The Purpose of Education in America, Clinton to Obama

by

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ABSTRACT

Presidents exercise influence over policy discussion and options in America by the frequency and language they use to describe the current conditions, the perceived problems, and the solutions. The ability for presidents to articulate problems and solutions assumes an underlying purpose exists. This study examines how presidents frame the policy discussion for education in America and how they describe the purpose of education in the public record: the benefit of education is for society (common good), or the benefit it to the student (private good). Then the study examines the extent to which those frames stay consistent or are variable within and between administrations.

The study utilizes presidential issue framing and agenda-setting to examine historical documents in the Public Papers of the President archive to determine the articulated purpose using the framework proposed by David Labaree. This study focuses on three administrations of the most recent period of federalism in education policy in America, starting with Bill Clinton and ending with Barack Obama.

The study found that President William Clinton used the purposes of Social Mobility and Social Efficiency most frequently, President George W. Bush used Social Efficiency – Public Good and Social Efficiency – Private Good most, and President Barack Obama used Social Efficiency – Public Good more than all other frames. All three presidents maintained relatively consistent use of their prominent frames throughout their administrations with some indication that slight shifts may occur. All three presidents had low utilization of the frame Democratic Equality, and all used the combined frame Social Efficiency the most. Some variation between the utilization of the second-level codes of Private Good and Public Good do exist between administrations. The prominence of the combined frame Social Efficiency across administrations may suggest a more crystalized definition for the purpose of K-12 education in America.

This is dedicated to my Beacon Elementary School 5th grade teacher Mrs. Farmer who said it was ok that I read slower than other students and had difficulties with spelling. She encouraged me to take my time and carry a dictionary, and I would be just fine. The power of one teacher's encouragement can make an immeasurable difference in the life and achievement of a student.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This study will increase understanding of how presidents influence the discussion about education, specifically the purpose of education. The study also examines executive actions and proposed policies to assess the extent to which presidential administrations frame education policies as advancing public or private goods.

First, the study examines how presidents frame the policy discussion for K–12 education in America and how they describe the purpose of education. Using the public record, the study seeks the benefit of education, either for society (common good) or as a benefit to the student (private good).

Then, the study identifies whether presidential policy agendas exhibit variation within and between administrations for their stated purpose. If there is no variation, this may suggest that the purpose of education is more crystallized. If variable, this may indicate that the purpose is potentially more responsive to social pressures.

Presidential Writing and Speech

Presidential expression carries through communication across many media and forms. Early presidents often relied on significant events and addresses, then later these speeches would be published in newspapers, and early presidents also used direct personal correspondence to political elites to express policy objectives (Skowronek, 1993). Modern presidents have a multitude of channels with direct access to the public and legislative members, including television and social media. Irrespective of the method used to deliver the rhetoric, most communications are intended to relay the president's priorities to the public or to instruct legislators about policy preferences (Taylor, 1998; Whittington & Carpenter, 2003). The two most common speeches that

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convey the president's policy preferences and priorities are the inaugural address and the State of the Union.

Inaugural addresses, as part of the American political ritual, are used to convey the political principles that the new president intends to use to guide the administration (Campbell & Hall Jamieson, 1990). This speech also serves as a meaningful way to begin the narrative of how the new president intends to make their mark on history and the legacy they intend to build during their term in office (Seidman, 1998; Skowronek, 1993). Inaugural addresses draw large crowds and television viewership, as citizens and foreign nationals alike listen for potentially significant history-making proposals (Cohen, 1997).

State of the Union addresses similarly serve an essential role in how the president articulates policy preference and administrative direction. They are organized as litanies of agenda preferences and typically align with supporter preferences as an expression of public concerns (Cohen, 1982; Tulis, 1987). By including an item in the State of the Union, the president not only draws attention, but also satisfies or placates constituents by mentioning their concerns (Kessel, 1974). A mention in the address does not assure passage of a measure by Congress, but it does have the effect of maintaining support for the president among those constituents interested in the topic (Fuchs & Hoadley, 1987). The State of the Union also demonstrates policy preference and direction for handling those concerns from the White House perspective and leverages a pivotal moment in time with a significant national appeal for attention related to the communication.

Presidential Issue Framing and Agenda Setting

Through the inaugural and State of the Union speeches, along with other speeches and documents, the president makes direct appeals to constituents. Using mass communication, the president can state the policy case directly to the public and ask for support for their agenda while framing the proposal and its impact unfiltered through

intermediaries like the press (Canes-Wrone, 2001; Skowronek, 1993; Welch, 2003). Direct appeals by the president are often retold through clips and soundbites by the media and paraphrased by other political influencers. Intermediaries may reframe retellings of presidential proposals, and media bias may alter the original message, negatively impacting the public perception of the proposal (Hershey, 1994; Patterson, 1996). Due to this potential for bias, using secondary accounts of presidential communications may not accurately reflect the president's agenda. This study does not include secondary accounts for this reason.

Direct communication conveys the agenda of executive officeholders; generally, the most carefully crafted of these are thorough public speaking engagements and written releases. The frequency of presidential attention to a topic can increase the level of concern the public feels in a given policy area (Cohen, 1995). This power and its effect on public discourse are what President Theodore Roosevelt called the "bully pulpit," a platform for an elected official, specifically the president, leveraging the power and notoriety of their office to speak on any issue of concern. Research indicates that, when the president uses this power of influence, they speak with a national perspective and assume a representation of the nation-at-large, making the policy priorities of the president likely to resonate with the population more so than that of other political actors and policymakers, mainly because the public tends to look to the president for leadership (Cavari, 2017; Cohen, 1995; Wood, 2009).

This mechanism of framing, coupled with the ability of a president to exert influence by using the bully pulpit, is what makes presidential speech significant. Given that the power of the presidency is vested in a single person, the influence of the president's frame may be more significant than that of other stakeholders in the policy process. When presidents take a personal interest in subjects, they may also influence

the media's coverage of such issues and therefore propel an otherwise un-newsworthy topic to a high level of attention (Wanta & Foote, 1994). The president's attention and personal interest are not absolute in directing media attention and coverage, but in specific topics, the officeholder can use this leverage for added influence.

The president's agenda is a critical factor in the business of public policy. Not only does the president articulate their goals and objectives for accomplishment in their agenda, but they also communicate about the policy topics and options they are unwilling to consider. By articulating the agenda, the president not only states their goals, but also communicates the topics in public policy they believe are in an open window or ripe for change (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009; Howlett, 1998; Kingdon, 2003). Agenda setting by presidents can effectively force the discussion of specific political topics in advance of the normally punctuated equilibrium shifts, removing the insulation of political subsystems that typically maintain the administrative status quo (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009). The acceleration discussion may occur because agenda setting has the potential to expand the interest in policy change past that of a single actor, increasing the potential for a charge.

Various agenda-setting actors influence education policy, but few wield the command of the dialogue like the president. *Agenda setting* is the process by which political actors define and frame problems while specifying the potential solution sets for consideration (Bachrach & Baratz, 1962; Baumgartner & Jones, 2009; Beckmann, 2010; Elder & Cobb, 1984; Kingdon, 2003; Riker, 1993). The composition of agenda setting includes four components: (a) the process by which alternatives and priorities are established and communicated, (b) how problems are defined and judged as inside the political arena, (c) how problems are political in scope, and (d) the formation of

strategies to persuade specific policy actors to arrive at the desired outcome (Beckmann, 2010; Riker, 1993).

Presidential agenda setting defines the critical issues the administration wishes to address, the most critical issues facing the country at that time, and the president's intent to commit resources to the various departments they oversee (Kingdon, 2003; Light, 1999). Agenda setting is not only the defined platform of the president or other actor, but also the systematic utilization of priority setting to leverage influence through priming and framing, having the ability to alter the policy discussion and the policy alternatives considered (Eshbaugh-Soha & Peake, 2004; Weaver, 2007; Wood, 2009). Priming is integral to agenda setting, as it leverages memory-based modeling of information processes so that the intended audience may later recall the messages, making their judgement more likely to be affected when making a decision (Scheufele, 2000). *Framing* is the depiction of events or options by defining the intentional human action behind the event's occurrence (or potential occurrence). By conveying the intent of an action to an audience, this may influence their decision making in the situation (Scheufele, 2000). By offering the narrative of intent for an action or policy choice, the president can influence how others perceive the option. In turn, this narrative may influence the level of support. These priming and framing activities by the president may drive media coverage and influence other actors' policy choice (Protess & McCombs, 1991).

There are many instances that demonstrate the influence of agenda setting in education policy. A variety of actors' agendas demonstrate the influence toward affecting the policy framing and outcomes in the arena of education finance, minimum competency testing, and remedial education as examples (Mazzeo, 2002; Odden & Wohlstetter, 1992; Resnick, 1980). These include both political office holders and other

trigger mechanisms that may initiate new alternatives as technology and societal forces shift.

Presidential speech matters, as it can affect the perception of the need for policy change; the solutions being considered; and the public opinion about the policies, solutions, and the urgency to act. A president's articulation of educational purpose is likely to be more meaningful than an average citizen's perspective, due to the availability and use of the bully pulpit. The presidential perspective may be an expression of the collective national will, or the president may be a leading influencer of change in a policy direction.

In communicating the agenda, presidential speech serves as a social mechanism capable of creating intended outcomes, as the higher the frequency of the policy articulation, the more significant the potential of influence on the message receiver's memory-based modeling. Presidential speech making, and the resulting influence over the media's reporting, communicates the intent of the administration. Accordingly, the agenda has the potential to permeate the populace, dominating the frame of discussion and directing the conscience of society. The sequencing of the presidential speech and repetition or frequency of topic discussion can create conditions in which the stated outcome is a self-fulfilling prophecy (Mayntz, 2004; Merton, 1968). By defining and framing the topic, then repeating how it is defined, the president can influence the associated media exposure. The president can then direct the discussion based on the frame used. In some cases, this framing and media influence may create conditions that are initially untrue or unlikely to occur but may eventually be perceived by constituents and policy actors as accurate and probable, due to the societal influence of the president's increased attention on the subject (Merton, 1968).

Before the increase in federal activism in education in the 1990s, many education policy elements were considered solely state-level matters (Manna, 2006). During the period of this study, Goals 200, No Child Left Behind, and Every Student Succeeds instituted federal mandates for achievement and accountability, using funding or the threat of withholding funding to persuade state and local compliance with federal mandates.

Next, I review the influence of governors as executives for indications of how presidents may also influence education policy. When investigating the state-level executive agenda setting and alternative specification, governors demonstrate significant influencing over policy adoption. Even when multiple parties are attempting to influence a political outcome, research indicates that presidents may have similar influence even in ideologically competitive environments (Young et al., 2010). Whether applying the multiple streams[1] model or the earlier garbage can[2] approach, executive officeholders tend to have greater leverage on the policy outcome than other individuals who may factor into the total influence equations. Therefore, it is likely that the same model of influence would follow when shifted to the federal level.

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[1] The multiple streams model identifies the three process streams as problem, policy, and process. Action becomes likely when the problem becomes prominent enough to interest policy decision makers, and the policy actors can identify one or more policy solutions to address the problem. At the same time, policymakers may sense a shift in political forces that necessitates taking a policy action. The convergence of problem and policy streams often result in agenda setting wherein policy entrepreneurs create and foster support for policy alternatives (Kingdon, 2003; Young et al., 2010).

[2] The garbage can model of decision making assumes non-crystallization of preferences within decision makers, and that the power dynamics are frequently changing. In this model, problems, solutions, opportunities to make choices, and decision makers are not focused on solving the problem and do not devote significant effort to problem solving. Essentially, there is a pooling of problems and solutions, then when a problem arises where a solution will fit, the organization pairs a problem to a solution to make a decision, focusing on the application of a solution to facilitate quick decision making (Cohen et al., 1972; Kingdon, 2003).

Non-Presidential Actors' Agenda Setting and Framing

The ability for presidents to gain attention is valuable in and of itself, but it does not automatically result in policy passage. Presidents must consider several factors, including how the legislature may react and how the media may attempt to reframe the discussion. Executives must seek the input of other policy influences and policy entrepreneurs to prevail in passing a measure. Failing to consider other policy actors may result in less success in achieving the president's agenda (Rudalevige, 2002). Agenda setting or discussion framing differs from policy enactment, as they do not require cooperation and inclusion of a sufficient number of other parties. Because this study focuses on the communication of educational vision and goals, not the ability to enact policy, speeches, media releases, and other presidential communications are artifacts and are the most appropriate sources to understand the president's expressed intent.

Presidents are generally considered the most influential political actors in America, and due to the bully pulpit, they are also the most significant agenda setters in Washington. At times, presidents compete with the media, which is another important actor playing a role in policy framing using their own agenda. The media entities exercise their role in agenda setting by choosing what to cover or not cover and to which audience they direct more exposure. Other mass-publication channels like social media and podcasts may prove to shift that power as citizen-journalists, and social influences can directly publish information to large groups rapidly without the constraints of traditional media ethics. While social media is a newer form of dissemination, political actors have taken to self-dissemination since our country's inception, as evidenced by *The Federalist Papers*. These historical examples do not vary too much from current trends, but now presidents have an immediate connection to followers on social media. Even with direct

dissemination, the media has a part in framing the consumption of the president's agenda and may choose to alter the presentation to influence the perception by the consuming public (Eshbaugh-Soha & Peake, 2004; Wood, 2009). This influence may alter the policy agenda's success but may not affect the position of the agenda by the president. The exception would be if the preponderance of constituents disagrees, and the president decides to change course for political reasons. The media's coverage of the president's stated agenda is not inherently associated with the president's preference set, but coverage may influence the articulation of the agenda, the speed at which the agenda is furthered, and may pose a risk of agenda failure (Eshbaugh-Soha & Peake, 2004).

Congress also has the power to set policy agendas. However, unlike the president, Congress typically has multiple agendas, as there are multiple legislators, parties, and group leaders in the body. While Congress has traditionally been the federal actor to play the most substantial part in education policy matters, when the president chooses to make education a central part of their agenda, the congressional role diminishes, and Congress is attentive and cautious in addressing the president's agenda (Edwards & Wood, 1999). Some presidents make education an agenda priority, but it is less frequently than Congress makes education an agenda priority. The period for this study is a time during which presidents were more engaged in education policy agendas. When presidents make education a priority, this shift in influence may create an increased dialogue between the two branches of government and enhance media coverage and the number of influencers participating in the public discussion (Edwards & Wood, 1999). Congress' mindfulness of the president's agenda-setting authority in education policy makes the president the unit of inquiry. Accordingly, when researching the vision and goals of the American educational system, it is appropriate to focus on the president's articulation of purpose. The influence interplay of the president and media on education

policy talk by both the first President Bush and Clinton is visible in Edwards and Wood's (1999) study, in which they mention that education policy attention by the president produced an increase in media coverage. Although by a smaller factor, Edwards and Wood also found that media coverage of education policy produced increases in presidential mentions of education policy.

Considering that Congress and the media are also policy actors who may affect agenda success, when presidents make education policy a key component of their agenda, they tend to be sensitive to input from Congress and the media. Conversely, when education is not a significant part of the president's agenda, presidents are less involved in policy formation than Congress or the media. The same is not true of Congress, which tends to be sensitive to any presidential or media attention about education. This suggests that, while presidents may vary in the importance of education as an agenda item, education is always an agenda item for Congress, at least since the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and more prominently since 1980 (Davies, 2007; Edwards & Wood, 1999; Vinovskis, 2009).

This study does not consider the influence that Congress or the media may have on the presidential agenda for education. These actors are excluded from the research because the goal of this study is to investigate presidential agendas and framing for education. The goal is not to determine the success of presidential agendas or the discourse between the various actors. These actors may influence the president's agenda and may cause framing and agenda shifts over time. These factors are not considered in this study, as this research seeks only to identify whether the shifts occur, not causality. Accordingly, the exclusion of influence by Congress and the media is warranted, as neither are germane to this research study.

Political parties also serve as influencers on presidential agendas and policy option articulation. While party and ideology are different elements, where the party is a set of beliefs, party identity, affiliation, and leadership can influence the presidential agenda, vision, and goals in addition to policy options (Noel, 2014). While in office, the president is the highest-ranking elected member of the political party and, therefore, the de facto party leader. This position provides the potential power of influence to advance an agenda, but it is not an assurance of support by other party members. Party influence may also be an underlying factor in agendas, framing, and policy options communicated by the president (Beckmann, 2010). This research study excludes the factor of political party affiliation, as there is insufficient sample size to assess whether party has influence. While political party influence may affect the analysis of education policy agenda setting and the resulting vision and mission articulated by the president, it is not feasible to separate the influence of party from the influence of the individual president's policy preferences because there is only one republican included.

Framing of Education by Purpose

Through agenda setting and framing, the president articulates the goals of the administration, the approach to achieving those goals, and how the population will be better off upon realizing that achievement. The types of goals set for education originate from the agenda, then are coupled with the frame that describes the end-state of being reached after the educational goals are achieved, thus articulating the purpose of education. There are many potential ways to frame educational purpose. The literature review explores prominent approaches to educational purpose and discusses the advantages and drawbacks of each. This study explores the application of David Labaree's approach to the American struggle over educational goals—that they can be public or private goals falling into one of three categories: "democratic equality (schools

should focus on preparing citizens), social efficiency (they should focus on training workers), and social mobility (they should prepare individuals to compete for social positions)" (Labaree, 1997, p. 39).

Hochschild and Scovronick (2003) outlined a similar framework for educational goals: individual success, collective good, and group welfare. The authors attributed the origin of these principal goals to Thomas Jefferson and his design for public education in Virginia. According to the authors' interpretation, Jefferson devised a three-goal system for public education: individual success (transaction of business), public participation (civic and social responsibility), and a third goal that homogenized the two in relation to judgment about rights, responsibilities, and exercise of judgment (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003). These authors also mentioned *Plyler v. Doe* (1982), a U.S. Supreme Court case that struck down a Texas law that limited the use of state funding for the education of undocumented children. The majority opinion outlined two goals of education—the transference of democratic system beliefs and values and the provision of basic tools for leading an economically productive life—then the Court used these two goals as the basis for deciding that the Texas law in question violated the 14th Amendment (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003). The Supreme Court identified two goals that map to three of the four purposes identified by Labaree. In this decision, the court merged the elements of preparing citizens (Democratic Equality) and competing for social positions (Social Mobility) into the first goal description of democratic beliefs and values, then the second goal of leading an economically productive life maps reasonably well to the Labaree purpose of Social Efficacy- Private Good. The high court's decision in *Plyler v. Doe* (1982) stopped short of declaring education as a fundamental right but appears to have held education as something approaching fundamental. This is because the lack of providing education for specific individuals can have the effect of placing

those children in significantly diminished social and economic positions as adults and, as children, they are not responsible for or able to change their status or location. This court ruling demonstrates the similarities between the judicial branch's interpretation of the Constitution and the framework of how Labaree outlined the four purposes of education.

Further back in time, President Johnson's remarks on the signing of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 likewise highlighted three goals for education, the first two being preparation for citizenship and social participation. The third goal was contextualized with Johnson's personal experience and focused on social mobility: "As a son of a tenant farmer, I know that education is the only valid passport from poverty" (Johnson, 1965). Johnson saw this intervention as a way to help lift children from poverty as part of his Great Society policy initiatives. President Johnson implied but did not specifically mention labor force preparation as a goal of education, but the Elementary and Secondary Education Act had a focus on providing resources to students in poverty.

