability to shape individuals perceptions. Third, I illustrate possible avenues for future research.

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Finally, I conclude with the importance of future talk to the presidency and the American political system.

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

How presidents engage in future talk is an extension of political communication research on the role of elites in political life. From a content perspective, research focuses on how presidents communicate in such a way as to preserve institutions of government (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008) and to showcase executive governance (Hart, 1987). From an effects perspective, scholars have paid much attention to how elites – including the president – shape public attitudes (Lane & Sears, 1964; Zaller, 1992). The present research drew upon these rich research traditions to study the content of expectation frames as well as the influence of these frames on public attitudes and beliefs. Engaging these ideas thus extends upon the scholarly understanding of how elites strategically communicate and attempt to exercise influence in the political system.

To examine the important, yet understudied, topic of presidential expectations, I contribute both theoretically and methodologically to political communication research by (a) re-conceptualizing expectations as a type of causal attribution frame in presidential communication as well as (b) employing unique methodological approaches to analyze the content and effects of future frames. By innovating in these areas, I was able to draw important conclusions about how presidents attempt to exercise influence through future talk.

Re-Conceptualizing Expectations

Studying how presidents exercise influence through future talk first required a clear definition of expectations. As advanced in the Introduction, I define presidential expectations as *future-oriented statements made by the president*. Past research

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approaches had adopted the argument that people know expectations when they encounter them, and that expectations include notions of probabilities and future evaluations (Seligman & Baer, 1969). I operationalized future-oriented statements based on "will," "shall," and "can" constructions in presidential communications. Although the ensuing analysis in Chapter 4 accounted for other types of future-oriented constructions (e.g. predict, forecast, foresee), "will," "shall," and "can" were the most prevalent expressions of expectations.

This conceptualization of expectations was used to broaden notions of causal attribution framing. To illustrate how presidents seek influence by strategically selecting and emphasizing particular parts of a future reality, I advanced framing theory to account for expectations as future causal attributions. Framing theory is an appropriate lens for studying the construction of expectations. As scholars have observed, framing involves strategic patterns of selection, deflection, and emphasis about some perceived reality, whether it has occurred or not (Entman, 1993; Gitlin, 2003; Goffman, 1974; Lawrence, 2000). The causal attribution frame that was studied in previous research was past-focused (Iyengar, 1991; Lawrence, 2004; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000): An observable present effect or event was linked to past causal origins. I conceptualized expectation frames as future-focused causal attributions. President Obama's "you can keep your plan" statement attributes a future action ("can keep") to a causal agent ("you"). As a type of causal attribution, expectation frames account for these future-oriented constructions in a manner that past notions of causal framing had not.

Expectation frames then were applied as an attribute of presidential communication to test their influence on individuals. As one attribute among many in communication, expectations may have their own unique influence on individuals. Mapping Eveland's (2003) "mix of attributes" approach used in media technologies

research onto presidential communication, I argued that expectations should be isolated and tested to analyze how the frames can move beliefs about the future and the president. This advancement diverged from past research approaches that studied the influence of whole presidential speeches on outcomes like job approval (see Druckman & Holmes, 2004; Edwards, 2003). The findings reported in Chapter 5 illustrate the potential advantages of studying expectation frames as well as other attributes of presidential communication compared to full speeches.

Methodological Innovations

This project contributed methodologically to the study of political communication in two ways related to the content and effects analyses of future frames. First, I employed statistical modeling techniques to analyze the content of expectations in presidential communications. Second, I applied measures of certainty used in other research areas to assess perceptions of the political future.