A president's articulation of educational purpose is meaningful, as it is an expression of the national perspective by the elected chief of executive branch, who has the potential to move opinions or actions more so than another individual with significant communications reach. It is essential to understand the frames used and the agendas presidents set, as they will influence the policy alternatives considered and the process of arriving at policy implementation. Policy actors who differ in views of educational purpose may have different means of determining the success of the educational system. A policy actor focused on social justice may approach a policy debate differently from a policy actor focused on economic returns for the average child over a

lifetime. The former would view education as a public good[3] because it focuses on a return for the many and not a single person; alternatively, the latter would see education as a private good because the unit of measure is one person's wealth. These disparities in approach can also manifest in frames and evidence used to support policy preferences during the policy debate. The policy actor focused on social justice may evaluate a policy alternative based on its ability to lift socio-economically disadvantaged students out of poverty. In contrast, the policy actor focused on average lifetime return may evaluate the same proposal based on the efficiency of producing the highest average income return to all students. Because these two policy actors can view the same information and policy in differing ways, it is vital to understand the frame they use and the goals they set to know how they are approaching a policy problem.

It is also important to understand the differences between presidential goals that achieve public versus private benefits for educational purpose. The distinction is important because the implementation of the policies requires investment of taxpayer dollars to achieve the goals, and taxpayers may also have specific beliefs and preferences about investments as public- or private-focused outcomes.

When education is approached from the purpose of social efficiency and treated as a private good, tax dollars are collected and expended to enhance the individual and personal return to the policy's targeted citizens. Conversely, educational purposes that are a public good seek to enhance society in general, such as democratic participation or promotion of ideals. These kinds of policies can take several forms, including programs that reinforce democratic beliefs and behaviors (i.e., Labaree's classification of focus on preparing citizens), and those that support cultural participation and civic engagement.

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[3] The term 'public good' is defined in this study using the common meaning as described by Labaree (1997). This description includes outcomes and benefits with value to the collective society, rather than outcomes and benefits with value specifically or solely to the individual.

The policies can also take the form of collective goods that serve the general needs and may also benefit individuals as a byproduct. Labaree (1997) classified these policies under social efficiency as a public good—evidenced in programs designed to train workers to enhance the national position in a global economy. Examples of these types of investment include those related to projected labor force needs like health care workers or aerospace engineers. For instance, if there is a projected deficit in medical doctors, and there are insufficient entrants to the field or students are not adequately prepared at graduation from public schools to enter these studies in college, a policy that invests in educational preparation or that influences students to pursue these jobs serves both as a public good and as a private good. The latter is because there is a personal benefit, insomuch as the student individually and personally gains financially. However, this also serves as a collective public benefit by ensuring there are sufficient health care workers to meet the needs of the population at large. In the application in this study, the determination of purpose for education is the one articulated by the president.

As of yet, no one has applied Labaree's framework to presidential schooling purpose and executive agenda setting (Cranston et al., 2010; DeJarnatt, 2014; Gilead, 2017; Shaker & Heilman, 2008). The value of doing so is that it provides a categorical way to analyze a key policy agenda setter's approach to addressing the primary tensions in the purpose of education. Understanding which purposes presidents articulate through speeches and documents provides insight into the goals they envision for the American educational system; through frequency of frame use, such an analysis may provide some indication of the primary purpose of education for that president. Knowing this may aid future researchers in interpreting the policies of the president, how policies shift over time, and potentially aid in other research to determine whether America is achieving the purposes indicated by its presidents.

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An increase in federal involvement in education in the 1990s led to a corresponding increase in influence by federal policy actors in framing education policy (DeBray, 2006; Manna, 2006). With increasing federal involvement in K–12 education policy, so too has the attention paid by presidents to education policy increased. This leads to a significant impact on how the public views the problems that need addressing in education policy and the potential solutions to those problems (Cohen, 1995). The frames used by the president to describe the policy problem and solution has the potential to influence the public opinion of education, its perceived purpose, goals, and quality (Cohen,1995; Hart, 1987; Kernell, 1997).

Presidents can command public attention for policy matters by use of the bully pulpit. When they speak, it is willful communication and the exercise of the president's powers to govern (Hart, 1987). When presidents communicate on a topic, they contribute new elements for consideration in an attempt to persuade the public's support, and their policy agenda priorities are more likely to resonate with the public than those of other officials and policy actors like Congress (Cavari, 2017; Cohen,1995; Kernell, 1997; Zaller, 1992). The president's inclusion of education in the policy agenda directly and significantly shapes public discourse and can increase public concern about education (Beckmann, 2010; Cohen, 1995). The president also asserts significant influence over Congress on education policy when included as a priority (Edwards & Wood, 1999). Although policy talk may wax and wane over time, when the president speaks, the goal is always to attract support for their position, and the president is always attempting to influence toward their own policy preferences (Neustadt, 1990).

Through agenda setting and public communication, presidents influence the framing of policy problems and the scope of considered policy options because these frames influence the way people think about problems and what they are willing to

consider (Beckmann, 2010; Cialdini, 2016; Rutledge & Price, 2014). Understanding this influence and the frame in which the president describes the purpose of education has the potential to directly shape the policies adopted, the metrics used for future evaluation, and education policy initiatives in education, as is seen in the analysis of other countries' educational policy trajectories (Cranston et al., 2010).

If one understands how one or more educational purpose frames from the Labaree model apply to policy agenda sets, one can understand the political discourse on policy development, passage, implementation, and success of education policy initiatives. The findings of this study will benefit other scholars who study education policy formation, discourse, and policy passage by providing a classification framework for types of educational policies.

The president leverages the available communication tools to inform Americans about what the public beliefs should be, what are the national policy priorities, and then outlines the president's plan for addressing these priorities (Cohen, 1995; Edwards & Wood, 1999; Kingdon, 2003). For many citizens, a president's inaugural address serves as the assertion of what the new president stands for, what the administration's priorities will be, and what the historical mark the president desires to leave on history during their tenure (Campbell & Hall Jamieson,1990; Seidman, 1998; Skowronek, 1993). Then, the State of the Union address provides updates to the American people about shifts that arise from current events and shifting constituent concerns while serving as a tool to draw attention to the presidential agenda (Cohen, 1982; Kessel, 1974; Tulis, 1987). These speeches are tools to inform and persuade the public and other policy-making participants, with the State of the Union address each year being the instrument typically most important to citizens' understanding of policy priorities and plans (Peake & Eshbaugh-Soha, 2008; Taylor, 1998; Whittington & Carpenter, 2003).

Through the bully pulpit, the president has many opportunities beyond the inaugural address and State of the Union to communicate with the public and policy influencers. Some of the most important communications to impact public support for agenda setting are nationally broadcast addresses (Peake & Eshbaugh-Soha, 2008). While the captive audience may be smaller at times, each opportunity the president has to communicate priorities, plans, and messages can explain and further persuade. The president has many structured and unstructured opportunities to explain and detail policy priorities, objectives, and plans through numerous communications channels to appeal and convey agendas and preferences to a verity of audiences that may aid in policy passage (Druckman & Jacobs, 2015). These include press briefings, remarks, and news media interviews. Inclusion of these media interactions is essential to this study, as they are considered to be more engaging to the public and even more authentic because they are less structured events in which reporters often ask questions about policy agendas (Clayman & Heritage, 2002; Kumar, 2007).

Research Questions

This research looks at what presidents say about education, how they define the purpose of education in America, and whether they are consistent or variable in their approach. Then, the research assesses whether differences exist across presidential administrations on purpose or just policy proposals.

This study answers three questions:

RQ1:   What did Presidents William Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama articulate through public speeches and communication documents in the *Public Papers of the Presidents* archive as the purpose of K–12 education in America using the framework for purpose proposed by David Labaree?

RQ2: Is each president consistent in the purpose articulated in the speeches and documents throughout their presidency?

RQ3: Did these presidents differ from one another in the articulated purpose in these speeches and documents, or are there commonalities between these presidents?

Time Period for This Study

This study focuses on three administrations, six presidential terms in office, and 24 years of the most recent period of federalism in education policy in America. The selection of the time frame is partly related to the availability of documents; at the time of this study, documents for Donald Trump were not available for download and review in the National Archives. This means Barack Obama is the most recent president included in the study. Papers before the Clinton Administration are held in other forms and locations, lacking the archival index and document classifications used to identify the documents for this study. Some documents from the Reagan Administration are not available in text-based form and would require transcription. Many of the documents that pre-date the Reagan Administration are similarly not held in a text database to facilitate easy access and analysis with a software-aided coding process.

The starting point of the study is set with the beginning of the term for President Bill Clinton, as he initiated the most recent era of presidential educational policy discussion. President George H. W. Bush held the September 28, 1989 Charlottesville Summit, which concluded with a majority of the responsibility remaining with state and local funding and control. At the end of the summit, numerous governors commented to national media about their satisfaction with a state rather than a federal focus, and for leaving the control to state and local governments (Hoffman & Broder, 1989). This is important in determining the period of study, as it means that the George H. W. Bush

Administration was focused on state and local control. Immediately following Bill

Clinton's election, he shifted the conversation toward expanded federal involvement in

education, thus beginning the most recent area of intense presidential discussion about

education policy and marking the beginning of a shift in policy regime (Manna, 2006;

McGuinn, 2006; Vinovskis, 2009). In March of 1995, President Clinton signed the

Educate America Act (Goals 2000) into law, which outlined eight national goals for the

American educational system and expanding the role of the federal government in

education. The difference in this policy under the Clinton Administration was that the

goals were set nationally for achievement and states had to submit school improvement

plans to the federal government to receive funding (Vinovskis, 2009). Once approved,

states could distribute these funds to local schools based on a similar process,

conforming to the goals and process the states promised to the federal government. This

inserted the federal government directly into the process of creating improvement plans

and holding states accountable for achieving those plans with the funding provided

(Vinovskis, 2009). This is different from prior administrations, which primarily utilized

a block-grant process to transfer money to states with broad potential uses for the funds

that states could then choose how to apply as they deemed reasonable, often without any

specific accountability or plan submitted to the federal government.

Having considered the historical factors, this study's scope begins with the

inauguration of William J. Clinton on January 20, 1993. The study then runs through the

expiration of President Obama's administration on January 20, 2017, for all data related

to presidential speeches, press releases, and other documents.

Presidential Agenda Setting and Documents Included in Study

Presidents communicate agendas and frames through speeches and other

documents. These documents are then able to be coded for the purposes of education for

use in this study. Agenda setting is the process by which alternatives and priorities are established and communicated with the intent of influencing others to achieve the goal (Riker, 1993). Thus, this study examines documents in the National Archives organized as part of the *Public Papers of the Presidents*. The archive includes documents published by the Office of the Press Secretary, documents from the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, and other documents, including proclamations, executive orders, and more as released by the Office of the Press Secretary and/or published in the Federal Register (Office of the Federal Register, n.d.).

Included in the analysis are all addresses to the nation marked by the National Archives with a subject index related to education, as well as all State of the Union and inaugural addresses of the three presidents. Also included are pages of all the following documents when noted by the National Archives to include a topic directly related to education:

- addresses and remarks
- bill signings
- communications to Congress (including calls for legislation)
- executive orders
- interviews with news media
- letters and messages
- statements by the president

These documents provide direct evidence of the presidential agenda. All of these instruments are included in the analysis, rather than a narrower list of direct, explicit actions, as presidents often leverage different channels to communicate policy preferences and agendas based on their chosen policy process strategy and approach for an appeal to gain public support (Lowande & Gray, 2017). The president has

opportunities to assert the role that they believe the legislative branch should play in achieving the policy priorities and plans through calls for legislation and other communications to Congress. Calls for legislation are significant in demonstrating presidential action on policy priorities and plans, in that it is an official request by the executive branch to the legislative branch when such policies require authority beyond that solely held by the president in the Constitution.

As the chief executive, the president also may exert direct influence on policy priorities and plans through communications to federal agencies. Executive orders are the constitutional instrument at the president's disposal to directly affect policy through a single action that changes how the administrative departments behave or prioritize their enforcement and enactment of laws without or in conflict with congressional action (Deering & Maltzman, 1999; Fine & Warber, 2012; Krause & Cohen, 1997; Mayer, 2001). Such unilateral implementation of policy is perhaps the most exceptional exercise of carrying out an agenda and is a clear indication of the president's policy intent (Chiou & Rothenberg, 2014; Howell, 2003; Mayer, 1999).

The prudent action is to include only items that originate from the Executive Office of the President, where it is reasonable to believe that the president was consulted on the communication. Therefore, also excluded are any departmental-generated correspondence, speeches, or media interactions, as there is no assurance of direct presidential involvement in those communications.

Other competing political agendas include those of the House, Senate, and mass media. As these groups each have their respective agendas and supporting artifacts, such as the Congressional Record or news media coverage, including them in the study would introduce noise to the analysis. This study is focused solely on the president's agenda,

though other scholars may find value in applying this framework to other policy actors in the future.

Less relevant documents are excluded, such as official announcements of appointments and nominations. While a president may highlight the mission of the new officeholder, the topic is conflated with the prior work of the individual and the justification for appointment that may have no direct correlation to the agenda per se. Likewise, resignation and retirement announcements are vehicles through which the president may highlight accomplishments that align with policy priorities and may contain preferences, but any such claim is likely confounded by the ability to achieve the policy objectives that are not part of this study. Finally, communications to federal agencies (including statements of administrative policy) are also excluded. While these communications may include agenda-relevant and policy-framing elements, significant shifts of executive action are often incorporated into executive orders rather than routine administrative referrals.

Analytical Approach to Assessing Presidential Agendas

Content analysis is the most appropriate method for analyzing the frames presidents use for describing the nature of the problems in education, the potential solutions, the trajectory for remedying the problem, and the pain the problem will cause if not remedied.

Content analysis is used by researchers to review the explicit and latent content, distilling to a codable and, therefore, a comparable element of the text. The elementary form, word or phrase frequency analysis, is applied in this study, but also a more comprehensive approach is used by assigning codes to represent significant portions of content (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 2013; Saldaña, 2016).

Documents coded by the National Archives as relating to K–12 education are used for this analysis. Excluded are codes for materials solely about early childhood, adult and workforce retraining, and post-secondary education. While studying these other phases of education may also indicate the frames uses by presidents, they are avoided because they are not part of the refined study scope. This study will apply the Labaree model to a focused area of education, K–12 schooling. Other researchers may find it valuable to their work to extend the model to early childhood, higher education, and adult education.

This study also does not attempt to establish an order or causal inference about the origin of the presidentially defined purpose of education. Future studies may seek to identify the origin of the framing used by the president. This study does not look at the origin, sequencing of the frame or purpose of the policy, as this may be difficult to identify adequately given the interaction of policy ideas and preferences that emerge in the policymaking process (Gleiber & Shull, 1992). This study does not assign the origin of the frame or agenda about education; it seeks only to identify which purposes are used and articulated, as well as the stability of their utilization over time.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In researching the answer to the question of what the purpose of K–12 education is in America as articulated through the president's public speeches and communication documents, it is prudent to investigate the various models for educational purpose used by education scholars. Next, it is essential to review how those models align or differ from those used as the framework for this research. The literature presents several alternatives, many of which share common elements with the David Labaree model.

Some of the alternative models to the one used in this research share elements with observed American public policy directions but do not align with the Labaree model. One divergent model situates the decisions related to educational aims as a function directly influenced by the political process. Other divergent models follow the guides in the formation of purpose by early American political figures.

The close ties between scholarly education purpose frameworks and political thought leaders illuminate the connections between the president and education policy. They also illustrate why, even though the Constitution does not directly grant the regulation of education to the federal government, the president wields much influence in education policy, if they choose to use it. As the federal government's chief executive, the president has considerable power and influence. Complementing the powers given to the president in Article Two of the Constitution, this power is expressible through rhetoric. Therefore, it is vital to understand how the president uses rhetorical powers and devices to influence the policy system and actors. This literature review explores how presidents use the power of rhetoric, whether it is influential, who it may affect, and how it may be limited concerning education policy when attempting to define the purpose of education in America.

Purpose of Education

Several models and philosophical approaches exist to identify and explain the potential purposes of education. One way to define a single purpose is to create better adults by imparting knowledge across several subject areas (Noddings, 2015). An alternative definition of purpose is that the value of education is determined by what society deems worthy to its members to either know as an adult or, if by knowing the information as a child, makes better adults (Bruner, 1960; Noddings, 2013; Noddings, 2015). These purpose-driven explanations demonstrate the need to understand the intended goal of education in America. Knowing the purpose or goal is essential to accurately measuring educational success and effectiveness for society. If assuming that the purpose is the value of knowledge to society, it is necessary to ascertain what society values and whether it is realizable.

Conditions of Growth and Contribution to Society

John Dewey (2009) argued that the differences between savage and civilized societies are in the utilization of social structure and conveyance of norms to children toward a construct that leverages a more efficient use of resources to benefit the group or society. One outcome of the education process is, therefore, the ability to be educated further. The second outcome is the perpetuation of the society and the ability to work collaboratively to maintain and enhance society.

The primary mode of purpose for education for all humans is survival. Dewey (2009) postulated that humans are feeble beings, lacking even basic abilities to survive from birth. The mature of the species must impart through interaction with other humans all necessary skills for survival. For our species' continued existence, some form of training, learning, and transfer of knowledge must occur. Academic education is one way to transfer this knowledge for survival, but there is more to convey to young humans

for them to understand the world and the community in which they live. Humans form groups and communities, and these communities adopt standards of behavior and practice. Young humans must learn how to cooperate and participate in the community based on the adopted norms and acceptable behaviors established through consensus to function in society. This education and communications about norms and essential information can operate in both organic and formal structures. By living together, young people learn organically about relationships, structures, dynamics, roles, and power. This knowledge may also transfer through formal institutions like churches, organizations, and schools. Countries like America are highly organized social groups and therefore create formal structures for education and training. As adults in structured societies become more specialized in their function and method of contributing to the population through their work, this creates the necessity to have scholastic institutions that utilize specialized groups of professionals (teachers) responsible for providing the education of children as they develop into contributing adults (Dewey, 2009).

This transformation in the society of educating young through formal institutions and teaching professionals is necessary to maximize the specialized contribution of the parent or guardian of the child in their work within the society. Because the transmission of the learning occurs through repetition of communication, the experience transforms both the teacher and student. The goal is to have the student assimilate the instruction and to be able to repeat the process and behaviors on their own (Dewey, 2009). These organized systems of teaching have an identifiable output by design. This study seeks to determine what presidents articulate is the designed and intended outcome of education, also stated as the purpose of education in America.

Dewey (2009) first approached the purpose of education as serving a social function: to instill meaning and understanding of the social environment and attempt to

instill traditions, behaviors, mental processing, and emotional reactions in students to assimilate them into the environment that elders created. Working from survival as the basic purpose of education and layering on social constructs related to interactions and the function of modern societies, Dewey proposed a model of educational purpose that arrived through evolution and social influence. This transference process is limited, as the information cannot be directly imparted but is conveyed through intermediaries. Dewey argued that this process is purposeful and structured but imperfect, as the most effective tool is to control the environment for the conveyance of these lessons of mental and moral disposition. The environments available for teaching leave some experience to chance and others to outside influence. By this, Dewey meant that schools attempt to create a sanitized environment for learning and understanding all the concepts and influences on a student. Unfortunately, it is difficult for students to grasp how knowing much of the information taught in schools will directly affect them and society (Dewey, 2009). Therefore, the learning that occurs in schools is complemented or contradicted by multiple groups influencing the students' learning. These conditions can create an incomplete or split transference of the information. Students may adopt differing and conflicting standards of judgment and emotional response to information than what is taught in schools. This reality makes it difficult to control the factors of education and measure the effectiveness of the educator.

The second part of the conditions of growth and contribution to society approach to education's purpose is how to influence others' behavior by children first learning how their own behavior is influenced and then observing others' interactions in society. These effects also apply to the uses of the physical environment and the objects within that environment. This learning effect is not only a response to stimuli, but also teaches how to reason and the cognitive process to evaluate and respond to environmental and

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situational changes. This observation teaches children the juxtaposition of action and the consequences of actions as a series of events. These constructs are valid for the physical and psychological worlds by creating a sophisticated understanding of objects, ideas, and beliefs (Dewey, 2009). Because the comprehension of social controls is impressed upon children by models, including schools, educators, and other groups of influencers, all of these contributors have opportunities to aid in forming the cognitive pathways in children as they mature. To maintain and perpetuate these efficiencies, the group must impress upon the young the systems, customs, and process for decision making that allows for continued prosperity through specialization. Thus, the systems of education are necessary to teach children to suppress impulses, compel adoption of norms, perpetuate the continuity of customs through the structure, and impose self-adopted controls along with an awareness of the child's power and ability to influence outcomes.