When individuals construct frames, they emphasize and hide particular parts of reality (Entman, 1993; Lawrence, 2000) at some moments compared to others. To methodologically account for patterns of emphasis and de-emphasis in expectation frames, I used statistical modeling techniques rarely used in content analytic research. Modeling approaches offered the opportunity to assess how presidents strategically choose the type of future individuals encounter. Past quantitative and rhetorical research on the content of presidential communications treated word and other speech units as independent for statistical analysis (see Coe, 2007; Hart & Scacco, 2014). Syntactically, words and paragraphs are not independent, however. These approaches, while revealing much about language use in presidential discourse, could hide variation that exists within and across communications. By recognizing the non-independent structure of discourse

(sentences within a communication), I was able to use hierarchical modeling approaches that allowed for the examination of frame components while controlling for factors in the political environment. The predicted probabilities, in this regard, revealed the likelihood that the president would use a type of expectation in a sentence. This statistical approach captured how presidents pick-and-choose components of reality (Carragee & Roefs, 2004; de Vreese, 2005; Entman, 1993; Lawrence, 2000) and when presidents are more or less likely to construct an expectation. Future research on frame content may benefit from employing similar modeling approaches to reveal how frame components are selected or not selected by political elites.

In examining the effects of expectation frames on individuals, this research illustrated the efficacy of certainty measures in assessing beliefs about the future and the president. After reviewing how prior research measured certainty (Clatterbuck, 1979; Corbett & Durfee, 2004; Poortinga et al., 2011) as well as how past framing scholarship manipulated certainty (Morton et al., 2011; Patt & Schrag, 2003), I adapted measures used in interactional, climate change, and weather communication to identify two distinct types of certainty: personal and presidential certainty. Although continued research is required to develop these measures fully, the results are promising for future research trajectories that will continue to assess the dimensionality of certainty as both an internal, personal assessment as well as a more external, presidential one. The presidential certainty measure, for instance, captured how individuals ascribe certainty to the president based on the type of expectation frame they encountered.

These theoretical and methodological contributions to political communication research assisted in answering *how* presidents construct expectation frames and *what* effect the frames have on individuals. The answers to these questions reveal how presidents seek to gain influence by framing the future.

The future is a rare opening for presidents to exercise influence with the public and political agents. Although chief executives face challenges to their influence, expectations are one possible means by which presidents attempt to project their dominance and protect their relevance in the political system. First, presidents engage in deliberate actions to target the settings where expectations are framed, the agents responsible for the future, and the policies associated with tomorrow. Second, presidents can influence how people think about the future. Not only do individuals attend to how presidents frame the future, but also are affected as a result of encountering future frames. The results in Chapters 4 and 5 paint a compelling picture of the ways in which expectation frames can contribute to the president's leadership.

Strategic Future Framing

The President of the United States must talk about tomorrow. Chief executives need to confidently convey future certainty and project an optimistic persona (Hart, 1984a). Part of presidential influence is projecting how aggressive leadership "will" change the country for the better (Begala personal communication, September 22, 2013). But circumstances within and outside of government challenge presidential influence. Presidents may reconsider how they view the future (Manheim, 1979) and how they talk about it as a result. In these instances, presidents attempt to preserve their influence by tempering the likelihood that the future "can" occur. Expectation frames are one tool for navigating these challenges. By targeting the agents responsible for future actions, the policies linked to the future, and the settings where expectations are framed, the president uses future frames to strategically position himself as central to tomorrow's actions and events. Yet in their attempts to project and protect their influence, presidents downplay

the influence of citizens over future events – a potentially worrisome insight on presidential governing behavior.

Presidents strategically project their influence by emphasizing government agents and foreign policy when stating what "will" happen. As the symbol of the federal government (Hart et al., 2005), presidents trust institutions to manage future actions. To project their relevance and power in the government, presidents link state agents to a certain future as the data in Chapter 4 illustrate. By engaging in this practice, presidents communicatively showcase the work of government, even if the work has yet to occur. Moreover, presidents attempt to project confidence and assuredness in government entities that they symbolically or realistically lead.

Foreign-oriented actions and events also are framed in an assured manner. A reflection of the president's constitutional authority and relative autonomy as Commander-in-Chief (Wildavsky, 1966), foreign policy framing allows the president to strategically enhance and project the government's power on his home issue turf. Not only does the president showcase his perceived responsibility for foreign affairs issues (Wayne, 1982), but framing in this manner highlights the president's leadership role vis-à-vis other international actors.

Chief executives also pick-and-choose when to build and protect their influence over the future. Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama use more expectations during first year annual messages compared to first year signing statements – a strategic means of building influence with a more public audience. At reelection, presidents temper the future with "can" frames. Perhaps as a way of empowering citizens or constrained by congressional and public politics, presidents strategically frame a possible future – the only time this occurs during an administration. As an administration concludes, presidents construct more expectations in last year signing statements compared to last

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year State of the Union addresses. This tact may preserve and enhance each president's legacy by providing "final wishes" to the agents who will execute laws after the president leaves office. Moreover, presidents use divided government to stoke a certain future, a way of potentially challenging congressional influence in government. By projecting assurance with "will" expectations, the president may send a message about his relevance to the governing process.

In the process of strategically projecting and protecting their influence, presidents simultaneously downplay the influence of citizens over the future. Citizen agents are more likely to be framed with "can" as opposed to "will" expectations in State of the Union addresses, signing statements, and tweets. While presidents emphasize the role of government for tomorrow's actions, they de-emphasize citizen agency for a certain tomorrow. Although presidents cannot be certain about the future actions of citizens, assuredness in government's future actions may come at a cost if presidents are isolated from citizens communicatively. Frames serve to confer "legitimacy upon particular aspects of reality while marginalizing other aspects" (Lawrence, 2000, p. 93). As leaders of government, presidents know the machinations of government more than individuals and thus frame their faith in its processes. Yet, a *government* of, by, and for the *government* may project insulation and detachment from citizens. This development could serve as a threat to democratic responsiveness.

Influencing Citizens

Part of presidential leadership is the ability of the chief executive to influence how individuals think. This influence is critical for how presidents contribute to and ultimately lead the national conversation. Yet, contemporary accounts question the influence presidents have through their communication. Edwards (2003) argues that "the

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bully pulpit has proved ineffective not only for achieving majority support but also for increasing support from a smaller base" (p. 241). He concludes his book, *On Deaf Ears*, by encouraging presidents to "stay private," or eschew public communication appeals. Eshbaugh-Soha and Peake (2011) redeem presidential influence somewhat by arguing that presidents can lead the public's issue agenda in some cases on less salient topics, such as the budget deficit. However, Eshbaugh-Soha and Peake also find considerable challenges for presidents who wish to "break through the noise." These research accounts raise questions about why presidents communicate if they are often so unsuccessful.

My research qualifies these accounts. Presidential communication serves as an important means by which the president can exercise influence over the public. Presidents can, at times, direct individuals toward the future with expectation framing. As the results in Chapter 5 illuminate, individuals notice small changes to the future orientation of an expectation frame. Participants respond differently depending on whether the president uses a "will," "shall," or "can" expectation. When citizens attend to future framing, their thinking can change as a result. Individuals perceived the president to be more certain with "will" expectations. Republicans, in turn, viewed President Obama as less certain with "can" expectations. Citizens who encountered "can" frames also saw the president as more in control of the policies mentioned in his speech as well as more optimistic. These changes reflect some of the ways in which expectation frames influence thinking about the future and the president.

Although the findings in Chapter 5 show that the type of expectation frame did not directly influence presidential job approval attitudes, presidents can be one source of individuals' beliefs about the future. Presidents, in this regard, lay the building blocks for how the political future can be viewed. Often, researchers look to non-presidential agents and entities for the source of expectancy beliefs, including political culture (Simon,

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2009), familial socialization (Easton & Dennis, 1973), and the news media (Cook, 2005). Some scholars even go so far as to blame citizens' lack of political knowledge for beliefs about the future (Stimson, 1976). My research offers empirical support for the president's role in shaping future-based beliefs about politics and presidential governance.