The third element in the conditions of growth and contribution to society is one's own understanding of the conditions of growth. This factor deals with the child's recognition of their capacity, growth potential, and their need to understand how they may affect their environment and how the environment may affect them. By learning how to select and filter stimuli, children learn to adapt and respond to situations in societies to achieve desired outcomes. As an understanding of the conditions of growth develops, this creates the potential to foster understanding of why adults in societies are highly specialized toward the common production of society. As a result, this influences how children will behave in society as adults.

These three elements come together in the Dewey (2009) approach to education's purpose as the concept of preparation, and it demonstrates how education helps achieve this goal. He argued that the education of children is the process of getting ready for the future. Children are motivated by the promise of future reward or avoidance of future

pain, as they learn that one should delay present-day satisfaction for future reward. This process of growing and learning unfolds to some future end without a straightforward measurement of one's progress toward a goal. Parents and teachers try to establish goals with children so that the improvement may be measured and rewarded in the short-term to compel the attention necessary to achieve the long-term goal. This process in itself is part of the focus of education, to transfer the skills of motivating others toward goals. Later in schooling, children are introduced to the idea of education as a means of training toward a formal discipline, and thus their place in a specialized society to promote goal-seeking toward economic, social, and intrinsic rewards. This process helps children see a focus on leveraging both mind and matter toward achieving the goals they seek to obtain. While goals may change over time, the product is that children learn to motivate internal and external resources in a coordinated way to pursue an interest.

Dewey (2009) argued that, to meet educational aims, we must understand the relationship between the inputs and the outputs. We must have a specific goal in mind, and then the forethought to create a clear path toward the outcome. By creating aims, we explicitly assign value to the activities and the outcomes. To Dewey, we must be able to identify what is presently happening, consciously create a plan that will reasonably produce the result, and restrict ourselves to aims for which we have control over the inputs, activities, environment, and situations—rejecting the creation of an aim that requires us to assume that factors outside of our control will be ideal for creating the desired product. These aims must be consistent and conditions flexible to cooperate and adapt to changes. Dewey stated that aims that are general or abstract goals and unable to adapt to changing conditions make ill-advised and improperly formed aims that are unlikely to be achieved.

Focusing on the conditions of growth and contribution to society is valuable in understanding education's underlying process and the difficulty of setting educational aims or purposes. However, this construct fails to address political decision-makers' practice to create purposes for education, promote policy, and attempt to measure the success of enacted policies for education.

Public and Private Benefits

I next turn to the frame of education purpose as was proposed by David Labaree, whose reflective observations outlined the American struggle over educational goals in three categories: "democratic equality (schools should focus on preparing citizens), social efficiency (they should focus on training workers), and social mobility (they should prepare individuals to compete for social positions)" (Labaree, 1997, p. 39). The United States does not have an expressed written set of national goals for education, but it does have general education aims concerning the measurement of knowledge bases as defined by laws like Goals 2000, No Child Left Behind, and Race to the Top. Everyday discussion of education in America can help define the purpose and identify historical figures of influence. These laws, statements, and proclamations are utilizable to create structured model frames to understand the purpose of education in America.

Labaree (1997) acknowledged that educational benefits can be either public or private. The public/private dimension is explicitly applicable in the area of social efficiency, where skills training for employment can be used both for personal gain and for gross economic stability, which is a gain for the nation as an economically competitive force in the global marketplace. This premise demonstrates the core of the Labaree argument that the purpose of education is in the tension between government goals and private goals, and that tension remains mostly unresolved. His approach

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acknowledges that education can serve several purposes while constructing a framework to demonstrate the goals' dynamic and systematic interactions.

Labaree's model also aligns with the civic republican public psychology model, in which there is a promotion of a common democratic life, but individual groups struggle for inclusion (Abowitz, 2008; Fuhrman & Lazerson, 2005). One can see this as an echo of Thomas Jefferson's *A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge* (Jefferson, 1779). In this bill, Jefferson explains that, to achieve what he saw as key educational purposes, children should learn reading, writing, arithmetic, and history, including that of Grecian, Roman, English, and American origin. If Labaree's framework does not explain the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1996, Supreme Court cases like *Plyler v. Doe* (1982), and government reports like that from the National Commission on Excellence in Education in 1983 and the National Education Goals Panel in 1995, it at least maps onto them reasonably well (Labaree, 1997).

While aspirations and philosophical aims may be hard to distill to a common set shared by all Americans through historical record and observation, Jefferson's model addressed the need to be prepared for the transaction of business, civic and social responsibility, and ability to exercise judgment about rights and responsibilities. Labaree's similarities with this and other scholarly approaches mentioned suggest that he successfully articulates the tensions of educational purpose in the arena of policy discussion. This inclusive, organized, and categorical approach makes for a strong practical a priori framework to code presidential rhetoric about education policy. The Labaree model was chosen in part for this research because its approach echoes U.S. political actors throughout America's history.

Pluralism and Sociopolitical Processes

While many scholars have sought to define the different uses for education and others the different philosophical approaches to determining education's purpose, fewer have tried to identify the problem from the approach of what Americans ask the educational system to accomplish. This approach differs in that it aggerates the views, opinions, and expectations of both political influencers and benefactors from the educational system to arrive at the compilation of society's aims or expectations of education. Thus, it purposes a sum of expectations and the desire to meet those expectations.

John Goodlad (1994) argued that Americans do not intend to have schools solely dedicated to educational aims because the purpose of schools originates through sociopolitical means. He explains that politicians will also communicate that education and schooling's intent is to improve the economic health of the nation, equalize disparities between the wealthy and the disadvantaged, and strengthen our form of government; not because it is the purpose of education to accomplish all three, but that by stressing all three, they appeal to the broadest possible set of potential voters (Goodlad, 1994). He also argues that politicians use education as a virtual panacea for all of America's and the world's problems, as evidenced when Vice President Humphrey declared that America would use its educational system to solve not only literacy issues, but also unemployment, crime, and war (Goodlad, 1984).

This model evaluates all the requirements for schools in America, based on two functions of schools: social functions (not stated as educational goals) and educational functions (closely tied to educational outcomes). Both types of goals are societal-based purposes, but the social functions include results of other policy measures unrelated to education, like keeping children out of factory labor. This model allows for the

consideration of the multitude of ways individuals may perceive as why a school should exist, even if only casually observed and never articulated. As a result, the Goodlad (1994) model states 12 goals for education:

- mastery of basic skills

- career or vocational education

- development intellectually

- enculturation—values and characteristics of the civilization

- interpersonal relationship skills

- autonomy—decision making

- citizenship—historical perspective and understanding of the government

- creativity and flexibility

- self-concept—confidence, reliance, and knowledge of limitations

- emotional and physical well-being

- moral and ethical character—judgment

- self-realization

Each item in the model has a series of sub-measures that explain how the goals are applied. Goodlad (1994) argued that only a small number of these goals are measurable by standardized tests, and only those items directly related to educational focus are included in the evaluations of how schools perform at educating children. The model stresses that the needs of society and education should be aligned to contribute toward the desired outcome or future. The concept is that society must decide what schools are for, then be deliberate and consistent in the efforts to fulfill that purpose (Goodlad, 1994).

Democratic Ends and Morality

Gutmann (1987) argued that schools serve to impart moral and democratic beliefs as a function of schooling. The function is not separable from the rest of education and is necessary as part of understanding how learning other subjects is useful in a democratic society (Gutmann, 1987). To understand democratic education in America, it is essential to mention a core tension related to moral teachings in schools. While most scholars agree that there are some fundamentals of education necessary for teaching in schools, like reading, writing, and mathematics, there is also the teaching of democratic beliefs, systems, and customs for functioning in American society as a contested matter. While some may argue that these elements may be easily separated from school and left to families and other institutions to impart, the nature of classrooms will convey some level of moral structure as a necessity to operate schools, such as the principles of respect for others, respect for authority, and discipline for classroom management. These activities are required for students to function in the school's social structure and inherently impart some level of moral values (Gutmann, 1987).

The tension originates from differing factions in society, wherein one group believes that teaching in public schools should include a basic core set of beliefs to all students for the benefit of society by having an orderly understanding of democratic principles and the operations of our society's interactions between individuals and expectations (Dewey, 2009; Gutmann, 1987). The other faction believes that any imposition of moral, value, or belief structures by public schools constitutes an over-step by governmental authority and that only families have the right to choose what the child learns related to moral organization and decision making (Gutmann, 1987). Public schools try to satisfy both structures by teaching school children to respect all beliefs and helping them in the logical reasoning process, by which they can evaluate and adopt their

own beliefs. This approach does not fully satisfy the tension, as factions with firmly held beliefs and rigid belief structures may reject the existence of alternative beliefs. Thus, the public-school approach may be perceived as infringing on parental rights, with the possibility of being seen as indoctrinating students in alternative belief systems (Gutmann, 1987).

Centers of Care and Morality

Nel Noddings (2006) argued that schools must focus on teaching care to students. This instruction should include caring for oneself, family, community, and the society in which they live, as well as the world. Noddings (2006) saw the academic subjects of math, science, history, and language and postulated that the sanitized method of teaching the concepts does a fundamental disservice to the child, as they never learn to critically analyze these concepts and incorporate them into a broader worldview. This dedication to care means that students should learn to analyze, organize, and question the content they are taught, thus learning about critical thinking. The present realities are an over-reliance on organized testable knowledge, which generates a systematic approach lacking interpersonal connections. According to Noddings (2006), schools should improve by including specific areas for instruction:

- self-understanding - motivation and study habits assessment
- psychological appeal of and the effects of war along with the mental impacts on society
- understanding of house versus home - how to share a home and what it takes to maintain a home environment
- social physiology - interacting with others, socialization, group unity, and shared responsibility

- parenting - caring for children, benefits of reading to children, caring, guidance and respect

- animals and nature - animal companions, what animal cruelty means and foreshadows, ethical treatment of animals, and speciesism as a proxy for understanding racism and bias

- advertising and marketing persuasion - what it means to be a consumer and how that differs from a citizen or a person, understanding health and well-being and how that differs from advertising, and how persuasive messages may also manifest as propaganda

- how to generate an income on which you can live - setting realistic expectations, exploring potential occupations and options that may be different from traditional employment, ethics in employment, evaluating self-worth, regulation of behaviors, and understanding of what school provides in employment preparation, as well as its limitations and lack of ability to assure gainful employment

- concepts of gender - ascribed gender roles, natures, societal expectations, sex, and sexual preference as separate from but related to gender expectations

- religion - understanding your beliefs, whether there is a supreme being, common myths about religion, misconceptions about gender and sexuality relative to religion, the understanding of the afterlife, alternate sources of morality beyond religion, and the concept of spirituality

According to Noddings (2006), other structural changes become necessary when approaching schooling from the point of caring for the student. This shift includes the potential for tracking paired student class groups with teachers over time, rather than new teachers each year, building trust and relationships that foster an advisor/mentor

relationship rather than an instructor of specific knowledge. Noddings argued that such fundamental differences in practice create the necessary environment that helps students learn and develop.

The result of this critical view is that the purpose of education is to teach children how to learn, analyze, reason, and fit into society. While thought-provoking in perspective, this concept presents the potential failings and shortcomings of existing approaches to education, rather than a construct for the purpose of education in America.

Summary of Educational Purpose

In determining how to arrive at an existing structure for the purpose of education in America, analysis of the literature aids in identifying feasible and systematic ways and rules out methods that are less applicable to the analysis of policy rhetoric, framing, and agenda setting.

Noddings's approach serves as a critical analysis of existing education policies and practices. While it raises important perspectives on the purpose and goals of education, it does not address existing essential elements of the policy discussion. It also presents a contrary opinion on the learning of core subject areas often articulated as necessary to children's development in recent education policies. These factors make the Noddings care approach an incomplete coding scheme for president-articulated purpose of education.

Similarly, Gutmann's argument about the teaching of morality and democratic means is also insufficient as a coding scheme for presidential rhetoric on the purpose of education. This is because it fails to provide a space for economic aims. Economic means are a necessary part of the coding, given the political discussion over the past decades concerning global competitiveness and the popularity of econometric models that try and

predict the return on educational investments in K–12 schooling. Lacking this perspective, the Gutmann approach applied as a system of coding would potentially miss important considerations that may be expressed by presidents about the purpose of education.

Dewey provided an excellent broad approach to the purpose of education, focusing on the need to teach kids to function in society. His growth-and-development-based model stresses the basic needs of an educational system to help students evolve into functional citizens who can participate in a specialized society. The difficulty in applying this construct as a coding system is that it is too broad. Dewey's approach provides a framework for interpreting information about educational purpose and less as a clearly defined coding scheme for the stated purpose.

John Goodlad approached educational purpose from a point of pluralism and sociopolitical processes. His method was to assess everything that society expects schools to do, then construct the purpose from a utilitarian approach. He argued that politicians will construct the broadest possible definition of what schools should do in order to gain the support of voters to secure a position of power. Goodlad's 12 goals for education are broad and prone to overlaps in categorical definitions. Many of the goals are also not easily articulated in common themes. The lack of precision in this approach for clearly defining organized goals makes it problematic in use as an a priori coding for what presidential speech expresses as the purpose of education. Goodlad's approach may prove more useful in explaining why a politician may define a specific purpose of education more so than what they define as the purpose.

David Labaree's approach attempts to provide a simple, eloquent summary of the core tensions and approaches to educational purpose. Due to his model's defined categories, this framework is a practical way to code and discuss the purpose of

education in presidential discourse. Also, Labaree's model echoes those used by many other scholars and in American history, going back to some of the earliest schooling models in America. His construct is similar to that of the Virginia Common Schools, which had a stated purpose and goals. This model is also supported by historical markers of educational purpose in America, like Congressional acts and Supreme Court rulings. The Labaree approach is particularly strong because it incorporates the element of public and private goods, a common theme between the two dominant political parties' approaches to discussing education in American. For these reasons, the Labaree model is the best fit as an a priori coding model for this research.

Presidential Rhetoric

The president of the United States commands one of the most influential rhetorical positions in the country and world. Choosing to speak or not on a topic can directly influence other actors and potentially dominate the public discourse or be used to ease public fears and apprehensions. The influence over educational policy is available and leverageable by the executive and other policy actors. The president is a significant actor in education policy, as they have considerable influence over departmental operations through political appointments and procedures that affect government administration. The president also prepares first draft budgets that frame the allocations of resources, but they must collaborate with Congress to pass their budgets. Presidents also can articulate agendas or groups of policy preferences they prioritize as the most important for adoption. These presidential agendas then must compete with or be negotiated against other agendas in the political space. Political parties also serve as an influential force in politics and education policy, potentially influencing the president's position and rhetoric.

Understanding this rhetorical influence is innate in the research questions, and it is the premise under which the transference between how presidents speak about educational purpose may impact the beliefs and behaviors of other actors and the public. Presidential rhetorical influence is an area of study well-established in political science literature. Explored for this research project is the origin and extent of the power of presidential rhetoric, the ways presidents use rhetoric to persuade, the significance for major political speeches as a way to exert rhetorical power, and whether or not what presidents say has any influence on public policy outcomes.

Power of Presidential Rhetoric

The president's power to persuade is not vested in the office's constitutional authority, but rather in the sharing of that authority between institutions of government (Hargrove, 2001; Neustadt, 1990). The president generally does not persuade by force, but rather by the ability to influence others to believe that following the will of the White House is in their own best interest to maintain their authority and power. Through various communications channels, the president relays to the public the administration's priorities or its instructions to Congress about policy preferences (Taylor, 1998; Whittington & Carpenter, 2003). The president leverages persuasive techniques to influence other policy actors to their desired path. The motivation for other policy actors to agree with the president is the assumed reciprocation of the White House's future support of some ambition or plan (Hargrove, 2001; Neustadt, 1990). The agreement is, therefore, sometimes given in the spirit of reciprocity, if not quid pro quo.

Conversely, other policy actors also fear the White House's intervention to derail their plans and intercede to prevent their intended aims of accomplishment. This relationship exists to check the advantages of the other, but only the president functions as a solitary actor. Accordingly, the president's ability to influence is often related to the

ability to frame each actor's responsibilities, and the nation's, demonstrating that action is required to fulfill their own best interest and the best interest of the country. It is also true that positions taken by the president and articulated in goals and purposes may be used historically as a reflection of the political sentiment of the time (Nieburg & Nieburg, 1991).

The president's ability to lead the country with rhetoric, not only with words, but also with time, space, and context of the presentation, is essential to success on policy matters (Beasley, 2010). By explaining problems, policies, and alternatives to the public, the president applies pressure to Congress to act or support the president's position. Presidents also tend to utilize the solitary actor advantage when speaking on topics and use the office of the president as symbolic of national strength and unity when stating the purpose and goals of policy directions.

Presidents have a significant impact on the areas of policy prominence in public discourse. The amount of attention paid to a topic area by the president can increase the level of concern by the public (Cohen, 1995). Presidents do not need to be popular to affect the public. They may use multiple modalities of communication to accomplish the desired level of influence, even if they are not concise in articulating the supporting arguments or providing reasons behind their directions and decisions. This ability is due to what President Theodore Roosevelt described as a platform for an elected official to speak on any issue of concern. Roosevelt would agree that the bully pulpit gives the president a commanding position to influence attention on matters of policy.

Just because a president can command attention, this does not necessarily mean the policy will see passage. Presidents have many factors to consider when forming policy and moving that policy through Congress. When presidents fail to seek advice from or consider the needs, positions, and opinions of departments, interest groups, and

congressional leaders, policies tend to fail (Rudalevige, 2002). This means that presidents cannot act alone in matters that require congressional approval, and they need to be aware of the influence they have over the public agenda, as well as their limitations. Presidents carry significant weight and influence to affect policy change, but they are not the only agenda setters or influencers of the public.

Presidents are the most important political actors in the United States and exert influence as a role, an office, and an individual (Denton, 1988). The president is responsible for setting national policy and goals; as such, they are the most significant agenda setter in Washington. The media also has considerable influence over the systemic agenda and can either compete with the president or be influenced by them. When topics receive significant coverage in the media, the president has less influence over the media and the systemic agenda. However, when the media does not frequently cover a topic, the president has significant influence over the perceptions of the issue and the agenda for that topic (Eshbaugh-Soha & Peake, 2004; Wood, 2009). The president's policy agendas can also be impacted by the public's agenda if not aligned. This occurrence may result in an alternate policy for consideration, and that policy may receive more attention from the media.

Congress, too, has agendas and the ability to influence the public and media. Congress may be unified at times, but it generally speaks with many voices, making the congressional agenda less cohesive. This outcome is increasingly evident in matters of significant difference, particularly if those matters are politically charged and related to political party platforms. Historically, presidents have paid less attention to education than Congress, and the media has paid little attention to education (Edwards & Wood, 1999). As a result, the topic generally receives less influence by multiple actors when presidents do not make education a priority for their policy agenda.

Although not as articulated as foreign policy, recent presidents have included education as an agenda priority and directly discussed the framing of education problems and their preferred potential solutions to a higher frequency. Considering the three actors, when presidents make education policy an important component of their agenda, they must consider the agendas of Congress and the media. When the president takes a strong position on education, Congress tends to be sensitive to presidential and media attention on education, causing them to be less forward in the furtherance of their agenda, unless politically charged. The result is that, although presidents may vary as far as the importance they place on education, Congress always puts education high on its agenda (Edwards & Wood, 1999).