Presidents should be cautious in their drive to influence citizens, however. Influencing how individuals think about the future may have drawbacks. The building blocks on which the future is built could crumble if the certainty, control, and optimism engendered are violated by presidential actions. As Cronin (1977) warned shortly after President Nixon's resignation due to Watergate, "The best of leaders often suffer from one of their chief virtues – an instinctive tendency to raise aspirations, to summon us to transcend personal needs and subordinate ourselves to dreaming dreams of a bolder, more majestic America" (p. 74). Indeed, past research finds that individuals punish presidents for unmet expectations (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2005; Sigelman & Knight, 1983; 1985; Waterman et al., 1999). President Obama, for instance, was criticized when his "you can keep your [healthcare] plan" expectation was juxtaposed in the news with accounts of citizens losing their healthcare coverage. Although presidents may gain influence in the short run by defining the boundaries of how individuals view the future, this influence may vanish if a certain future becomes the disappointing present.

RESEARCH TRAJECTORIES

Presidents must compete with other agents and entities when attempting to shape public thinking about the future. Future research trajectories in political communication should look beyond presidents to investigate how citizens and media elites construct expectations to make sense of policy futures and tomorrow's leaders. To fully understand the kabuki dance of expectation construction and effects between the president and other

agents, scholars should focus on how other agents frame expectations and the effects of these frames on individuals.

Citizens may engage in future talk, especially communications related to what the president "can," "shall," or "will" do. Mapping the expectation frame theorized in this research onto citizen political communications may illustrate the visions individuals have of the president's role within the political system. Scholars know that individuals' socializing experiences emphasize the prominence of the president. School textbooks (Hart et al., 2005), family and social network discussions (Valentino & Sears, 1998), and political campaigns (Bartels, 1988; Campbell et al., 1960) familiarize citizens with images, actions, promises, and words of the president or those seeking the office. How might these salient experiences be expressed in citizens' future talk?

The role citizens play in expectation construction holds great promise as a research trajectory. Research could examine citizens' communications in letters to the editor, news comment sections, or on call-in programming such as C-SPAN's *Washington Journal*. Do citizens consider the president to be a "Jack of all Trades," causally responsible for a certain future with "will" expectations? Or might individuals understand the inherent limits of executive power and frame the president's ability to accomplish policy action with "can" expectations? The answers to these questions would explain how conceptions of the future differ between presidents and citizens.

News media agents also frame political expectations, including future references to presidential actions. Jamieson and Waldman (2003) explain that news personnel can act as soothsayers by predicting political actions that have yet to occur. This behavior is important for studying the news media's role in constructing expectations. Research is quick to point to the influence of the news media in creating expectations for the president (Barger, 1984; Cook, 2005; Edwards, 1983; Farnsworth & Lichter, 2006;

Hinckley, 1985; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Simon, 2009). Cook (2005) notes that the press' focus on the president's activities compared to other political actors may give the false impression that the president can do everything. In content analyses of nightly broadcast news, the president receives the majority of coverage compared to Congress and the Supreme Court (Farnsworth & Lichter, 2006). The media's tendency to (a) predict political events and (b) focus on presidential actions should make news media stories an appropriate venue for future studies of expectation framing. Moreover, with individuals increasingly likely to be exposed to presidential communications secondarily through news media venues as opposed to primary speech exposure (Baum & Kernell, 1999; 2007), it is important to assess the role of opinion leaders and media elites in the process of expectation construction and transmission.

Research trajectories should investigate news expectation framing from both content and effects perspectives. From a content angle, scholars could use the conceptual and theoretical approaches developed in my research to examine how legacy venues (i.e. newspapers, broadcast television networks) frame political expectations compared to niche media venues (i.e. partisan cable news, Internet-based news sites). These comparisons would clarify how different forms of news reporting influence frame construction. For example, do partisan cable outlets frame a more or less certain future ("will" expectations) when referencing opposing political agents compared to network news? Do partisan outlets interject more ideal, obligation-based expectations ("shall" frames) for supportive political agents? From an effects perspective, researchers could investigate whether citizens seek out news headlines containing expectation frames compared to traditional, past-focused causal attribution frames. Integrating partisan selectivity processes (Stroud, 2011), future scholarship also could examine whether individuals who encounter a news expectation frame assign more certainty and control to

agents and policies with which they agree politically compared to agents and policies with which they disagree.