Another important actor in the policy agenda setting is interest groups. These organizations may seek to influence policy actors directly, by lobbying, or through the electoral process, by contributing to campaigns and mobilizing voters with similar interests (Adams, 1975; Baumgartner & Jones, 2009). Interest groups include those who represent teachers, school administrators, superintendents, researchers, and specific areas of policy. Groups also have agendas related to education policy and seek to influence policy actors. While the level of involvement and the number of interest groups have grown in recent decades, scholars disagree on how the results influence the political process. One perspective is that, as the number of interest groups has grown, the professional separation of education from other politics has devolved and aims to weaken the public education system (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). Other education scholars take a reserved approach to the interpretation of the growth of education interest groups. They acknowledge that additional actors have entered, and the effect is a further division of perspectives into more focused areas of education policy (Cibulka, 2001).

The provenance and perceived influence of interest groups have risen in correlation to the increase of federalism of education. This development is, perhaps, a product of the increased centralization of policy decisions and the influence of the iron triangle between interest groups, agencies, and congressional committees in the determination of resource allocation and disbursement (Berry, 1989; Lowi, 1969). Accordingly, interest groups are another agenda setter that may influence policy adoption and provide complementarity or counterforces to the president's policy agenda rhetoric.

Presidential Rhetoric and Ways They Persuade

The primary purpose of presidential rhetoric is to define political reality and communicate agendas or priorities of the administration (Zarefsky, 2004). Secondarily, the president uses their power in an attempt to shape public opinion and policy proposals. The president's rhetorical power is derived less from the office's power itself and more from the ability to persuade, which may also evoke a positive public response or motivate and activate members of the electorate (Denton, 1988; Zarefsky, 2004). There are several ways to accomplish persuasion and motivation, including the framing of topics with specific words or vocabulary without making an explicit argument. Presidents may also frame opponents in ways that make it more likely for them to win a political argument by trying to associate the opponent with characteristics, traits, or ontologies that symbolize potentially undesirable outcomes (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1958/1969; Zarefsky, 2004). Although a logical fallacy, ad hominem argument, this strategy may be useful because observers of the media coverage may not be sufficiently knowledgeable on the policy topic or may commit another logical fallacy, hasty generalization, when the policy topic is politically charged.

As the focal point of the American political system, presidents may also use rhetoric to persuade the public (Denton, 1988). They do so through careful calculation and cultivation of messages and images (Wood, 2009). By crafting and delivering messages of succinct purpose, created and tested by policy and message strategists, presidents can frame and articulate purpose, supporting evidence, and the intended direction in policy matters (Tenpas, 2000). Increasingly, presidents must be self-reliant in communicating their messages to the public, opting for speeches and direct communication channels to convey their policy direction and intent (Greenstein, 2004; Kernell, 1997). Generally, presidential rhetoric has only marginal effects on persuading the public at large. The frames and positions tend to be agreeable to their supporters and unfavored by opponents, resulting in a good representation of the party affiliation but not necessarily the public at large during any given period (Wood, 2009). This statement may not be true when the matter is not partisan or when the rhetorical campaign extends over a lengthy period. This persuasive power is living and flexible over time and will change with the influence exerted by other contributors to the rhetorical discussion (Denton, 1988).

Knowing that presidents have the ability to persuade other political actors and the media's coverage of their remarks makes the president a unit for examination in determining policy purpose and direction. It is also essential to understand the limitations of presidential rhetoric, positively in the area of framing and contextualizing, but limited in moving the public's held beliefs over a short time. Knowing that presidents can persuade political actors and the public in different ways, it is necessary to examine some of the primary channels and tools used to communicate policy agendas.

Inaugural Addresses and State of the Union Speeches

Presidents communicate to policymakers and the public in several ways. The most viewed and examined are nationally broadcast remarks. These remarks have the most extensive reach and impact, specifically the inaugural address after taking office and the State of the Union speech delivered each year. Both are significant events for media, often covered on all major broadcast news channels and preempting other programming. These speeches are attended and analyzed by policymakers, media, and the public, and they are often followed by offers of interpretation by political parties and pundits. This structure makes the content more accessible to a broader range of the population, as the commentary and reporting often include contextual information and expert analysis.

Inaugural addresses and the annual State of the Union speech are part of the primary means by which presidents convey administration priorities, legacy-leaving intent, and the policies and direction of the administration (Campbell & Hall Jamieson, 1990; Cohen, 1997; Seidman, 1998; Skowronek, 1993). These speeches serve as the primary indicators of presidential policy preference and administrative direction and generally reflect popular public concerns (Cohen, 1982; Cummins, 2008; Tulis, 1987). Items included in these addresses signal that the president wants to draw attention to the matter and may also be a way to satisfy supporters and placate constituents or congressional forces (Fuchs & Hoadley, 1987; Kessel, 1974). These opportunities to speak directly to Congress and the public foster support for an agenda and frame the proposal to guide its interpretation (Canes-Wrone, 2001; Skowronek, 1993; Welch, 2003). When communicating the agenda, the president not only articulates the goals, but also provides context to its policy weight with other demands facing the office, which may persuade

other policy actors into action (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009; Howlett, 1998; Kingdon, 2003).

These speeches are particularly useful when the president wants to launch a campaign to establish public and political elite support of generic policy objectives, like broad goals, directions, and intended purposes (Beasley, 2010; Cummins, 2008). Later speeches and actions may fill in policy details, but inaugural speeches and State of the Union addresses serve the priming function (i.e., the persuasion prelude to specific policy talk). State of the Union speeches also influence media coverage. The media tends to track presidential progress toward the goals stated in the State of the Union speech throughout the year and the inaugural address throughout the presidency (Cummins, 2008).

Inaugural and State of the Union speeches contribute to agenda setting, but they may also serve as priming for future political communications. Priming and framing can alter the policy discussion, and the policy alternatives considered part of the influence leveraged (Eshbaugh-Soha & Peake, 2004; Weaver, 2007; Wood, 2009). Priming leverages memory-based modeling on information processes, making it easier for an audience to retrieve the message from memory, and future communications are more likely to influence the message receiver's judgment (Scheufele, 2000). Framing depicts events or options available by defining the human action behind the event's occurrence (or potential occurrence) as intentional and constructed. By telling the audience the intent of an action, the message may influence the decision making given the specific situation (Scheufele, 2000). These narratives of intent for action or policy choice provide opportunities for the president to influence how others perceive the option and may influence the level of support for a policy or decision. The president's priming and

framing activities may also drive the media and other actors' agendas related to coverage, reaction, and policy process steps (Protess & McCombs, 1991).

Even with much attention, presidents do not consistently pursue the policies they outline as part of their agenda in the State of the Union. Presidents are most likely to carry through on policy agendas related to foreign policy and less likely to follow up on policies mentioned in the State of the Union addresses related to health and social welfare policy (Cummins, 2008). This outcome likely occurs because health and social welfare policies are generally more redistributive and may create more controversy. Given that education may serve a social welfare function (i.e., social mobility), this policy area may also have similar inconsistencies on follow through. While presidents may tend not to follow through on some policies they mention in the State of the Union, the use of going public in that speech is significant at driving rhetorical value, even if the president does not seek policy action after the speech.

The purpose of this study is not to ascertain whether the president made efforts toward achieving a specific policy or elements of a policy toward the articulated educational purpose. The aim of this study is only to determine whether presidents articulate specific purposes for education, and if so, what national purpose they articulate.

Does it Matter What Presidents Say?

A president's articulation of educational purpose is only meaningful if it is potentially more impactful than another citizen's. The presidential perspective may be an expression of the national perspective; accordingly, the value is in the aggerate, or it may be a leading influencer of change in a policy direction (Beasley, 2010; Cohen, 1982). Both circumstances make the presidential statement of purpose more meaningful in policy

matters only if it effectively moves opinions or actions more so than another individual who has command of an expansive reach.

Presidential speech matters, and it can affect policy and approval in several ways. Some significant ways presidential rhetoric affects the public opinion and policy process are through priming and the framing of a discussion or criteria of evaluation in terms desired by the president (Druckman & Holmes, 2004; Mazzeo, 2002; Miller & Krosnick, 1996; Odden & Wohlstetter, 1992; Resnick, 1980; Riker, 1996). As explained in Chapter 1, priming is a subtle leverage of even brief experiences to shape later cognition of an intended audience, while framing defines events or policy options in an explicit rhetorical position. The priming effect places weight on the importance of the policy issue and can influence the focus and attention on the issues paid by other actors and the public, making them more susceptible to the message before they hear it (Cialdini, 2016; Molden, 2014). Framing articulates the purpose of the policy (the why) and aims to help the actors or the public to understand the complexities of the situation, and therefore aids the public in defining and deciding whether they approve of the policy, the president, and the actions (Badie et al., 2011). When the president communicates about an issue, it can cause people to care about the policy problem, as well as garner media attention. The more media attention a problem or policy receives, the more the population reads stories about that policy, making it more likely to evaluate the president on their performance in that specific area with a more substantial influence on the overall approval rating (Druckman & Holmes, 2004; Kinder, 1986). This frequency of rhetoric influences media coverage of the president's position and therefore allows the president to influence the media's agenda on policy matters. The emergence of direct access to media channels like social media also gives presidents more options for rhetorical outlets, even if competing with an alternate media agenda.

The president leverages communications opportunities to alter or cement national values, beliefs, and views that align with the policies they want to forward (Beasley, 2010; Denton, 1988). These communications may alter the culture and political climate, establishing norms for political actors and the public concerning the president's important topics and policies. Presidential communications help to influence national identity and prime the public and other policy influencers before proposals or events may occur. The president does not require actual power or authorly over a given topic to use rhetoric to influence how a matter is perceived, received, or receives an action.

Presidents may also use rhetoric to focus the attention of the population of voters on specific topics, thus making issues salient to voters and potentially persuading voters to support the president's policies (Druckman & Holmes, 2004; Druckman et al., 2004; Murray, 2001). To accomplish this process, the president uses the frequency of messages to bring the specified issue to the foreground and assigns weight to the issue with both frequency and recency, moving other issues of importance to voters to the cogitative background (Miller & Krosnick, 1996). Accordingly, the president's use of rhetoric to comment about policy topics may raise their importance, influence the way the public views them, and frame the discussion in terms the president wants. Then, the president can frame the policy's success or failure by using their intent to influence how the public may evaluate their performance, ultimately shaping presidential approval (Druckman & Holmes, 2004; Krosnick & Kinder, 1990; Sigelman, 1980).

Caution is necessary, however, when social scientists use presidential rhetoric in measuring public opinion changes or message recall. Single-message exposure is shown to have little effect on changing opinions, but it does serve as reinforcement of existing opinions. This outcome is contrary to the effect of multiple exposures, which may tend

over time to change some opinions and reframe the discussion for those individuals with less firmly held beliefs (Zarefsky, 2004).

The other approach to rhetoric and presidential power is in the understanding of the power of the presidency. The complex system of bureaucracy limits the ability of the president to use power as an instrument. The act of giving an order, in and of itself, does not cause the order to be carried out, and the disconnected bureaus within the organization require coaxing to complete the task requested (Denton, 1988). The use of public communications to stated priorities, agendas, and articulated purpose is also part of the president's power. This power influences the civil servants who carry out orders, as they are also recipients of the president's rhetorical communications. As presidents have an interest in influencing the behavior of members of their administration, public speeches and addresses may also have the intention of compelling action within the administrative offices, and they are a way to demonstrate leadership of the bureaucracy by the president (Beasley, 2010).

Additionally, it may be necessary for presidents to take policy appeals public, due to the divided nature of government, separations of powers, and partisan conflicts (Kernell, 1997). This direct public rhetoric can potentially undermine other political influencers' credibility, making their messages potentially less appealing. This method may have the negative political effect of hardening existing stances and reducing the opportunity for bargaining to create consensus and policy passage (Canes-Wrone, 2001). Presidents must also be cautious in how frequently they utilize the going-public approach; it may have a declining effect on the public over time, due to message wearout or market oversaturation (Kernell, 1997). The wearout effect may be less likely when the public statement focuses on intuitional pluralism and when the statement uses broad

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terms that have general public support, creating greater salience of issue within the public (Canes-Wrone, 2001; Hutchings, 1998).

Presidential Politics and Education Policy

Unlike other forms of domestic policy, education policy has been difficult to separate from broad economic, social, and foreign policy matters since World War II (McGuinn, 2006). The exception to the international competitiveness and security arguments, in which education becomes entangled, is the Civil Rights Movement. With public schools, the government positions itself as the primary distributor of knowledge, beliefs, customers, and behaviors (Spring, 1989). Education is, therefore, a non-natural public program and open to use for political instrumentation. The frames used by the president and other political actors to justify the policy's needs have the potential to be framed in terms of broader federal policies. This outcome holds, even though the majority of education policy is implemented and funded at the state and local levels because the frames and rhetoric can trickle down from federal policy actors to these lower levels of government.

After WWII, education was a tool to reinforce American ideals and prevent the subversion and intrusion of communism. This concept manifested as a theme of American schoolchildren competing with "Ivan," their soviet counterpart (Spring, 1989). This narrative explicitly positioned schooling as an element of nationalism. This approach also positioned education as a tool for serving military needs, reinforced as recently as the Reagan Administration's focus on federal education policy actions to shift focus from education in the arts to subjects targeted explicitly toward the preparation of future contributors to the science of modern warfare (Spring, 1989). This policy directive was also an area for federalism in education, focusing on the national interests in

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education being central to filling the need for an expanded candidate pool of future soldiers trained in math and science.

Since WWII, national interests in education have also had a focus related to influence on the economy, as workers in various fields and trades were needed to fulfill national economic objectives. This approach, coupled with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, helped formulate substantial involvement and interest by the federal government in schools (Davies, 2007; Light, 1999; McGuinn, 2006; Spring, 1989). The use of television in the 1950s to broadcast events and bring pictures to living rooms propelled the story of desegregation to a national stage, causing presidents to no longer be able to continue to frame these as local and state matters, creating further federal interest in education policy. This mass media coverage drew federal policy actors to comment as viewers looked to the president for leadership. Subsequently, the package of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 created a direct involvement of the federal government into education policy, and presidents (or the executive branch) have since involved themselves in education policy rhetoric and decisions.

Presidents also use education as a tool both for discussing potential solutions to societal problems and as a scapegoat for concerns they cannot or do not wish to directly address (Spring, 1989). Because the federal government has little direct control over schools and schools carry the charge of educating children, presidents can assign blame or delegate responsibly for corrective actions to schools for a variety of topics, including teen pregnancy, delinquency, crime, drug abuse, and unemployment. Ronald Reagan leveraged schools as a rhetorical solution for rising crime and drug use, but other policy matters can also cross over into federal policy, such as bilingual education or English language learning policy (Davies, 2007). The latter factors entangle education with

immigration policy and broaden the potential rhetorical value of education policy for presidents to include in agendas and framing mechanisms for policy objectives.

The history of executive activism in education is not necessarily at the direction of the president, but it may originate from the executive branch without or against the president's leadership. Several times in the Nixon Administration, the president disagreed with the policy direction and took steps to steer the administrative agency's actions in other ways. Specifically, following the Supreme Court decision in *Alexander v. Holmes*, Nixon attempted to prevent the implementation of the decision because he believed it was going too far and would have a detrimental effect on his political prospects among southern states in the next election (Davies, 2007).

While both Spring (1989) and Davies (2007) agreed that there is a history of executive activism in education policy since WWII, the mechanism and justification for that involvement differ from the period used in this study and are not always driven by the president, unlike during the period used in this study. Another reason why presidents may discuss education policy in their platforms and agendas is that voters have rated education as a top concern in recent decades, and education is a frequent topic of discussion in campaigns (McGuinn, 2006). Often, presidential education rhetoric may discuss the efficiency and effectiveness of the federal funds spent or the approach to delivering education by educators. President Nixon made such framing popular in frequent laments during his time in office about Congress's generosity in funding but lack of statistically observable results (McGuinn, 2006). Similar framing is still used today as part of the present education policy regime and the reliance on testing to track and evaluate school progress and effectiveness.

Summary of Presidential Rhetoric

Presidents, by use of rhetoric, have significant power to persuade. This presidential speech tool can alter the ways the public and policy actors view, think, and react to political problems. Presidents can influence other actors with rhetoric by expressing favor or disfavor and altering how the public and media perceive other political actors by framing the individual. Rhetoric is also useful to persuade the bureaucracy to act when the president makes decisions, as the civil service is somewhat insulated and may lag in response to the president's demands, given the levels of separation from the White House.

By going public, presidents can influence both policy actors and the public in the level of attention a problem gets, but this ability is limited and may not be effective in matters of partisanship, or the short term when the public is already firmly entrenched in an opinion. By taking the situation to the public, the president can also distract from other events by redirecting attention to a matter they find essential.

Of direct application to this research, presidents use rhetoric and public speeches like the State of the Union addresses to express policy priorities and articulate their agenda. The result of mentions in these speeches, the policy priorities attract attention from all actors and often remains in the sphere of public comment for a year, term, or longer. This importance makes these speeches, among others, particularly useful in assessing the president-expressed intent of education policy.

Summary

The review of the scholarly literature related to educational purpose and presidential rhetoric has confirmed that the approach to answering the question of what presidents articulate through public speeches and communication documents as the purpose of K–12 education in America is appropriate, prudent, and reasonable.

The application of David Labaree's model for educational purpose as a framework is supported by the literature as a practical application of theory and a pragmatic choice given the unit of measure and the methodological approach.

Additionally, the unit of investigation at the presidential level is a logical and reasonable choice. The justification for this decision is strong, due to the singular nature of the president's office and influence over other political actors, the public, and the available data for assessing the president's articulated purpose. Finally, the use of presidential documents and speeches, such as the State of the Union address, to express the direction of the president in policy matters is valuable evidence to determine whether (a) there is an expressed presidential purpose, (b) the purpose is consistent, and (c) the purpose varies among presidents.

This study seeks to address a potential gap in the academic literature and, therefore, a hypothesis of the perceived outcome would require an unsupported logical step. Reasonable inferences can be assumed based on the party platform of the three presidents included in the study, but the sample size is too small to support any conclusions drawn based on party affiliation. Based on the Democratic Party platform of 1996, results from the documents from Clinton may include codable segments with a tendency toward the use of the frame for Social Mobility (Peters & Woolley, 1996). Reviewing the Republican party platform of 2004, results from the documents for Bush may include a significant number of mentions of Social Efficiency – Public Good given the strong language toward building a globally competitive economy (Peters & Woolley, 2004). Finally, looking at the Democratic Party platform of 2012, results from the documents from Obama may tend toward codable segments identified with both Social Efficiency sub-categories (Peters & Woolley, 2012).

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Approach

This study aims to answer three research questions about the purpose of education in the United States of America. I assessed what the presidential publicly expressed purpose is and whether it is consistent across presidential administrations. The three research questions I answer are as follows:

RQ1: What did Presidents William Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama articulate through public speeches and communication documents in the *Public Papers of the Presidents* archive as the purpose of K–12 education in America using the framework for purpose proposed by David Labaree?

RQ2: Is each president consistent in the purpose articulated in the speeches and documents throughout their presidency?

RQ3: Did these presidents differ from one another in the articulated purpose in these speeches and documents, or are there commonalities between these presidents?

Using content analysis, I examine the frames these presidents used to describe the nature of the problems in education, and thus what they respectively communicate as their purpose for education as part of their agenda.

I use content analysis to review the language and arrive at codable elements comparable in form within the text (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 2013; Saldaña, 2016). Using software algorithmic processes and a priori codes from Labaree (1997), I analyze the documents through a word- or phrase-frequency analysis associated with each code. The frequency of these codes then illustrates the dominant and secondary frames used by each president for the purpose of education in America.

To answer the three research questions, I analyze the documents created by the Executive Office of the President during their respective administrations. Specifically, this study examines documents in the National Archives organized as part of the *Public Papers of the Presidents*. The archive includes papers published by the Office of the Press Secretary, documents from the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, and other documents, including proclamations, executive orders, and more, as released by the Office of the Press Secretary or published in the Federal Register (Office of the Federal Register, n.d.). As these are archive-preserved original copies of communications issued and other primary source documents created during an administration, the content is a fair representation of the policies, proposals, and frames articulated by the president while in office.

I use qualitative data analysis software, MAXQDA, to facilitate the coding of a large number of documents. I report the coding in frequency tables and summary statistics to answer the first and second research questions.

To test the method of coding and analysis, I conducted a pilot study as a proof of concept using the State of the Union speeches from Carter to Trump, including 43 documents. From the experience of that pilot, the full study is feasible and requires few operational changes to complete effectively. Some adjustments may be necessary to enhance the accuracy of the algorithmic coding process, but the methodological approach is sound and the project achievable.

Sources

The original documents analyzed in this research are from the National Archives and organized as part of the *Public Papers of the Presidents*. The original documents, if not initially electronic, were digitized by the National Archives' staff and published in

volumes, available in print and digitally online in a database (Office of the Federal Register, n.d.).

Compiled and published by the Office of the Federal Register in the National Archives and Records Administration, the *Public Papers of the Presidents* is an official series in which presidential writings, addresses, and remarks to the public are available for public review. Each volume is made up of the papers and speeches of the president of the United States as issued by the Office of the Press Secretary. The National Archives verifies all transcriptions of verbal remarks against other records, and all copies of the documents are also compared to signed copies to assure accuracy. National archivists then annotate any differences within each document. These archives also include documents previously published in the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents (Office of the Federal Register, n.d.). Each compiled index of documents also has a categorized list by message type and subject matter. I use the category indexes to identify the documents for inclusion in the study.

Selected Presidential Terms

The documents chosen are selected explicitly by period relevant to the presidencies under review in this study, including the papers of William Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama. The time frame chosen for this study considers the historical factors of federalism in education policy. It begins with the inauguration of William J. Clinton on January 20, 1993 and runs through the expiration of President Obama's administration on January 20, 2017. This period is specifically relevant because, immediately following Bill Clinton's election, he shifted the conversation about K–12 education to an expanded federal involvement and began a period of intense presidential discussion about education policy, marking the beginning of a shift in policy regime (Manna, 2006; McGuinn, 2006; Vinovskis, 2009). In March of 1995, President

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Clinton signed into law the Educate America Act (Goals 2000), outlining eight national

goals for the American educational system and expanding the federal government's role

in education. This law signaled a new direction from that of George H. W. Bush's

administration, which was focused on state and local control. This is evidenced by the

outcome of the September 28, 1998 Charlottesville Summit, which concluded with a

majority of the responsibility remaining with state and local funding and control

(Hoffman & Broder, 1989).

The National Archives have no requirement to make documents available for a

presidential administration until 5 years after the president has left office. Accordingly,

not all of the papers of Barack Obama are available for review at the time of the data

gathering for this research. However, the official documents from the *Public Papers of*

the Presidents archive are able to be supplemented by the speeches and other documents

available in the frozen website of the administration, already in the National Archives

but not yet published in a volume as part of the *Public Papers of the Presidents*.

Inclusion Rules

I include in this study documents identified by the National Archives as relating

to K–12 education. I acquired the documents directly from the digital archive for the

Public Papers of the Presidents held and posted for electronic access by the U.S.

Government Publishing Office. I employed the two indexes to identify the archive

documents based on the index for national-archivist-coded communications type and

the other index for national-archivist-coded content area. I acquired and cataloged all

documents fitting the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria stipulated the documents

acquired according to the subject or document type index. As each year of the index may

use slightly differing terminology, the categories below are representative of the subject

categories for included documents:

- education system, improvement efforts

- education - global competitiveness

- education - high school dropout rate and prevention programs

- education - Hispanic students

- education - low-income students

- education - minority students

- education - school improvement and renovation

- education - science and math programs

- education - standards and school accountability

- education - teachers

- education - technology and innovation, expansion efforts

- Education, Department of - Race to the Top Fund

- Educational Excellence for African Americans, President's Commission on

- Presidential Scholars, Commission on

I excluded all materials categorized as solely about early childhood, adult education, workforce retraining, and post-secondary education.

All of these documents are included in the analysis because presidents often leverage different channels to communicate policy preferences and agendas based on their policy strategy and approach as appeals to gain public support (Lowande & Gray, 2017). My analysis includes the full content of all State of the Union and inaugural addresses of the three presidents. Also included are all pages of the following documents, where noted by the National Archives that they include a topic directly related to education:

- addresses and remarks

- bill signings

- communications to Congress (including calls for legislation)

- executive orders

- interviews with news media

- letters and messages

- statements by the president

I selected these documents for analysis because they are artifacts that demonstrate the presidential agenda. These specific documents are relevant to the study and help answer the research questions because they are direct articulations of presidential policy preferences, goals, and opinions. The research questions aim to derive whether there is a publicly expressed purpose of education, and if so, what it is and how it varies among presidents. These documents are also frozen in time, meaning they convey the president's sentiments at the time of being in office and not a reflection on that time later. For these reasons, the selected documents are the most aligned mode to evaluate and determine the president's agenda, framing, and message on the topic of education policy. The themes generated from the discourse analysis are also directly related to the presented message. Although potentially responsive to other pressures, presidential speech does not include potential confounders like filters or framing by other parties, such as news media coverage of the addresses or documents may include.

I excluded any departmentally generated correspondence, speeches, or media interactions, as there is no assurance of direct presidential involvement in those communications. Only items that originated from the Executive Office of the President are reasonable in the belief that the president was consulted on the communication, whereas department communications are likely to be less centralized in review. Additionally, as these are original copies of digitized documents, they require no transcription and are already categorized by document type and subject matter following

consistent National Archives procedures. By using existing categories and indexes established by the National Archives, I leveraged a consistent framework for selecting documents to include in the study.

The study examines 2,370 documents tagged by archivists as containing education-related content in the *Public Papers of the Presidents* national archive for William J. Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack H. Obama. One document was used as an exercise for coding during the training for the manual coders, one document was used as an independent training activity, and 27 were used for the manual coding phase, leaving 2,341 documents for coding in the algorithmic coding phase.

Initial Document Processing

After identifying all the documents, I downloaded the documents from the electronic database in plain text or portable document format as available. Using contractors on the service Kolabtree, the documents were prepared and cleaned for loading to the qualitative analysis software package. Four contractors were used; two were doctoral graduate students and two were professors who already earned doctorates. The work was delegated to the contractors roughly equally in terms of numbers of documents, divided by year, and each president's documents were distributed to at least two contractors to prevent the potential for any systematic errors affecting a single president's documents. A random sample of 20% of each contractor's work was inspected before accepting them as accurate, clean, and complete work. No errors, omissions, or issues were identified in any of the quality control checks. When loaded, I organized the documents by groups of president and year. No consideration is necessary to safeguard the information with encryption, as these are public record documents and not data from human participants.

Manual and Software (Algorithmic) Coding

In the first round of coding, I used structural (utilitarian) a priori coding, which labels, indexes, and categorizes data in a single coding round (Saldaña, 2016). This first round, using human coders, established the list of words and word-strings that represent each code for the second round of coding. The first round consisted of a team of human coders to manually review and code 27 representative documents, nine from each president. In the second round of coding, I used the words and word-strings associated with the selected codes to input the parameters in the software used to run the software algorithmic coding process. Automated coding methods, as deployed in this study, are more appropriately suited for larger data sets than human coding alone (Cavari, 2017). This method is appropriate for this study and is applied when the aim is to answer a specific research question that utilizes a standardized data gathering protocol. Structured coding generates results that identify large segments of text on broad topics and facilitates the transformation of the data corpus to organized categories that can then be analyzed qualitatively or quantitatively. First, I will analyze the coded data by frequency reported in a table to determine dominant themes. I will employ an at-first impression analysis of the frequency tables to identify the themes in the data for a report of the themes by president. Then, the themes are reviewed over time and assessed for consistency within and among respective presidential administrations. Therefore, the frequencies are the measure of the prevalence, or most frequently utilized themes by each president in each year. This prevalence demonstrates the educational purposes articulated; the more frequently used in speeches and documents, the greater the emphasis that president places on that purpose in a given period.

A Priori Codes From Labaree

      After acquiring and cleaning all documents from the National Archives and the *Public Papers of the Presidents* database, I loaded the documents into the MAXQDA software and assured that each entry was identified and grouped according to the protocol to generate the appropriate frequency tables later. The metadata codes include the name of the president and the year of the document.

      I then coded the corpus of the data with the research codes, which are structural and utilitarian, following the model proposed by David Labaree. There are three primary codes from this model, two with a single level of coding and a third primary code with a bifurcated second level of coding. According to Labaree, the purposes of education include, whether they be public or private goods, three categories: "democratic equality (schools should focus on preparing citizens), social efficiency (they should focus on training workers), and social mobility (they should prepare individuals to compete for social positions)" (Labaree, 1997, p. 39). The code for democratic equality is defined as a public good, insomuch as the benefits of preparing children to be good citizens benefit all of society. The code for social mobility is defined as a private good, in that preparing individuals to compete for social positions will primarily benefit the individual with personal returns, including returns of a non-economic nature like power, prestige, or accomplishment of societal advancement. Accordingly, when these codes are applied, the second-level coding is inherited for public or private good. The third code, social efficiency, also stated as a focus on training workers, can serve both public and private economic returns. When this code is applied and the context relates to national workforce needs, international competitiveness in the economy, or advancements in industry, I will apply the secondary-level code of public good to the text. This code is applied because the social efficacies created are a common good or public benefit that

society may benefit from as the justification for the purpose. Conversely, social efficiency is a private good when the rationale used includes private returns like better-paying jobs, helping to lift oneself out of poverty, and increasing a person's or family's economic quality of life. The codes used in this study are as follows:

- Social Efficiency – Private Good
- Social Efficiency – Public Good
- Social Mobility
- Democratic Equality

In the pilot study, these codes emerged as follows in these examples:

- Social Efficiency – Private Good: "Good jobs began with good schools" or "A high school diploma no longer guarantees a good job."

- Social Efficiency – Public Good: "And we can make sure our children are prepared for the jobs of the future, and our country is more competitive by strengthening math and science skills" or "This is a prescription for economic decline, because we know the countries that out-teach us today will outcompete us tomorrow."

- Social Mobility: "If we simply give ordinary people equal opportunity, quality education, and a fair shot at the American dream, they will do extraordinary things" and "Empower our citizens through education and training to make the most of their own lives."

- Democratic Equality: "Give our citizens more of the tools they need to get an education and to rebuild their own communities" and "Character education must be taught in our schools. We must teach our children to be good citizens."

Operationalizing the Code Definitions via Manual Coding

I started the coding process with manual coding using 27 documents acquired from the archive across the three presidencies and the various kinds of documents in the full set of data. I selected a purposive sample with an equal number of documents from each administration (nine for each president). The sample controls for the type of document and its original delivery form, with approximately half originally delivered as written content and half originally delivered as spoken communications and form across the duration of the president's administration, to be sensitive to differing sentence structures and vocabulary.

I recruited two coders who had prior experience participating in content analysis coding: a current professor at a university and a doctoral graduate student who had completed a graduate-level qualitative analysis course. One coder identified as male and one as female, and both were in the age range of late 20s to mid 30s. Coders separately took part in a Zoom-hosted coding session. I began the manual coding session by describing the purpose of the study and the coding, followed by a description of the coding process. I presented and defined the structured codes and provided two examples of coded sentences that matched each code from the data set, but not from the representative sample documents for the exercise. Then I provided each coder with a code sheet including coding descriptions and sample words or phrases for each code to use in the manual coding. The examples were derived from actual documents in the full data set but not in the sample to be coded.

Next, I used a sample document and led the coders through an exercise of coding the sample document together as training, having them explain why they chose that code for each instance. Then, the coder practiced coding another sample document independently. After they finished coding the document, we went through the document

together with our independent coding results and identified the codes they used. We had intended to discuss any identified discrepancies, but none were noted.

I then provided the coders with a link to a Google Drive with the 27 documents in Microsoft Word format, along with copies of the code sheet and directions. Both coders received the same documents but in personal Google Drive folder locations. Each coder was instructed to code all documents within 1 week and return them with Track Changes turned on, highlighting the words and adding a comment for the code they selected. The coders completed the work and emailed me when they were done. I verified that they did not miss any documents, then replied with a confirmation that they had completed their coding task commitment and transmitted a nominal memento of appreciation.

I then reviewed the documents and compared the codes selected by the two coders with a set of documents I coded. On review, only 12 passages had code disagreements out of 127 coded segments, totaling 9.4% with disagreements. These were collected and forwarded to Sherman Dorn (the dissertation committee co-chair) for review and advice. The feedback from the dissertation committee co-chair was used to choose the applied code for each passage in the manual coding phase. After manual coding, I collected all the documents and utilized them to generate the inclusion and exclusion criteria, also known as the dictionary, to conduct the lexical search using MAXQDA. Lexical search is a function that uses a character string as a pattern of vocabulary that computer software recognizes in text or data, matching the words or word strings/phrases or their variants.

Below are examples of passages coded and the key words and word string identified by the coders, in bold, for programing the software (algorithmic) coding phase:

- "A nation's well-being depends largely on the **skills of its work force** and the capacity of the people to adapt and be productive" (Clinton, 1993, p. 1010).

- "So people can **realize their dreams** here in this country"(Bush, 2004, p. 2364).

- "And our competitive advantage depends on whether our **kids are prepared** to seize the opportunities from tomorrow" (Obama, 2015, p. 1572).

Software Algorithmic Coding

After the manual coding phase, I then input the inclusion criteria in the dictionary of the MAXDictio function so the software could auto-code the data. MAXQDA software has a capacity similar to other qualitative analysis software with automated coding, in that it relies on a list of pre-defined dictionary word and phrase lists. I created the list of criteria for the dictionary in the MAXQDA software for this study from the manual coding round and applied them at this phase. The human coders identified words and phrases associated with each of the a priori codes across each president and the various types of documents. The manual coding phase goal was to generate a well-crafted list of terms that MAXQDA could use to produce accurate algorithmic results. Each a priori code required the entry of separate inclusion criteria. Simple inclusion criteria such as "education" or "schooling" are too general and would result in an overstatement of the number of coded segments. Inclusion criteria using phrases such as "education is to build the economy" or "teach children to be good democratic citizens" are too specific and may understate the number of codable segments.

To mitigate this challenge, I used a refined dictionary list for each a priori code of statements based on the language observed in the manual coding phase. The use of

exclusion criteria, or stop words, proved to be challenging to implement without omitting codable segments and attempting to prevent overstatement by including miscoded segments.

For these reasons, I conducted spot checks of the automated coding to ensure accuracy. After the first time running the auto-coding process, I manually inspected the results, comparing the auto-coded segments to the manually coded portions of the same documents to verify accuracy of the word strings selected. Only minor adjustments were required to compensate for human error, like leading or trailing spaces, or typographic error. After making adjustments, I reran the software auto-coding and manually verified the coded segments a second time. The final modifications compensated for minor needed changes like shortening word strings from "skills they need to succeed" to "skills they need" or adjusting for an inclusive set of pronouns occurring in speech instead of only using the sample word string "realize his or her dreams" to also include a segment for "realize their dreams."

Of the 2,370 documents across all years that archivists tagged as education-related, approximately 52% had codable text segments. The initial result of the software algorithmic coding is 2,242 coded segments in 1,226 documents. I inspected 400 of the coded documents, approximately 33%, to determine whether any of the coded segments had been mis-coded and may contribute to an overstatement of codable content, finding none. I then inspected 180 of the documents without coded text segments to ensure that there were no potently codable segments that went uncoded by the software algorithmic coding process. I identified three documents that required further review. Given that the number of identified documents for further review was greater than 1%, I inspected all 1,144 documents. Completing this step identified 38 documents that may contain codable segments, or approximately 3% of the documents with no codes assigned by the

software algorithmic coding. After careful review, 15 of the 38 documents had potentially codable segments. I compiled the full text of the 15 documents for review by my dissertation co-chair to confirm the presence and code of the identified text. All 15 documents were confirmed to contain a total of 27 coded segments included for analysis.

Using this process increases the internal validity of the study. First, the use of a diverse set of coders reviewing a purposive sample of diverse and representative documents increases the likelihood of capturing the needed words, word-strings, and logical statements for use by the software coding process. Second, spot-checking the software results reduces the amount of over- or under-representation of codes related to the accuracy of the inclusion and exclusion criteria used for the algorithmic process. Third, by using an algorithmic method, the large quantity of documents is efficiently and consistently coded based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria established in the manual coding phase using the a priori codes.

After completing all steps to identify and code segments, there was a total of 1,159 documents identified by archivists as containing content related to education, with a total of 2,267 coded segments. There is a total of 425 coded segments in the Clinton documents, 427 coded segments in the Bush documents, and 1,415 coded segments in the Obama documents.

Frequency Analysis

Presidents possess the power to persuade by use of the bully pulpit, and the amount of attention paid to a topic is related to the exerted influence, resulting in an increase in the amount of attention or concern by the public and other political actors, as well as influencing the perceptions about an agenda topic on an audience (Cohen, 1995; Denton, 1988; Eshbaugh-Soha & Peake, 2004; Wood, 2009). The amount of attention paid to a policy area is measurable by the number of times a president mentions a

specific policy topic, and an increase in the amount of attention paid to a policy topic or frame is an indicator of the president's use of influence (Cavari, 2017; Edwards & Wood, 1999). Therefore, the number of times a policy topic or frame appears is a useful measure of the president's intent, as well as its potential influence on the public agenda. Thus, a comparative-frequency analysis is a first-order metric of the weight a president places on one policy frame over another. Accordingly, the lower the frequency of a policy frame use, the lower intent to exert influence using that policy frame. Conversely, the higher the frequency of a policy frame's use, the higher the intention to exert influence using that policy frame.

As stated in Chapter 2, the primary purpose of presidential rhetoric is to communicate agendas; thus, the policy frame's repetition is evidence of an attempt to communicate that frame as part of the agenda (Cavari, 2017; Zefersky, 2004). For this study, the frequency of text coding for a specific educational purpose is therefore representative of the amount of attention paid by the president to that educational purpose, and the lack of any mention of a particular educational purpose is an indicator of a lack of presidential use of that educational purpose as part of the agenda. Thus, the inclusion or exclusion of the educational purpose in the agenda is representative of the president's policy framing intent. Accordingly, a frequency analysis of policy mentions is a representation of policy preferences expressed in public speeches and writings of the president.

Content Analysis: RQ1 and RQ2

Summary statistics focus on frequency tables of the categorical codes applied for a first-impression content analysis to answer the first two research questions. This structured coding model directly aids in answering the first research questions because structural coding organizes large segments of text on broad topics for analysis. A

frequency table provides the ability to assess the data at first impression and determine whether one of the categories is dominant under a given president, resulting in a primary theme or purpose for education (Saldaña, 2016; Weick, 2001). I will then report the analysis in a narrative description of the information observed and the frequency of the themes recorded in the coding.

I will answer the second research question from the frequency table by assessing the data at first impression and determining whether there is a dominant category in each administration by year. Then I will analyze the frequency over time for the entirety of a president's term in office to ascertain what similarities or differences exist. By evaluating the table for patterns and variations over time, I will then report my findings in a narrative description of the observed data and explain the evidence for or against consistency.

Next, I will review the annual frequencies for the entirety of term in office and determine whether directional shifts or trends existed. Where analysis of the frequency table suggests the potential for a change over time, I will report the evidence of such a transformation and discuss the findings in the narrative.

Finally, as a second measure, I will total the number of documents containing a specific code and assess them as a percent of the total number of documents. I will report the observed totals and provide a narrative, including a narrative of the difference in totals.

Content Analysis: RQ3

The third research question seeks to determine whether there are differences or commonalities among presidents. The analysis necessary to answer the third research question will start with the same process of assessing the data at first impression and making a determination as to whether there were differences and similarities in

presidents based on the data in the frequency tables, as utilized for RQ1 and RQ2. After completing this analysis, I will report the findings in a narrative description of the information observed and the frequency of the themes recorded in the coding.