Although this research has examined expectation framing in presidential communication, my conceptual and theoretical framework for future frames could be useful to scholars and practitioners beyond political communication. Health communication professionals and researchers could apply expectation frames to doctor-patient interactions to study how expectations are communicated in contexts from everyday health behaviors to chronic illnesses. Organizational communication scholars could use expectation framing to understand how administrative officers communicate about future business events. Interpersonal communication research might benefit from applying expectations to relationships. Do couples communicate using different types of expectations at particular stages of a relationship? What might these expectations reveal about a couple's relational uncertainty or satisfaction? These possible applications for future frames are just the starting point for how scholars and practitioners could use expectations to understand how individuals and entities manage the uncertainty of tomorrow.

CONCLUSION

By claiming tomorrow, presidents try to establish their influence today. Whether it was George W. Bush bellowing that the "people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon" in September 2001 or Barack Obama exhorting a crowd that "if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor" in March 2010, the purpose was the same: frame the future and the president's place in it. Each utterance reveals how presidents strive for relevance and dominance in a contested message environment.

Presidents face both rewards and risks when framing the future. They project and protect their institutional influence based on the strategic construction of expectations. Yet there are potential downsides. Although the "will" frame instills certainty in the president, it also privileges government agency over that of citizens. As a result, citizens could feel that the president is certain while experiencing alienation from the processes of democracy. The certainty a president communicates today may evaporate for citizens tomorrow amid the division, complexities, and power struggles of politics. Presidents may be punished when future mirages disappear. The President of the United States thus summons possible successes and challenges with future talk.

Citizens may benefit from knowing the details of how and why presidents talk about the future. The relationship between the governors and the governed in a political system is predicated ideally on citizens having knowledge to make informed decisions. Information imbalances favor the powerful and well-connected agents in a political system, which may make citizens' decisions poorer as a result. Indeed, individuals generally have a rudimentary understanding of how politics work, according to scholars (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996). This lack of knowledge may influence how individuals enact the processes of citizenship. Buchanan (2013) observes that citizen feedback in the form of public opinion is often imperfect. Perhaps knowing how presidents talk about the future will allow citizens to better understand the governing behavior of their leaders, and thus strengthen how individuals render democratic feedback. If knowing how their presidents communicate and seek to influence the public empowers citizens, the result may be a less imperfect and more efficient means of holding presidents accountable for their communicative and policy decisions.

When presidents try to gain influence today, they predict tomorrow. The future allows the president to rise above the political milieu to establish legitimacy, cement a

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legacy, challenge Congress, and shape the thoughts of citizens. Whether this strategy benefits presidents or citizens in the long term is unknown. For all their talk of tomorrow, presidents cannot see that far into the future.

Appendix A: Content Analysis Codebook

Unless otherwise indicated, codes are 0 = absent, 1 = present

(COMMUNICATION LEVEL)

DIRECTIONS: Begin first by coding the overall communication.

GENERAL COMMUNICATION DETAILS

1. Your Initials
2. POSTID
3. Date of communication (DDMMYY / 011312)
4. President: Clinton (0), Bush (1), Obama (2)
5. Type of communication: State of the Union (0), Signing Statement (1), Twitter post (2)
6. Number of words in entire communication (use count provided by Word readability statistics)
7. Number of sentences in entire communication (use count provided by Word readability statistics)

(SENTENCE LEVEL)

DIRECTIONS: Once the communication has been coded, move on to code each sentence individually using the questions and prompts below.

8. Identify the sentence number in the communication you are coding. [Note: Easy way to keep track – use your Excel data sheet]

9. Copy the sentence you are coding into the Excel data sheet.

CLEARINGHOUSE QUESTION

10. FUTURE: Does the sentence contain a firm/definitive/un-qualified characterization of how things will be in the future? Does the sentence make you expect something in the future – an action or behavior? Look for keywords here to point you in the right direction: *will, would, shall, should, can, could, expect, anticipate, forecast, foresee, predict*. (Note – do not code a sentence if these words are present but do not indicate something about the future.) Do not code words associated with "likely."