Addressing Threats to Validity

This study utilizes software to auto-code text segments using operational definitions created through manual coding, so the primary concern is coding validity rather than reliability. (The focus is on internal validity because software-driven auto-coding has a 100% reliability; it always codes the data corpus the same way given the criteria, as described earlier in this chapter.) To establish coding validity (internal validity) before the software auto-code, I utilized a manual coding process with accuracy checks, diverse coders, and a purposive selected set of diverse documents. In the manual coding phase, I selected nine documents from each administration, controlling for potential differences in vocabulary by selecting half of the documents from communications originally delivered as written materials and half originally delivered as speeches. Two coders with prior experience in content analysis coding participated in the manual coding sessions, wherein both independently coded identical documents using identical directions. Each coder participated in a one-on-one training session and two sample exercises to assure comprehension and preparation for the coding activity. After the coders completed the manual coding step for all assigned documents, I compared the codes from the two coders with an identical set of documents I coded. Twelve passages had code disagreements out of 127 passages, totaling 9.4%. The 12 items with code disagreements were collected and forwarded to the dissertation committee co-chair for review and advice. I used the dissertation committee co-chair's feedback to choose the applied code for each passage marked as having a code disagreement. After resolving differences, I used the words and word strings for each of the four codes identified in the

manual coding phase to generate the lexical search criteria in MAXQDA. In the second coding step, I used MAXQDA software algorithmic coding for content analysis and examined the frames used by the three presidents to describe the purpose of education in America.

This study does not attempt to assess themes not specified in the Labaree model and will not detect other themes that may be present related to educational purpose. A potential threat to internal validity is that, while algorithmic coding is entirely reliable, changes in speaking and writing style over time may omit potentially codable segments. To mitigate this potential, I will perform spot checks (as described in the software algorithmic coding section of this chapter), make adjustments, and notate any changes during the study.

Pilot Study

The pilot study goal was to provide proof of concept that algorithmic coding of presidential documents will work effectively to answer the research questions. The pilot study included a total of 43 documents (see Table 1), including all State of the Union addresses and *Address on Administration Goals Before a Joint Session of Congress* and similar speeches delivered to a joint session of Congress in the 1st year of a presidency, shortly after the inauguration. This sample includes all speeches from Jimmy Carter in 1978 through the most recent address from Donald Trump in 2020.

Table 1

State of the Union

President	Documents	Codable segments
Carter, J.	3	3
Regan, R.	8	14
Bush, G. H. W.	4	9
Clinton, W.	8	22
Bush, G. W.	8	8
Obama, B.	8	24
Trump, D.	4	4
Total	43	84

Note. This table demonstrates all documents included in the pilot study, both State of the Union documents created by each president (whether delivered in person or in writing) and all Addresses on Administration Goals Before a Joint Session of Congress.

To start, I manually reviewed two speeches from each president (14 documents total) and highlighted the relevant passages, where they existed. From these passages, I derived words, word strings, words occurring within proximity, and exclusionary phrases. I input these variables in the lexical search function of MAXQDA and ran an initial auto-coding process, producing 52 results. I reviewed and evaluated the coded segments to verify coding accuracy. Seven coded segments were incorrect, as they pertained to higher education or early childhood education policies (not K–12 education). Examples included "making higher education a higher priority in their budgets" and "high-quality early childhood education can save more than seven dollars later on: by boosting graduation rates." One other incorrectly coded segment pertained to investment in education abroad. I then adjusted the exclusion criteria for these factors, and only two of the eight errors remained.

On further inspection, I noted that 24 of the 81 documents had no potentially codable text segments. Lexical search was used again on broad terms, including education, schools, learning, and teaching, along with the alterations of their routes. This process produced a total of 1,277 potentially codable text segments in the documents. On reviewing this list individually with pertinent sections highlighted, I made notes for improvements on the auto-coding process and the words or word strings. Rerunning the auto-coding resulted in 102 codable segments. I again evaluated the coded segments in the respective code segment review table and individually reviewed for coding accuracy. I identified 14 of the coded segments as being in keyword reference lists at the bottom of several documents, making these potentially codable text segments false positives. Four of the coded segments were again related to higher education and not K–12. After the final review, I determined that the total number of accurately coded segments was 84 (see Table 1), making the final algorithmic coding 92% accurate. In the final evaluation, seven documents did not have any codable segments of education purpose information out of the 43 total documents, or approximately 17% of the documents. Table 2 represents the summary of codes used for each education purpose by president.

Table 2

Number of Coded Segments for Educational Purpose

President	Social Efficiency		Social Mobility	Democratic Equality
	Private Good	Public Good		
Carter, J.	1	1	0	1
Regan, R.	1	5	2	6
Bush, G. H. W.	0	7	0	2
Clinton, W.	2	9	6	5
Bush, G. W.	1	1	5	1
Obama, B.	5	12	5	2
Trump, D.	0	0	3	1
Total	10	35	21	18

Note. This table demonstrates the number of total codable segments for all available State of the Union documents created by each president, whether they were delivered in person or in writing, and all Addresses on Administration Goals Before a Joint Session of Congress by each president, including the sum of codable segments assigned with each code.

Pilot Study Analysis

Analyzing the data in Table 2 at first impression, it is discernable that Social Efficiency as a Public Good is the most frequently articulated purpose for education by presidents in State of the Union speeches, with 35 coded passages in the text, making this purpose of education the mode of the themes. Conversely, it is also identifiable that Social Efficiency as a Private Good is the least utilized of the four coding categories as the articulated purpose of education. From this limited pilot data set, there are also notable differences among presidents in the articulated purpose. Obama frequently articulated Social Efficiency- Public Good (12 coded passages) in State of the Union speeches, while

George H. W. Bush repeatedly articulated the purpose of Social Mobility for education (seven coded passages).

How Pilot Study Informs Methods

There are a few key findings from the pilot study that will inform the full research study related to procedures, data cleaning, and organization. First, because I had not removed metadata and keyword text blocks from the bottom of documents, I observed false positives in auto-coding procedures. Second, the type of files downloaded, the method of importation, and the organization in the software affected the ability to produce frequency tables in the necessary format. A clean data structure plan is necessary before data is loaded to the software to ensure efficient operations and accurate analysis for results tables. As a result, for the proposed study, I will create file folders in the system documents for each president and year, then clearly title the documents so that they are in sets for ease of reporting.

The pilot also informed the coding process, in that it may be necessary to review more documents to determine the words and word strings that are the best fit inclusion and exclusion criteria for algorithmic accuracy, increasing internal validity. However, some mitigation may occur in the full study, as it only includes three presidents and a smaller defined period, and the data corpus will already exclude material related explicitly to early childhood, higher education, job training, and foreign aid.

The study period is also narrower (i.e., 24 years instead of 43 years), which may limit syntactic shifts in public speech and written documents. I noted these shifts in the pilot. Carter's speech patterns created more significant gaps between the keywords or word strings, initially making educational purpose references in his speech non-coded. This narrower period may also reduce the changes in language associated with the policy approach and influencers. This reduction in history effects may also be true of relevant

policy topics related to education, potentially increasing auto-coding accuracy in the full study.

Pilot Study Relevance

The pilot study, although a small sample size, demonstrates that the method and approach to the data is a viable and relevant way to code education purpose as articulated by presidents. The pilot also demonstrates that these documents contain codable data, able to demonstrate an articulated purpose for the period studied. During the pilot, while the policy proposals change, the general syntax used during the period for the full study about education was more similar then when compared to the period before Clinton. The result is that the auto-coding method may have higher accuracy in coding the document text and fewer false positives requiring review and manual omission. The use of multiple manual coders in the study may also have a positive effect on the accuracy of the words and word strings used to generate the auto-coding over a single coder's input.

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Limitations

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The methods of coding and analysis in this study apply the Labaree model for education purposes in their design. They do not include other broader potential purposes for education, as defined under the Goodlad model. This alternative model assumes that schools are not for educational aims solely in intent, but also exist to meet sociopolitical demands, including goals of creativity, emotional well-being, and self-realization. Accordingly, the analysis findings will presume the importance instead of democratic equality, social efficiency, and social mobility, including the public/private goods distinction. The study is also solely focused on K–12 education and does not consider factors that may influence the interpretation of the holistic purpose of education across life-long learning. Other researchers may find value in extending the model to early

childhood and adult education or including other goals or aims. This study seeks to test a single model of education's purpose against what presidents articulate and cannot generate alternative theoretical models, nor does it attempt to compare models.

This study also does not attempt to establish causal inference or order of political thought and influence. This study solely seeks to ascertain the presidentially defined purpose of education, not the origin of the articulated purpose. Future studies may attempt to identify the source of the framing used by the president. Accordingly, this study also does not examine the sequencing of the policy's frame or policy purpose, as this may be difficult to derive given the interaction of policy ideas and preferences that emerge in the policymaking process (Gleiber & Shull, 1992). The articulated purpose may be echoed or contradicted by other actors, including Congress, the media, interest groups, or states. This study seeks only to identify the purpose of education as articulated according to the Labaree model and the stability of the president's utilization for purpose for education over time for the included presidents.

It is a limitation of the automated data coding process that some degree of both overstatement and understatement of codes may exist, but the automated method is more appropriately suited for larger data sets than human coding alone (Cavari, 2017). This study utilizes a mitigation strategy that includes both automated coding and human review to reduce the potential impact of this limitation.

Summary

This research study examines the original texts of public speeches and administration documents from presidents William Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama. I chose this time frame as it represents the more recent era of federal activism in K–12 education, generally beginning with the expanding federal involvement in education during the Clinton Administration through the passage of Goals 2000, also

known as the Educate America Act. George W. Bush continued to support federal participation in education with the adoption of No Child Left Behind in 2002. Barack Obama also demonstrated leadership from the presidency toward education reform measures with the implementation of the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act. The passage of these acts demonstrates that this policy direction continued under all these presidents toward federal involvement in K–12 education, making all three presidents part of a single policy regime (McGuinn, 2006).

The original texts are from the National Archives for examination in this study. These are significant because they are reviewed for accuracy and cataloged by archivists, then indexed by standard methods and systems. Therefore, the documents represent a frozen-in-time articulation of presidential framing and rhetoric as raw and uninterpreted data. Because the document has an index by type and subject matter, the scope of document inclusion may be limited to only those that are reasonably applicable, thus reducing the protentional for false-positive coding of irrelevant content.

The study employs sufficient controls to generate the word, word string, word proximity, and exclusion criteria through the use of multiple and diverse coders to identify the list of parameters on a cross-sectional and purposeful sample of representative documents. Because the codes use a structural and utilitarian system, they may also be explicitly defined and applied. A pilot study demonstrated the proof of concept in relation to the ability to accurately code documents using the automated procedure and informed me of potential improvements in study processes. The pilot also demonstrated that the majority of false positives in coding were due to procedurally controllable factors and may be mitigated by controlled document selection, confining historical period and using multiple manual coders in the word and word string definition phase.

The literature and historical relevance to American political leadership and case law support the utilized structural codes. The resulting research codes are structural and utilitarian, following the model proposed by David Labaree, and the codes systematically label, index, and categorize data in a single coding round. This purpose-driven coding scheme creates organized frequency tables that facilitate answering the research questions. This frequency table provides the ability to assess the data on a first-impression review and determine whether one of the categories is dominant under a given president, resulting in a primary theme or purpose for education to answer RQ1. A detailed year-by-year version of the frequency table is applicable for the same first-impression review to determine consistency or variance within an administration to answer RQ2. Both research questions' analysis may then be reported in a descriptive narrative, arriving at the answers and explanations. RQ3 is answerable by creating another summary table to compare dominant themes across administrations, performing a first-impression review, and reporting the findings in a narrative.

After reviewing the research methods and the body of literature and conducting a pilot study with similar content and variables, it is evident that the study is viable and will reasonably accomplish the analysis necessary to answer the research questions. Furthermore, this research will contribute to a gap in the literature about the president-articulated purpose of education.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

Approach

This study leveraged the content analysis to answer three research questions about the purpose of education in the United States of America. I analyzed the data to assess what the three presidents publicly expressed as the purpose using the framework for purpose proposed by David Labaree. The three research questions to answer during the analysis are as follows:

RQ1: What did Presidents William Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama articulate through public speeches and communication documents in the *Public Papers of the Presidents* archive as the purpose of K–12 education in America using the framework for purpose proposed by David Labaree?

RQ2: Is each president consistent in the purpose articulated in the speeches and documents throughout their presidency?

RQ3: Did these presidents differ from one another in the articulated purpose in these speeches and documents, or are there commonalities among these presidents?

I used algorithmic coding software for content analysis and examined the frames used by the three presidents to describe the purpose of education. The study examined 2,370 documents tagged by archivists as containing education-related content in the *Public Papers of the Presidents* national archive for William J. Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack H. Obama.

In the manual coding phase, I selected an equal number of documents from each administration (nine for each president). I controlled for potential differences in sentence structures and vocabulary by selecting approximately half of the documents

from communications originally delivered as written content and half of the communications originally delivered as spoken communications across each president's administration. Using two coders with prior experience participating in content analysis coding, I conducted manual coding sessions, providing both coders with identical documents and directions. After the coders completed the manual coding step, I compared the codes selected in the documents from the two coders and to an identical set of documents I coded. Twelve passages had code disagreements. The 12 items with code disagreements were collected and forwarded to the dissertation committee co-chair for review and advice. The dissertation committee co-chair's feedback was used to choose the applied code for each passage marked as having a code disagreement. Below is an example of a code disagreement segment with the word string text noted in boldface type:

> First and foremost, we need a 21st century revolution in education, guided by our faith that every single child can learn. Because education is more important than ever, more than ever the **key to our children's future**, we must make sure all our children have that key. That means quality preschool and after- school, the best trained teachers in the classroom, and college opportunities for all our children. (Clinton, 2000, p. 162)

Here is another example of a code disagreement segment:

> But that means we're going to have to shake some things up: setting high standards, common standards, empowering students to meet them; partnering with our teachers to achieve excellence in the classroom; educating our children— all of them—to graduate ready for college, ready for a career, ready to **make most of their lives**. None of this should be controversial. (Obama, 2013, p. 417)

In the first example, the two coders selected similar word strings but differing codes. One coder selected Social Efficiency – Private Good, and the second coder selected Social Mobility. The dissertation co-chair and I both selected Social Efficiency – Private Good on further review, making it the agreed code.

In the second example, the two coders both selected an identical word string but differing codes, where one coder selected the code Social Efficiency – Public Good, and one coder selected the code Social Efficiency – Private Good. Both the dissertation co-chair and I selected Social Efficiency – Private Good on further review, making it the agreed code for the word string.

After resolving the 12 disagreements from the manual coding step, I collected the word strings for each of the four codes and utilized them to generate the lexical search criteria in MAXQDA. I examined each passage highlighted by each coder and focused the word string on the keywords, omitting leading and trailing words that do not directly contribute to the passage's meaning as defined by the codes. For example, "preparing students with the skills for the new economy" became the word string "skills for the new economy," and "every child has got the potential to achieve his or her dreams in America" became the word string "achieve his or her dreams." At the end of the manual coding round steps, I added the word strings to the lexical search criteria in MAXQDA, totaling five for the code Democratic Equality, 16 for the code Social Mobility, 30 for the code Social Efficiency – Private Good, and 85 for code Social Efficiency – Public Good.

After completing the additional steps to reduce over- and understatements of codes, as described in Chapter 3, and removing the five inadvertently double coded segments, I created the tables for the first-impression review. Of the 2,267 coded segments, the breakdown using the a priori codes is: 32 Democratic Equality, 659 Social Mobility, 547 Social Efficiency – Private Good, and 1,029 Social Efficiency – Public

Good. For RQ1, I examined the table to determine whether one of the categories is dominant under a given president, resulting in a primary theme or purpose for education. For RQ2., I examined a detailed year-by-year version of the frequency table with the same first-impression review to determine consistency or variance within an administration. For RQ3, I created a summary table to compare dominant themes across administrations, performed the first-impression review, and reported the findings in a narrative.

<p style="text-align:center;">Research Question 1</p>

In answering RQ1, I constructed three data tables, one for each president, and examined them by performing a first-impression review. Each president's table disaggregates total codable segments by term. Each table displays the summary statistics and a total number of coded segments for each of the respective codes for the identified president.

RQ1: What did Presidents William Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama articulate through public speeches and communication documents in the *Public Papers of the Presidents* archive as the purpose of K–12 education in America using the framework for purpose proposed by David Labaree?

William Clinton

For William Clinton, there are 425 coded segments in the 485 documents identified by archivists as being related to education in the Clinton archives. Table 3 shows the summary statistics for the first term, second term, and the total of the administration for each of the four codes.

Table 3

William Clinton, Number of Coded Segments for Educational Purpose

Time period	Social Efficiency		Social Mobility	Democratic Equality	Total
	Private Good	Public Good			
First term, 1993–1996	54	98	106	14	272
Second term, 1997–2000	29	63	59	2	153
Total	83	161	165	16	425
(Total row %)	19.5%	37.9%	38.8%	3.8%	100%

Note. This table demonstrates the number of total coded segments for documents identified as related to education by archivists from the Clinton administration as part of the *Public Papers of the President* in the National Archives.

Using a first-impression review, the code Social Mobility had the greatest count of coded segments, with 165 or 38.8% of the total coded segments. The second-largest total was for the code Social Efficiency – Public Good, with 161 total coded segments or 37.8%. Given the closeness of the total count of segments between these two codes, I reviewed summary statistics by term of office. For Clinton's first term in office, the most frequently occurring code was Social Mobility, at 106 coded segments or 38.9%. Social Efficiency – Public Good was again the second-highest occurring code identified, with 98 segments or 36%. Looking to Clinton's second term, Social Efficiency – Public Good was the most frequently used code, with 63 segments coded or 41.1%. The second most frequently occurring code was Social Mobility, at 59 segments coded or 38.5%. The first-impression review supported the conclusion for RQ1 that the codes Social Mobility and Social Efficiency – Public Good were roughly equal to the frames articulated as the purpose of education in America by President William Clinton and were utilized more

frequently than the other two code alternatives. The analysis for RQ2 may reveal additional insight into the strength of a specific frame for Clinton.

George W. Bush

The total coded segments for George W. Bush amounted to 188 in the 368 documents identified by archivists as being related to education in the Bush archives. Table 4 shows the summary statistics for the first term, second term, and a total of the administration for each of the four codes.

Table 4

George W. Bush, Number of Coded Segments for Educational Purpose

| Time period | Social Efficiency | | Social Mobility | Democratic Equality | Total |
	Private Good	Public Good			
First term, 2001–2004	76	60	25	10	171
Second term, 2005–2008	95	128	31	2	256
Total	171	188	56	12	427
(Total row %)	40.0%	44.0%	13.1%	2.8%	100%

Note. This table demonstrates the number of total coded segments for documents identified as related to education by archivists from the Bush administration as part of the *Public Papers of the President* in the National Archives.

Using a first-impression review, the code Social Efficiency – Public Good had the greatest count of coded segments, with 188 or 44% of the total coded segments. The second-largest total was for the code Social Efficiency – Private Good, with 171 total coded segments or 40%. Given the closeness of the count of segments between these two codes, I reviewed summary statistics by term of office. For Bush's first term in office, the most frequently occurring code was Social Efficiency – Private Good, at 76 coded

segments or 44.4%. Social Efficiency – Public Good was the second-highest occurring

code identified, with 60 segments or 35%. Looking to Bush's second term, Social

Efficiency – Public Good was the most frequently used code with 128 segments coded or

50%. The second most frequently occurring code was Social Efficiency – Private Good, at

95 segments coded or 37.1%. The first-impression review supported a conclusion for RQ1

that the code Social Efficiency – Public Good is the purpose for education used most by

Bush, but Social Efficiency – Private Good is also a frequently used purpose worthy of

note in the analysis as the frames articulated as the purpose of education in America by

President George W. Bush. The analysis for RQ2 may reveal additional insight into the

strength of a specific frame for Bush.

Barack Obama

For Barack Obama, there were 1,415 coded segments in the 1,518 documents

identified by archivists as being related to education in the first 7 years of the Obama

archives. The last year of the administration is not included, as it was not available from

the National Archives at the time of data collection. Table 5 shows the summary statistics

for the first term, second term (first 3 years), and a total of the 7 years in the

administration for each of the four codes.

Table 5

Barack Obama, Number of Coded Segments for Educational Purpose

	Social Efficiency				Total
Time period	Private Good	Public Good	Social Mobility	Democratic Equality	
First term, 2009–2012	172	512	344	4	1,032
Second term, 2013–15 [a]	121	168	94	0	383
Total	293	680	438	4	1,415
(Total row %)	20.70%	48.05%	30.95%	.28%	100%

Note. This table demonstrates the number of total coded segments for documents identified as related to education by archivists from the Obama administration as part of the *Public Papers of the President* in the National Archives.

[a] The documents included for analysis in the second term exclude 2016 as they were not available from the National Archives at the time of the data collection for this study.

Using a first-impression review, the code Social Efficiency – Public Good had the greatest count of coded segments, with 680 or 48% of the total. The second-largest total was for code Social Mobility, with 438 coded segments or 30.9%. Given the clear mode of frequency of use for Social Efficiency – Public Good and that it leads the total count for both terms of office, the first-impression review supported a conclusion for RQ1 that the code Social Efficiency – Public Good is the frame articulated most frequently as the purpose of education in America by President Barack Obama. The analysis for RQ2 may reveal additional insight into the strength of other frames frame for Obama.

Research Question 2

In answering RQ2, I constructed three tables, one for each president's administration, examining them by performing a first-impression review. Each president's table disaggregates total codable segments by year. Each table displays the

summary statistics and a total number of coded segments for each of the respective

codes for the identified year of the president's term.

RQ2:   Is each president consistent in the purpose articulated in the speeches and

documents throughout their presidency?

William Clinton

Reviewing the documents for William Clinton again, there were 425 coded

segments in the 485 documents identified by archivists as being related to education in

the Clinton archives. Table 6 shows the summary statistics by year, the total of the term,

and the total of all coded segments for each of the four codes.

Table 6

William Clinton, Number of Coded Segments for Educational Purpose by Year

Year	Social Efficiency		Social Mobility	Democratic Equality
	Private Good	Public Good		
1993	14	34	40	2
1994	8	16	12	0
1995	8	35	27	7
1996	24	13	27	5
First term total	54	98	106	14
1997	13	18	28	1
1998	7	18	16	1
1999	5	19	6	0
2000	4	12	9	0
Second term total	29	63	59	2
Total	83	161	165	16

Note. This table demonstrates the number of total coded segments for documents

identified as related to education by archivists from the Clinton administration as part of

the *Public Papers of the President* in the National Archives.

Examining Table 6, Democratic Equality is consistently the least frequently used code for purpose of education by Clinton. While rising slightly in frequency in 1995 and 1996, it never exceeds 10% of the total of codes used in any year. Similarly, Social Efficiency – Private Good is the third least-used code for Clinton throughout the administration, except in 1996, when it briefly disrupted the bi-modal use of the top two codes for educational purpose. In examining the document's text, there is no single context of reference to assign the increased utilization for the Social Efficiency – Private Good code. Topics range widely in the text, but they tend to relate to school choice, tax credits, building and improving school facilities, quality of instruction (teacher quality), and the need to graduate high school with a diploma so that students can go on to enroll in higher education. While there is no single topic related to the increase in the use of the purpose of education frame of Social Efficiency – Private Good, 1996 was a presidential election year. It is a reasonable and testable hypothesis that the single-year deviation in pattern could be attributed to the rhetoric in the primary election cycle and in the general election. Other researchers may want to explore this historical occurrence as a potential explanation.

Social Efficiency – Public Good and Social Mobility were consistently the two most frequently used frames for the purpose of education by Clinton. Social Efficiency – Public Good was the most used code in 5 out of the 8 years of the administration and the second most used code in 2 out of the 3 years when it was not the most used. Social Mobility was the most used code in 3 out of 8 years in the administration, and it was always the second most used code in the years when it is not most prominent. As Social Efficiency – Public Good was the most frequently used in more years, but Social Mobility was the overall most used by the count of coded segments, the answer to RQ2 is that

William Clinton consistently used the frames of Social Efficiency – Public Good and Social Mobility throughout his administration as the purpose of education in America.

George W. Bush

For this analysis, I again reviewed the documents for George W. Bush, 188 coded segments in the 358 documents identified by archivists as related to education in the Bush archives. Table 7 shows the summary statistics by year, the total of the term, and the total of all coded segments for each of the four codes.

Table 7

George W. Bush, Number of Coded Segments for Educational Purpose by Year

Year	Social Efficiency		Social Mobility	Democratic Equality
	Private Good	Public Good		
2001	7	1	1	3
2002	17	4	8	2
2003	2	4	1	0
2004	50	51	15	5
First term total	76	60	25	10
2005	13	9	5	1
2006	46	76	14	0
2007	27	35	10	1
2008	9	8	2	0
Second term total	95	128	31	2
Total	171	188	56	12

Note. This table demonstrates the number of total coded segments for documents identified as related to education by archivists from the Bush administration as part of the *Public Papers of the President* in the National Archives.

Reviewing Table 7, George W. Bush followed the same pattern as Clinton, with low utilization of the frame of Democratic Equality as a purpose of education in America. The Bush documents also had a meager count of codes for Social Mobility, in that they

were consistently the third-highest number in every year except 2002, when the count increased to the second highest. There do not appear to be patterns of topical matter or syntax that suggest a pattern that unified the increase in comparative frequency on the code for Social Mobility in the text. Except for 2002, Bush documents frequently were coded with the educational purpose of Social Efficiency being the most and second most frequently occurring codes throughout the administration. Each of the second-level codes for Social Efficiency occurred as the most commonly used code in 4 years of the administration. The total number of codes across 8 years for Social Efficiency – Public Good was just higher than for Private Good, 44% compared to 40%. For 2 years, 2004 and 2006, the most frequently coded segment was Social Efficiency – Public Good. The increase in codes is likely related to the corresponding increase in the total number of documents in 2004, 2006, and 2007. While not a subject of this research study, a hypothesis for the increases in 2004 and 2006 is that this timeframe aligned with the 2004 presidential election and 2006 midterm election cycles. A further hypothesis is that the increase in total documents identified by archivists as being related to K–12 education topics in 2007 may have been related to the release of the No Child Left Behind Act performance metrics in that same year. These represent areas where other researchers may desire to investigate further. As social efficiency, both as a public and as a private good, is frequently articulated by Bush throughout the 8 years he was in office, the answer to RQ2 is that George W. Bush consistently used the frames of Social Efficiency – Public Good and Social Efficiency – Private Good throughout his administration as the purpose of education in America.

Barack Obama

Reviewing again the documents for Barack Obama, there were 1,415 coded segments in the 1,518 documents identified by archivists as related to education in the

Obama archives. Table 8 shows the summary statistics by year, the total of the term, and the total of all coded segments for each of the four codes.

Table 8

Barack Obama, Number of Coded Segments for Educational Purpose by Year

Year	Social Efficiency		Social Mobility	Democratic Equality
	Private Good	Public Good		
2009	17	115	29	0
2010	34	167	84	4
2011	64	140	131	0
2012	57	90	100	0
First term total	172	512	344	4
2013	64	71	36	0
2014	31	63	46	0
2015	26	34	12	0
Second term total [a]	121	168	94	0
Total	293	680	438	4

Note. This table demonstrates the number of total coded segments for documents identified as related to education by archivists from the Obama administration as part of the *Public Papers of the President* in the National Archives.

[a] The documents included for analysis in the second term exclude 2016, as they were not available from the National Archives at the time of the data collection for this study.

Reviewing Table 8, Barack Obama maintained a near-flawless consistency, with 6 out of 7 years utilizing the frame Social Efficiency – Public Good as a purpose of education in America. The Obama documents also had relatively high incidents of the frame Social Mobility, the second most frequently used frame in 3 out of 4 years in the first term. This became less consistent in the second term, when Social Efficiency – Private Good became the second most frequently used frame in 2 out of the 3 years

included in the study. Democratic Equality was the least used frame, only appearing in the codable segments in the documents in 2010 and only representing about 1.4% of the coded segments in that year.

2012 was the only year when Social Mobility was the most often used frame, but it was by a small margin, rising just 10 mentions or 4% above Social Efficiency – Public Good in that year. Looking at the text, there is anecdotal evidence that a theme may exist with some of the topical matter for text coded as Social Mobility in 2012 relating the need for quality K–12 education, entry into college, better jobs, and the associated social mobility that chain of events may produce. This pattern matches popular topics during the 2012 election cycle, when jobs and education were topics of considerable importance (Pew Research Center, 2012). This is an area outside the scope of this study, but other researchers may desire to investigate further. As Social Efficiency – Public Good has the largest total in 6 out of 7 years, and in the only year it is not the most frequently used frame it only fell by 4% to the second most commonly used frame, the answer to RQ2 is that Barack Obama consistently used the frame of Social Efficiency – Public Good throughout his administration as the purpose of education in America.

Research Question 3

To answer RQ3, I again reviewed Tables 3 through 8, performed a first-impression review, and considered the answers to RQ1 and RQ2. Combined, these tables disaggregate total codable segments by president, year, and term, providing the necessary information for assessing similarities and differences between administrations. Additionally, each table displays the summary statistics and the total number of coded segments for each of the respective codes for the identified president.

RQ3: Did these presidents differ from one another in the articulated purpose in these speeches and documents, or are there commonalities among these presidents?

In answering RQ3, I first looked across the three administrations for the sum of each code used by each president. The most notable similarity is that all three presidents used the frame of Democratic Equality the least in public speeches and documents, ranging from less than 1% for Barack Obama to nearly 4% for William Clinton, meaning that the articulated purpose does not directly align with schools having the explicit mission of focus on preparing citizens as the outcome. This pattern demonstrates a substantial similarity among presidents in the modern area of federalism in education policy, in that they consistently do not use the frame of Democratic Equality as a purpose of education.

The second similarity is observed using Table 9. Here, a first-impression review of the combined Social Efficiency frame, merging the second-level codes of Private Good and Public Good, is the dominant frame across all three administrations.

Table 9a

William Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, Number of Coded Segments for Educational Purpose by Term

Year	Social Efficiency		Social Mobility	Democratic Equality	Total
	Private Good	Public Good			
	244				
Clinton, administration	83	161	165	16	425
Clinton, first term	54	98	106	14	272
Clinton, second term	29	63	59	2	153
	359				
Bush, administration	171	188	56	12	427
Bush, first term	76	60	25	10	171
Bush, second term	95	128	31	2	256
	973				
Obama, administration*	293	680	438	4	1,415
Obama, first term	172	512	344	4	1,032
Obama, second term*	121	168	94	0	383
Total	547	1,029	659	32	22,267

Note. This table demonstrates the number of total coded segments for documents identified as related to education by archivists from the three presidential administrations as part of the *Public Papers of the President* in the National Archives.

* The documents included for analysis in the Obama second term exclude 2016, as they were not available from the National Archives at the time of the data collection for this study.

Table 9b

William Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, Percent of Coded Segments for Educational Purpose by Term

Year	Social Efficiency		Social Mobility	Democratic Equality	Total
	Private Good	Public Good			
	57.41				
Clinton, administration	19.52	37.88	39.52	.03	100
Clinton, first term	19.85	36.02	38.97	.05	100
Clinton, second term	18.95	41.17	38.56	.01	100
	84.07				
Bush, administration	40.04	44.02	13.11	.02	100
Bush, first term	44.44	35.08	14.61	.05	100
Bush, second term	37.10	.50	21.10	> .01	100
	68.76				
Obama, administration*	20.70	48.05	30.95	> .01	100
Obama, first term	16.66	49.61	33.33	> .01	100
Obama, second term*	31.59	43.86	24.54	0.0	100
Total	24.12	45.39	29.01	.01	100

Note. This table demonstrates the percent of total coded segments for documents identified as related to education by archivists from the three presidential administrations as part of the *Public Papers of the President* in the National Archives. *The documents included for analysis in the Obama second term exclude 2016, as they were not available from the National Archives at the time of the data collection for this study.

All three presidents frequently used references for the purposes of education that closely align with Labaree's definition of social efficiency, which states that schools should focus on training workers, and the frames of social efficiency are articulated in presidential speech and writing through references to jobs and employment. The

following are examples from the documents of these references that juxtapose education investment, the economy, and jobs from the coded segments in the research data set:

- "We'll invest in our future by nurturing our children and supporting their education, by rewarding work and family, by creating the jobs of the future and training our people to fill them" (Clinton, 1993, p. 104).

- At home, we're going to be a society which understands the issues facing our fellow citizens, helps our fellow citizens realize great expectations of our society, encourages the entrepreneurial spirit of Americans, enables people to realize their dreams by having an education system which works and functions well. (Bush, 2004, p. 206)

- "Education is an essential part of this economic agenda. It is an undeniable fact that countries who outeducate us today, will outcompete us tomorrow. Businesses will hire wherever the highly skilled and highly trained workers are located" (Obama, 2011, p. 1122).

While all three presidents used the secondary code of Public Good more frequently than Private Good, they are different in terms of the frequency they used the two secondary codes. The frequency of use for Social Efficiency – Private Good in the Bush documents was approximately 47% of the total occurrences within the primary code of Social Efficiency. In contrast, it was 34% for the Clinton documents and 30% for the Obama documents. The sample size of presidents is too small to conclude party differences, with only one Republican and two Democrats. However, the results may be an indicator of party affiliation influence on the use of these frames for the purpose of education in America.

To further the analysis, I examined the answers to RQ2 and the data in Table 9 to extend the evaluation this similarity. From the answers to each president's evaluation in

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RQ2, it is apparent that the use of Social Efficiency – Public Good as a frame for the purpose of education in America is shared across all three presidents. I confirmed this commonality with a first-impression review of Table 9, wherein Social Efficiency – Public Good is either the most or second most frequently used frame in the sum of code occurrences across each president's administration.

Using a first-impression review of Tables 3 through 9 also highlights differences in the occurrence of the code for Social Mobility. The frequency of occurrence of the code used in the Clinton documents (38.8%) and the Obama documents (30.9%) is higher than for the Bush documents (13.1%). Recognizing again that the sample size is too small to conclude party differences, the results may indicate that party affiliation influences the use of the frame of Social Mobility as the purpose of education. Future study would be necessary to determine the validity of the potential for influence observed in this data set.

Summary of Analysis

This study seeks to answer three research questions about the purpose of education in America by analyzing the speeches and writing of political elites, specifically presidents, in the modern era of federalism in education policy. The study uses a priori codes derived from David Labaree's three purposes of education. Having collected and coded the documents identified by archivists as related to education in the *Public Papers of the President* collection, I analyzed the data using a first-impression review for each research question.

In RQ1, I analyzed the data to determine each president's identified purpose of K–12 education in America. For William Clinton, Social Efficiency – Public Good and Social Mobility were consistently the two most frequently used frames for the purpose of education. In the evaluation of the data related to the documents of George W. Bush,

Social Efficiency – Public Good was the purpose for education used most, with the note that Social Efficiency – Private Good was also a frequently used purpose. For Barack Obama, Social Efficiency – Public Good was the frame articulated most frequently as the purpose of education in America.

RQ2 sought to answer whether each president was consistent in the purpose articulated in the speeches and documents throughout their presidency. Post-analysis, the results showed that William Clinton consistently used the frames of Social Efficiency – Public Good and Social Mobility, George W. Bush consistently used the frames of Social Efficiency – Public Good and Social Efficiency – Private Good, and Barack Obama consistently used the frame of Social Efficiency – Public Good throughout their administrations as the purpose of education in America. While there was some change in the frequency of code occurrence from year to year and across the sum of years in a specific term, all three presidents, generally, were consistent in the frames used across their administrations.

Lastly, I analyzed the data on first impression to answer RQ3 and conclude whether presidents had similarities and differences from one another in the articulated purpose for education in their speeches and documents. The most substantial similarity was in the infrequent use of the Democratic Equality code across all three presidents. A second substantial similarity was the use of the first-level Social Efficiency code as the dominant frame for all three presidents. However, differences existed in the second-level code when split further into Private Good or Public Good. While there were differences in frequency between years, terms, and administrations, Social Efficiency – Public Good was a dominant frame across all three presidents. After analysis, there were also

indications that the Social Efficiency – Private Good and Social Mobility frames may indicate party affiliation. However, the sample size is too small to conclude with this study.

CHAPTER 5: Discussion

The goal of this study was to increase the understanding of how presidents influence the discussion about education, specifically the purpose of education. The study cataloged and analyzed how presidents have framed the policy discussion for K–12 education in America; specifically, how they have described the purpose of education. Using public record documents, the study sought to find whether presidents articulated the benefit of education based on Labaree's purposes of education: for the common good, as a benefit to the student, as a means of facilitating social mobility, or as preparation for civic participation. Next, the study identified whether presidential policy agendas exhibited variation within and among administrations and whether commonalities exist across the presidents in the modem era of federalism in education policy. The study applied David Labaree's approach to the American struggle over educational goals to code documents from the *Public Papers of the President* identified by archivists as relating to education from the administrations of William Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barrack Obama. Papers from the last year of the Obama administration were not included in the study, as they were not available at the time of the data collection. This study answered three questions:

RQ1: What did Presidents William Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama articulate through public speeches and communication documents in the *Public Papers of the Presidents* archive as the purpose of K–12 education in America using the framework for purpose proposed by David Labaree?

RQ2: Is each president consistent in the purpose articulated in the speeches and documents throughout their presidency?

RQ3:   Did these presidents differ from one another in the articulated purpose in

these speeches and documents, or are there commonalities among these

presidents?

The study utilized content analysis to analyze the frames used by presidents for

describing the nature of the goals for education. An elementary form of word or phrase

frequency analysis was applied in this study to answer the research questions. However,

the study leveraged a more comprehensive approach by assigning a priori codes that

represent the purposes in the Labaree model to represent significant portions of the

content. The study used a first-impression review of frequency in data tables for analysis

and to answer the research questions.

I used structural coding, organizing large segments of text on broad topics for

analysis using the Labaree categories for purpose of education, then deployed software

algorithmic methods, which labeled, indexed, and categorized data in a single coding

round. The software (algorithmic) coding was then followed by a frequency analysis for

this study. After the initial manual coding round to identify the words and word strings

that represent the codes, I used data analysis software, MAXQDA, to facilitate the coding

of the large number of documents. Following the second phase using software

(algorithmic) coding, I manually verified a sample of the documents with codes to check

for accuracy and avoid overstatement of coded segments, and I manually reviewed all

documents without codes to verify accuracy and avoid understatement of coded

segments. I reported the coding in frequency tables and summary statistics appropriate

for answering each research question using a first-impression analysis.

This study did not attempt to establish an order or causal inference about the

presidentially defined purpose of education, and it did not investigate the sequencing of

the frame or purpose of the policy. The study also did not assign the origin of the frame

or agenda about education; it sought only to identify which purposes were used and articulated and the stability of their utilization over time.

Summary of Findings

This study answered three research questions toward understanding how presidents in the modern era of federalism in education policy articulate the purpose of education in America through the analysis of speeches and writings. Using the a priori codes derived from David Labaree's three purposes of education, after collecting and coding the documents identified by archivists as related to education in the *Public Papers of the President* collection, I conducted a first-impression review of the frequency data tables for each research question. As stated in Chapter 2, David Labaree's three purposes of education are "democratic equality (schools should focus on preparing citizens), social efficiency (they should focus on training workers), and social mobility (they should prepare individuals to compete for social positions)" (Labaree, 1997, p. 39).