    [If a sentence receives a zero (0) to this question, please leave the remaining codes blank and move on to the next sentence. <u>If a sentence receives a one (1) to this</u>

question, please move on to answer the questions associated with the remaining codes.]

CAUSAL ATTRIBUTION

The sentence (clause) will suggest that some individual, entity, program, or object is causally responsible for something that occurs in the future.

> Example (1): "Congress should pass comprehensive immigration reform before the summer recess." [Congress is causally responsible.]
> Example (1): "This proposal will shrink the deficit by $500 billion over three years." [The proposal is causally responsible.]
> Example (1): "Congress and I will work in a bipartisan fashion to implement these reforms." [Congress and I are causally responsible.]

11. PRESIDENT CAUSAL: Is the **president causally responsible**? [Look for keywords: the president, "I," "My," chief executive, Executive Branch, Commander-in-Chief, administration; in a State of the Union, this will most often be seen as a first-person reference "I" or "my;" in a signing statement, this may also be seen as "the president" or "my administration"]

12. POLITICAL, NON-PRESIDENTIAL CAUSAL: Is some **political actor or entity** other than the president causally responsible? [Look for keywords: Congress and its members and leadership; Supreme Court or other courts and its members and leadership; Bureaucracy; Cabinet Department – Defense, State, Health and Human Services and its members and leadership; Lobbyist groups; the Military; State government and its members and leadership; Local government and its members and leadership; Political parties; foreign governments and countries, nations, international alliances such as the United Nations or NATO or IMF, "the world", regimes, enemies of freedom]

13. GOVERNMENT PROGRAM, PROPOSAL, SPEECH, and ISSUE CAUSAL: Is a **government program, proposal/plan, speech, or issue the government confronts** causally responsible? [Look for keywords associated with established government programs domestic or foreign – Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid; proposals, plans, and legislation; government communications including speeches; issues of government – the deficit, debt, crises, growth, threat (including modifiers like terrorist)]

14. CITIZENS: Is a **private citizen or group of citizens** causally responsible? [Look for keywords associated with individual citizens and names, as well as classification groups – the rich, African-Americans, Hispanics, immigrants, gays, women, retirees,

parents, teachers, scientists, doctors. Include designations for "America" and the "United States."]

15. COLLECTIVE WE: Is a **collective who includes the president** causally responsible? [Look for collective words – "we," "us," "our"]

16. DIRECTED YOU: Is a **collective used to describe citizens** causally responsible? [Look for "you"]

FUTURE ORIENTATION

This set of questions asks you to look to the verbs and words that led you to indicate that the sentence has some future orientation. Look to the clause containing the future orientation for the associated verb.

17. Does the sentence contain a *will* or *would*?

18. Does the sentence contain a *shall* or *should*?

19. Does the sentence contain a *can* or *could*?

20. Does the sentence contain some other word(s) used to indicate the future? [Code here for keywords: *expect, anticipate, predict, forecast, probably, foresee*, *intend*, *commit* etc. TO CAPTURE THESE WORDS, DO A WORD SEARCH IN THE DOCUMENT.]

21. IF YES TO 20: List the word or words used to indicate the future.

POLICY or AREA FOCUS

This set of questions classifies the policy/area focus of the entire sentence, including causes not explicitly coded for an expectation. Specifically, does the sentence deal with issues clearly associated with domestic or foreign affairs? Made code both domestic and foreign in a sentence or code neither.

Codes adapted from Hart & Scacco (2014).

22. **DOMESTIC**: Mentions of domestic policy issues, actions, or affairs

Includes policies and issues that correspond to actions inside the United States. Includes mentions of geographic markers (states, capitals, cities, regions, people, topography), domestic departments and agencies, leaders of states and cities, policies contained within the borders of the U.S. (often denoted as "Federal" or "National;" Social Security, general economy, debt, deficit, jobs,

science/technology, medicine, healthcare, energy, infrastructure, domestic terrorism, immigration), business entities and personnel (CEOs, banks). Mentions of the budget must include specificity to be coded as domestic or foreign. Mentions of national security must have specific references as well to domestic affairs (military families, legislation aimed at helping military; internal military policy unrelated to external world events).

23. **FOREIGN**: Mentions of <u>foreign policy issues, actions, or affairs</u>

Includes policies and issues that correspond to <u>actions outside the United States</u>. Includes mentions of specific countries and their geography (states, capitals, cities, regions, people, topography), international leaders, titles of leadership and royalty, ethnic terms, international organizations, political agreements and treaties (NAFTA, Kyoto Accords), international economics (trade, overseas), and international issues (war, peace).

TWITTER QUOTATION

24. Does the tweet contain a direct quotation from President Obama? Include tweets with quotes ("") and/or a colon (:) and an attribution to the president (BO, O, President, etc.).

Appendix B: Survey for Expectations Experiment

Pre-Speech Questions:

Directions: Please answer the following questions about politics and government.

Some people seem to follow what is going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there is an election or not. Others are not that interested, or are interested in other things. Would you say you follow what is going on in government and public affairs:

> All or most of the time
> Some of the time
> Only now and then
> Hardly at all

On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means not at all important and 5 means extremely important, how important is it for the President of the United States to: Exhibit sound judgment in a crisis?

> [1-5 scale]

On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means not at all important and 5 means extremely important, how important is it for the President of the United States to: Deal effectively with foreign countries?

> [1-5 scale]

On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means not at all important and 5 means extremely important, how important is it for the President of the United States to: Have high ethical standards?

> [1-5 scale]

On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means not at all important and 5 means extremely important, how important is it for the President of the United States to: Work well with the U.S. Congress?

> [1-5 scale]

On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means not at all important and 5 means extremely important, how important is it for the President of the United States to: Ensure strong growth of the U.S. economy?

> [1-5 scale]

Post-Speech Questions:

Directions: Please read the following questions and statements below.

How confident are you of your general ability to predict what will happen with the Mars mission program?
  Very confident
  Somewhat confident
  Somewhat unconfident
  Very unconfident

I am certain that the United States can put a human on the planet Mars by the year 2020.
  Strongly Agree
  Agree
  Neither agree nor disagree
  Disagree
  Strongly Disagree

President Obama is certain that the United States can send a human to the planet Mars by the end of the decade.
  Strongly Agree
  Agree
  Neither agree nor disagree
  Disagree
  Strongly Disagree

How confident is President Obama in the Mars mission program to put a human on the planet Mars by 2020?
  Very confident
  Somewhat confident
  Somewhat unconfident
  Very unconfident

How much control do you think President Obama has over: THE MARS MISSION BUDGET?
  A great deal of control
  Some control
  Not much control
  No control at all

How much control do you think President Obama has over: STREAMLINING PROGRAMS TO PAY FOR THE MARS MISSION?
  A great deal of control
  Some control
  Not much control
  No control at all

How much control do you think President Obama has over: LANDING AN AMERICAN ON THE PLANET MARS BY THE END OF THE DECADE?
    A great deal of control
    Some control
    Not much control
    No control at all

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?
    Strongly approve
    Moderately approve
    Slightly approve
    Neither approve nor disapprove
    Slightly disapprove
    Moderately disapprove
    Strongly disapprove

Directions: The next set of questions are about President Obama. Each president should have certain qualities. Please indicate the extent to which each phrase describes Barack Obama. [Adapted from the ANES]

In your opinion, does the phrase he PROVIDES STRONG LEADERSHIP describe Barack Obama:
    Extremely well
    Quite well
    Not too well
    Not well at all

In your opinion, does the phrase he is KNOWLEDGEABLE describe Barack Obama:
    Extremely well
    Quite well
    Not too well
    Not well at all

In your opinion, does the phrase he is INTELLIGENT describe Barack Obama:
    Extremely well
    Quite well
    Not too well
    Not well at all