For RQ1, I analyzed the data to determine the identified purpose of K–12 education in America separately for each president. The study analysis answered RQ1 with the following results. The documents associated with William Clinton consistently contained references that coded the utilization of two frames: Social Efficiency – Public Good and Social Mobility. The documents associated with George W. Bush consistently contained references that were most frequently coded as Social Efficiency – Public Good. Notably, Social Efficiency – Private Good was also a frequently used code for purpose. The documents associated with Barack Obama consistently contained references that coded Social Efficiency – Public Good as the frame articulated most frequently.

For RQ2, I analyzed the data to determine whether each president was consistent in the purpose articulated in the speeches and documents throughout their presidency. The study analysis answered RQ2 with the following results. William Clinton

consistently used the frames of Social Efficiency – Public Good and Social Mobility, George W. Bush consistently used the frames of Social Efficiency – Public Good and Social Efficiency – Private Good, and Barack Obama consistently used the frame of Social Efficiency – Public Good. The product of the analysis was that, while there is some change in the frequency of code occurrence from year to year and across the sum of years in a specific term, all three presidents are generally consistent in the frames stated across their administration.

Finally, I analyzed the data to answer RQ3 and determined the similarities and differences among the three presidents in their articulated purpose from the text of the speeches and documents. After analysis, I determined two significant similarities and two potentially notable differences that may be areas other researchers want to explore in the future. Using a first-impression analysis, a strong similarity was apparent in all three presidents' infrequent use of the Democratic Equality code. The second similarity was the use of the first-level Social Efficiency code and its dominance as the frame for all three presidents. When moving to the second-level coding for Social Efficiency, code differences were apparent between the use of Private Good or Public Good in the frequency between years, terms, and administrations. Of note, Social Efficiency – Public Good was a frequently utilized frame across all three presidents. After analysis, there were also two notable differences in the frequency of the codes across presidents. The codes for the Social Efficiency – Private Good and Social Mobility frames occurred more frequently in the Clinton and Obama documents than they did in the Bush documents. This pattern may correlate to party affiliation, but the sample size is too small to conclude in this study.

Limitations

The methods of coding and analysis in this study apply only to the Labaree model for education purposes by design. This study does not include other broader potential purposes for education, as defined under the Goodlad model. Additionally, it is a limitation of the automated data coding process that some degree of both overstatement and understatement of codes may exist. This study utilized a mitigation strategy that included both automated coding and human review for the potential of over- and understatement of codes to reduce the potential impact of this limitation.

Before assessing the study's results in the context of the literature, it is first crucial to re-examine the potential accuracy of the methods and findings. The pilot study had 92% accuracy in algorithmic coding compared to a single manual coder, and the errors were either related to document cleaning and formatting, or were passages not identified as segments for coding based on syntax. In response, special attention was paid to document cleaning and formatting in the full study. Also in the full study, the process for spot checks of the documents for overstatement of codes identified no overstatement of coded segments in the full study data. Based on the findings of the pilot study, I followed the detailed manual review of the non-coded documents in the full study, and I identified only 15 documents and 27 coded segments not captured in the algorithmic coding process, or a less than 1% rate of identified relevant segment omissions among all documents identified by archivists as being related to education across the three administrations. This low error rate demonstrates that the procedure for the full study included appropriate precautions to address the identified risks.

Discussion and Implications

I turned my attention to examining the particular case of 2001, during the Bush administration. Historically, this was a period of heightened discussion in America about

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education policy leading up to the federal No Child Left Behind legislation. During this year, archivists identified 35 documents related to education that also met the inclusion criteria for this study. Of those 35 documents, 10 contained coded segments, with 12 coded segments in that year related to education purpose, meaning that fewer than 30% of the documents contained coded segments in 2001. Comparing this to 2002, 30 documents were identified by archivists as related to education that also met the inclusion criteria for this study, and 16 contained coded segments, resulting in 31 total coded segments in 2002. Alternatively stated, about 50% of documents contained coded segments. 2002 is similar to most years of the Bush administration, as it has a higher number of identified documents that contain coded segments. On the surface, this may seem like a potential flaw in the study design, but examination of the text quickly explains this difference between perception and the presented data. This study design required that the education purpose be stated explicitly and not based on the interpretation of the reader, who may be influenced by assumptions and potential biases. Looking to the *Remarks on Submitting the Education Reform Plan to the Congress*, on January 23, 2001, George W. Bush outlined the need for educational reform and the goals of the legislation using language about process measures and identifying systematic failures, including these text statements: "We must confront the scandal of illiteracy in America…," "We must face up to the plague of school violence," "…children must be tested every year in reading and math…," and "…many of our schools, particularly low-income schools, will need help in the transition to higher standards" (Bush, 2001, p. 12). Given that the language is output-focused and problem/solution orientated, it does not express a purpose for education in America and thus cannot be coded and included in the scope of this study. After examining this case, there are no

notable areas of concern in the study's approach or methods requiring further evaluation.

Discussed earlier are the possible implications of the study based on the potential for consistency and variation in articulated purpose for education in America. If there is no variation within and between presidents, this may suggest that the purpose of education is more crystallized. If variable, this may indicate that the purpose of education is potentially more responsive to social pressures. When looking at the collective results of all three presidential administrations in the modern era of federalism in education policy, there is both frequency and consistency in the use of the Social Efficiency – Public Good frame. Recall that Labaree's definition of social efficiency is related to the need for schools to train workers and the focus on public good (or benefit) derived from education, and that the benefit is to society, more so than the individual (Labaree, 1997). This matches with the command (or influence) of the policy agenda that the president has over economic and foreign policy matters (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009; Beckman, 2010; Canes-Worone, 2001). The finding represents a logical position for a president to take when attempting to influence education policy from the federal level. Here the president justifies that the intervention of policymaking is both needed and reasonable to assure the future economic health of the country, competitiveness in foreign markets, and potentially, national security. The consistency of the two Social Efficiency frames across administrations in summary statistics suggests that a principal purpose of education in America, according to the President of the United States, is job preparation, and social issues do not significantly influence this purpose. This being acknowledged, the core of the Labaree argument is that the purpose of education is a tension between government (or collective goals) and private goals, which remains evident when looking further at the findings and is still mostly unresolved. While the

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Social Efficiency – Public Good frame is dominant, in years when it is not, the prevailing frames are Social Efficiency – Private Good, defined as personal economic gains, or Social Mobility, defined as an educational purpose of preparing individuals to compete for social positions (Labaree, 1997). Both of these frames are focused more on individual returns.

While the sample size is small and insufficient to make conclusions, it is notable that both Clinton and Obama shifted the predominant frame to Social Mobility in the year leading up to a reelection campaign. This is an area of potential future study to determine if a correlation may exist. Similarly, we see that Bush increased the use of the Social Efficiency – Private Good frame in the year before and after the reelection cycle. While the sample size is small, this shift may indicate the potential that emphasis on frames may change to satisfy a political party's base near an election year. This indication may be worthy of future study to determine whether the frequency of purpose of education as articulated as a private good fluctuates slightly with election cycles.

Future studies may approach this from various angles, including rhetorical analysis of campaign speeches of the candidate and compare that language used during the direction and operation of government as the presidential office holder. In doing so, it may be beneficial to leverage theories that situate the roles of candidates, including their language and how they articulate their policy goals when recruiting votes from the electorate, with the realities of the role, limitations, and ability to exercise power in the office once they assume after swearing-in. An example of this difference is in the rhetorical approach used by George Bush in which he references reading as a civil right, which could be interpreted as using the frame of Social Mobility, but then consistently used Social Efficiency-Private Good and Social Efficiency-Public Good as dominant themes for the purpose of education during his eight years as president. Caution would

be necessary when interpreting campaign communications as the goals may differ from those of policy communications of an office holder. This is because campaign communications may seek to influence electors and motivate them to cast votes at the poling locations, whereas policy communications by an office holder would likely be focused on influencing the actors in the policy making process. This difference in audience may shift the weight and purpose used in the communication based on the candidate's or office holder's indented audience and message they feel will be most persuasive to lead to the desired outcome. Future studies may also explore and address the functional implications of enacting campaign policy goals and the resources and times lines necessary to effect the change if they are implemented. This study is not designed, nor does it seek to answer these questions but the appearance of a potential shift in frames in the year prior to reelection may inspire other researchers to examine these possibilities. Again, the sample size in this study is too small to determine if shifts occur, but the changes do raise interesting questions for potential future research by other scholars.

A second significant finding in this study is that none of the three presidents used the Democratic Equality frame, defined by Labaree as schools focusing on preparing citizens, on a level above incidental, to describe the purpose of education in America. While there are several potential explanations for this observation, perhaps the simplest is that federalism and an educational focus on preparing citizens to participate in democratic institutions are incompatible. As federal policy is far removed from the individual voter, and a single person has relatively small amounts of influence on political elites, the concepts may not align. An alternative yet aligned explanation is that the goal of teaching young people to be active contributing parts of our democratic system may be more evident in state- or local-articulated purposes of education, where

elected officials represent smaller constituencies, and those constituents have more potential access and influence on democratic processes and outcomes. Future study would be necessary at a state or local level to assess whether this frame is more frequently used in other spheres of political speech.

Considering both these findings and analysis, a reasonable person would expect federal education policies to focus on developing students in ways that would increase innovation, creation, problem solving, and communication, while likely omitting emphasis on democratic ideals, building skills, and understanding subjects like civics and history. We see this occur in major legislation during this period, including Goals 2000, No Child Left Behind, and Race to the Top, which all tended to focus on improving literacy and student skills in science, technology, engineering, and math. These focuses for federal education policy all drive toward training workers to participate in and bolster the economy of the country—thus justifying the federal investment and policy intervention, when lower levels of government are articulated as unable to facilitate the needed achievements. After this, the findings support that presidents, perhaps as it relates to partly affiliation, then make secondary arguments using frames related to personal financial advancement or the ability of underrepresented groups to better compete for social positions of influence. This aligns with Labaree's approach to the various purposes of education, acknowledging that education can serve several purposes while constructing a framework to demonstrate the dynamic and systematic interactions of the goals. This study, however, finds that specific frames are more prevalent than others and closely align with the traditional areas of significant policy influence by presidents: economy, foreign policy, and national security.

Two anomalies of the date are worthy of discussion despite have no notably identifiable impact on the study results. The first of these is the increase in the number of

codable segments identified in the archives related to Obama (1415 codable segments) versus the number of codable segments in the Clinton documents (425) and Bush documents (427). While this study does not include a linguistic analysis, casual observations suggests that the communication and speaking style of Obama is the most likely contributing factor to the difference in the number of codable segments. Informal review of the documents suggests that presidents Clinton and Bush were more likely to communicate on single subjects in each given record (e.g., speeches identified by archivists as being on the topic of education were generally only about education related topics). Conversely, President Obama tended to mention several topics in a single speech (e.g., speeches may focus on a primary topic like national security but may also include short mentions about economy and education policy).

The second observable data anomaly is the overall low occurrence of the code Democratic Equality. Causality is outside of the scope of this research; however, one may infer that a potential cause for low occurrence of this frame may be due to shifts in the dominant political discourse. William Clinton took office in 1993 following the fall of the Berlin wall, the Dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the increased interest in trade with China. These historical events may have had the effect of shifting policy topics from sentiments related to the need for school to reinforce a strong since of democratic principles and citizenship, as compared to communism, and toward policy topics focused more on international trade and economic competitiveness. Expanded research, including presidential policy talk about the purpose of education to the period before the modern area of federalism in education policy would be needed to draw better informed conclusions as that period is outside the scope of this study.

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Suggestions for Future Research

The findings of this study raised three additional questions that could expand the body of knowledge. The first is to further examine the shift that appears directly before and after a re-election cycle, wherein the use of frames associated with private returns on education increase in use compared to the Social Efficiency – Public Good frame. Across all three presidents there is indication of this shift, and a deeper analysis into the content of the documents may reveal why this shift occurs and potentially whether it is motivated by partisanship. While this study was not designed to sense detailed differences or infer causality, a future study could be designed to look into this unique element of the data.

The second area of interest that warrants further research is the application of this study design to state governors' papers, wherein State of the State addresses may be a viable starting point, as State of the Union addresses were for the pilot to this study. The research design for this study is intended to assess dominant frames of political elites on the purpose of education by a unitary actor, the chief executive. The same approach could be applied to governors and to determine the dominant frames used at the state level. The data tables from that study could then be analyzed to determine similarities within and between administrations in the state, within and between states as the unit of measure, and the states by region and in aggerate as compared to the finding of this study at the federal level. Such a study would illuminate the purpose of education as articulated by governors and presidents and create a rich data set for understanding the modern era of federalism in education. Such a future study would be valuable to determine similarities and differences from the prospection of the federal government, which funded significant initiatives, and states, which carried out the education reform and improvement programs flowing down from the federal policies.

While a similar study could be constructed for state governors, documents may be limited to State of the State addresses as many of the other papers for administrations are not yet digitized and collection of the documents could prove daunting, improbable, or impossible without significant resources. This process could become even more difficult if the period of inquiry was shifted to before the modem area of federalism in education policy as many states do not have digitized files prior to this period and are held in paper and microfiche state archives that would necessitate manual document inspection and transcription. Similarly, moving to the period before the modern area of federalism in education policy for presidential inquire would confront the researcher with challenges related to available digitized documents and the need to physically visit presidential archives around the country to gather the needed information to complete the research.

Future research could also be conducted at a more granular level, moving from the state as the unit of inquiry to the school board level. This would likely make necessary a shift in research design as school boards are deliberative bodies and not unitary actors like presidents or governors. Attempts at this approach may also require a change to a case study design as the number of school boards across the country is likely too numerous to leverage a similar research design and acquiring the documents may pose additional challenges for the researcher. Furthermore, the expansion of charter schools and charter districts funded through state-sponsored programs during the period may complicate the research design and analysis.

Another approach to future state-level analysis of educational purpose, beyond the articulation of purpose by the governor, could be through judicial opinions. While a study of this kind could use the Labaree framework, it is unlikely the results of the study would be reflective of the articulated purpose of education at the time, but instead how

the context of the political will at the time compares to those or prior periods. This is due to the fundamental role of the judiciary, to interpret existing laws. The most significant judicial opinions to study would be state supreme court rulings, which often include interpretations of the state constitution. Although this could be an interesting study of educational purpose, it would differ significantly from the approach taken in this study.

The third area of further research inspired by the findings of this study is a policy analysis of the federal education programs created during this time period and an assessment of how those policies match these articulated frames for the purpose of education in America. A detailed examination if each policy's evaluation metrics could determine whether the measures used are effectively aligned with the articulated purpose. If the purpose and evaluation metrics align, it would provide significant insight into assessing progress of the policies in achieving meaningful gains toward fulfilling the articulated purpose.

Finally, future research may be valuable to extend beyond the Obama administration and continue the understanding of presidentially articulated purpose of education. Such investigation could allow for additional review of potential shift that may occur. Research conducted beyond the Obama administration may first need to answer the question as to whether the election of Donald Trump extended or ended the modern area of federalism in education. Then the researcher may desire to assess if that determination strengthens or weakens the examination of the president as the unit of measure. Assuming that extending this research approach is logical and useful, the researcher would need to assess how the increase in utilization of social media as a presidential communications tool may impact the methods. While social media is readily available in a digital form and easy to use the same tools for analysis, the syntax may be significantly different than other presidential communications archives given the short

form of platforms like Twitter. Social media is also a two-way communication channel, unlike speeches and letters from the president, meaning that it would be necessary to include the initial communications and presidential replies to comments posted by other users, as well as comments posted by the president on other user's social media posts. These differences may necessitate a shift or adaptation of procedures in the utilized methods from this study.

World-Wide Pandemic and the Impact on American Schools

It is imperative to note that this study was conducted and analyzed during the COVID-19 global pandemic that came to the United States in early 2020. The unprecedented disruption to all social and economic systems significantly impacted every sector of the United States, including K–12 education. With mass school closures and conversions to learn-from-home models, the education system is likely to be forever impacted by the occurrence. In the months that followed the highest points of the pandemic, and when it began to become safer for students to return to school and adults to return to work, a multitude of purposes for the school system was widely discussed in mass media. The role of schools as childcare facilities was a prevalent theme in addition to being an institution of learning. These closures and partial closures of schools had significant perceived impacts on the ability of workers to return to offices and places of employment, as schools struggled with balancing learning and public health demands. The realities of the pandemic echoed the approach of John Dewey in that, as societies become more specialized and individuals take on specific roles to contribute to societies, it becomes a necessity to create and utilize specialized groups of teachers responsible for providing the education of children as they develop into contributing adults (Dewey, 2009). Media reports during the pandemic told stories of how parents felt unprepared for (a) the role of at-home teacher as their children learned remotely and (b) the

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difficulties arising from balancing their needs with the requirements of their specialized work skills to contribute to the economy. During this same period, the United States experienced significant political and social tensions that raised questions about the role of schools in guiding children to understand the concepts of race and gender; this became a regular discussion in the media and communities. This dialogue contained elements of the nature of the John Goodlad's approach to educational purpose: that Americans do not intend to have schools solely to teach core subjects like reading and math but also to solve other societal struggles and needs (Goodlad, 1984). During this time, many communities struggled. The media shared disagreements about differing approaches under the goals of enculturation, self-concept, moral and ethical character, and self-realization. This discussion also resulted to legislative action in some states.

The heightened attention during this historic period and the need for schools to play a childcare role so that parents can work suggests that there may be a need to distinguish the difference between the purpose of education and the purpose of schools. Future studies may seek to separate the school as a public institution service point providing many services, with one service being the education of children. As this study is a historical look at the purpose of education and focuses on the purpose of education and not the purpose of schools, the analysis and findings are not impacted by the global events which occurred during the study.

In addition to these considerations, the social and political factors that arose during the same time are likely to influence future studies of educational purpose and the views of political elites as they relate to the purpose of education in America. Media coverage of the time suggests that differences may be more notable if the focus is on state-level actors. Other researchers may want to assess whether the modern era of

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federalism in education policy is declining, or if the policy pendulum may be swinging back toward state-level control as a result of events after the time period of this study.

Conclusion

This study answered what presidents (Clinton through Obama) in the modern era of federalism in education policy viewed as the purpose of education in America. Using the Labaree model of educational purpose and documents from the National Archives, the study answered the three research questions with a resulting understanding that all three presidents frequently utilized the Social Efficiency – Public Good frame. When this was not the dominant frame, Clinton and Obama tended to utilize Social Mobility, and Bush tended to use Social Efficiency – Private Good. None of the three presidents utilized Democratic Equality at a notable frequency level. The study results match the underlying arguments by Labaree that the core tension in education in America is found between government or collective purpose for the public good and the private returns on education to individuals. While the study does not include a sufficient sample to conclude how a political party may play into this tension, there appear to be indications of patterns that align with traditional political party lines and suggestions that the frame may shift toward private returns on education near reelection cycles. Future study is needed to make the assessment and claim related to party influence. The study also found that the substantial use of Social Efficiency – Public Good and the lack of use of Democratic Equality match with the traditional policy arenas of presidential influence in policymaking, meaning that for the purpose of education, presidents tend to focus on Social Efficiency – Public Good, which ties closely to economic performance and competitiveness of the country.

This study may aid other researchers in both policy analysis and policy implementation assessment research. The findings of this study can inform other

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researchers about the framing of the purpose of policies and programs being assessed through adding the context of the stated presidential purpose for education in America. Other researchers examining the progress, success, or failure of programs during the modern area of federalism in education may employ this lens of presidential purpose in whole or in part, when formatting approaches, methods, and analysis to determine policy or program effectiveness from a directional perspective. Future research may use these findings and lens to determine if the policies, decisions, and actions of the presidents included in the study move the American educational system closer to achieving the most frequently utilized educational frames, or if the policies and programs were non-congruent with the president's articulated purpose for education in America.

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