In your opinion, does the phrase he is HONEST describe Barack Obama:
    Extremely well
    Quite well

Not too well
Not well at all

In your opinion, does the phrase he is OPTIMISTIC describe Barack Obama:
        Extremely well
        Quite well
        Not too well
        Not well at all

After having a chance to read about the Mars mission program, would you say that the program is:
        Extremely believable
        Somewhat believable
        Somewhat unbelievable
        Extremely believable

Directions: Here are a few questions about the current government in Washington, D.C. For each question, you will have less than a minute to answer before the survey will automatically advance to the next question. It is fine if you do not know an answer; please just give your best guess. Please answer these questions without consulting any other sources.

Which individual below is the President of the Senate?
        John Boehner
        Nancy Pelosi
        Joe Biden
        Harry Reid
        Don't Know/Refused

Who has the final responsibility to decide if a law is constitutional or not?
        The President
        The Congress
        The Supreme Court
        The Bureaucracy
        Don't Know/Refused

Upon the death, incapacitation, or resignation of the President of the United States, which amendment to the United States Constitution authorizes the Vice President to become the new president?
        13th Amendment
        17th Amendment
        22nd Amendment
        25th Amendment

Don't Know/Refused

Who is given the constitutional power to declare war?
    The President
    The Congress
    The Supreme Court
    The Bureaucracy
    Don't Know/Refused

Who is given the constitutional power to nominate judges to the federal courts?
    The President
    The Congress
    The Supreme Court
    The Bureaucracy
    Don't Know/Refused

How much of a majority is required for the United States House and Senate to override a presidential veto?
    A bare majority (50% plus one)
    A two-thirds majority
    A three-fourths majority
    A supermajority
    Don't Know/Refused

Directions: These are the last few questions.

Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a(n):
    Democrat
    Republican
    Independent
    Other (please specify)

Generally speaking, would you describe your political views as
    Very conservative
    Conservative
    Moderate
    Liberal
    Very liberal

What is your gender?
    Female
    Male

Other

What is the last grade or class you completed in school?
Grade 8 or lower
Some high school, no diploma
High school diploma or equivalent
Technical or vocational school after high school
Some college, no degree
Associate's or two-year college degree
Four-year college degree
Graduate or professional school after college, no degree
Graduate or professional degree

In what year were you born? [1910-1996]

Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent?
Yes
No

What is your race?
White or Caucasian
Black or African-American
Asian
American Indian
Other (please specify)

Directions: Please let me know if you have any additional thoughts on the speech or the study in general. Respond here with your thoughts. [Include large text box]

Appendix C: Question Schedule for Expectations Interviews

GENERAL THOUGHTS ON PRESIDENTIAL EXPECTATIONS
- How would you define presidential expectations?
- What kind of expectations do you think the American people have of any president?
- What kind of expectations do you think the American people had of the president you served for?
- What kind of expectations do you personally have of the president?
- Do you believe that expectations of the president / presidential promises have a positive or negative connotation?
  - Why do you believe this?

PRESIDENTIAL RECOGNITION OF EXPECTATIONS
- To what extent was the president aware of the expectations the American public had of him?
- In what ways did the president respond to public expectations?
- Did the president you served for recognize different public expectations for domestic and foreign policy?
  - If so, what were these expectations?
- How did the president talk about expectations with you? His staff?

EXPECTATIONS AND PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATION
- In general, how does any president set or shape public expectations in their communication?
- How did the president you served for set expectations in their speeches?
- Specifically, identify a sentence or phrase that could be said by the president that sets an expectation.
  - What specifically about this sentence makes it an expectation?
- In what ways did the president you worked for use personal self-references, such as "I," "me," or "my" in his speeches?
  - Why do you think this particular word choice was adopted?
- Why would the president use the pronoun "we" in a sentence?
  - What did the "we" indicate for the president you worked for?
  - When would he be most likely to use a "we"?
- In what ways did the president set expectations for other political actors, such as Congress, in order to achieve future actions?
- What is the difference between a president stating he "will" do something versus "should" do something versus "can" do something?

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