1998

Role of the Warrant in Presidential Debates : 1960, 1976, & 1996

Aaron Nicole Kaio
Portland State University

THESIS APPROVAL

The abstract and thesis of Aaron Nicole Kaio for the Master of Science in Speech Communication were presented on June 12, 1998, and accepted by the thesis committee and the department.

COMMITTEE APPROVALS:

[redacted]

Lisbeth Lipari, Chair

[redacted]

Leslie Good

[redacted]

Byron Haines
Representative of the Office of
Graduate Studies

DEPARTMENT APPROVAL:

[redacted]

David L. Ritchie, Chair
Department of Speech Communication

ABSTRACT

An abstract of the thesis of Aaron Nicole Kaio for the Master of Science in Speech Communication presented June 12, 1998.

Title: Role of the Warrant in Presidential Debates: 1960, 1976, & 1996.

Every four years in America we make a decision about which candidate is best suited to be our next president. Over the past twenty years a standard component of the presidential campaign has been televised debates. These debates are supposed to help the public get a better understanding of the candidates' ideas about government, our future, and to demonstrate analytical skills and their ability to think on their feet.

This study set out to see how the candidates' arguments measured up to some basic argumentation standards. According to several scholars, none of the televised presidential debates qualify as 'true debates', and this study found a decline in the candidates' use of supporting data for their claims. During the most recent campaign, between Clinton and Dole, the candidates had more unsubstantiated claims during the debates than Kennedy and Nixon did in 1960. The ratio of supported and unsupported claims changed: in 1996 a majority of the candidates' claims were unsupported by any kind of evidence; in 1960 the reverse was true.

A representative sample of questions and the candidates' responses were analyzed using Toulmin's Model of argument. Toulmin's Model has three basic

components: a claim; a supporting data statement; and a warrant statement that justifies the logical leap from the evidence to the claim, and which can be stated or implied. This study found a trend in presidential debate argumentation; to have less and less complete arguments and more unsupported claims, which are often just restatements of previously heard campaign slogans and promises, just presented in a different forum.

If the public is to make an intelligent decision about who should lead the nation for the next four years, then there needs to be a return back to a more traditional debate style, with more well thought out arguments and less sloganeering. The task of choosing a president is one that should not be taken lightly, and to best serve the ideas of democracy we need presidential debates that better fulfill their civic purpose and provide an environment for intelligent and thought provoking discourse and debate.

ROLE OF THE WARRANT

IN PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES:

1960, 1976, & 1996

by

AARON NICOLE KAIO

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
in
SPEECH COMMUNICATION

Portland State University
1998

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank my advisor, Lisbeth Lipari, for all of her insight and support throughout this process. I enjoyed working with her and her presence will be missed at Portland State.

I also need to thank my family for all of their love and support, for without it none of this thesis would have been written. Thanks to my grandparents, Bette and Ernest Berg, my parents, Susan and Steven Sandvold, my sister Arika Sandvold, and last but not least, my husband, Ken. Completing a graduate degree while raising a child is a trying and memorable experience, and my family was there to provide a variety of support services from babysitting to proofreading.

There are several faculty and graduate students who also helped me a great deal during the last few years. I would like to thank Professor Byron Haines for agreeing to serve on my committee at the last minute, and for providing me with constructive feedback during my defense. I also need to thank Professor Leslie Good for serving on my committee, as well as for all of her encouragement and instruction throughout the thesis process and my graduate course work. I am thankful for all of the brilliant professors who taught me so much through their courses and in the examples they set; Professor David Ritchie, Professor Larry Steward, Professor Peter Ehrenhaus, and Professor Susan Poulsen. Many thanks to all of the graduate students who acted as my support group for the last few years; Laura, Heidi, Heather, Rebecca, Warren, Jodie, Michelle, and most of all Gloria.

Gloria and I met in graduate school and formed a bond I am sure will not soon be broken. Thank you all very much.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments....i, ii

Table of Contents....iii

List of Tables....iv

I. Introduction....1

II. History of Presidential Debates....5

III. Review of Research on Presidential Debates....11

IV. Methods....18

V. Why Use The Toulmin Model....24

VI. Argumentation and Stephen Toulmin....26

VII. The Warrant....30

VIII. Analysis....33

IX. Conclusion....53

References....57

Appendix A: Partial Transcripts from 1960, 1976, & 1996....63

Appendix B: Analysis from 1960 Debate....72

Appendix C: Analysis from 1976 Debate....77

Appendix D: Analysis from 1996 Debate....85

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Comparison of Claims with/without Supporting Data.....45

I. Introduction

> It was a game of personal sharpshooting, an occasion of revilement, a fiery furnace of character attacks and defenses, most degrading to party honor and despicable in the eyes of individuals whatever their political predilections. Such an exhibition cannot be repeated now, if ever.
>
> James Hyde Clark

This passage could very well have been describing the Kennedy-Nixon presidential campaign in 1960, or it could have been describing events during the 1980 Reagan-Carter race for the presidency. In fact, this passage was written about the 1896 presidential campaign by a well known author of the time. The resonance of this statement 100 years later causes one to pause and think about how political communication has changed, or not changed, in the history of the U.S. presidency.

It is interesting to note, a century after James Hyde Clark remarked on a renewed conviction to civil discourse and debate, that Bill Clinton made a similar statement during the opening remarks of the first 1996 Presidential Debate:

> "I want to begin by saying again how much I respect Senator Dole and his record of public service and how hard I will try to make this campaign and this debate one of ideas, not insults."

Moving beyond personal attacks has been and always will be a concern in political communication because it is much easier to take a stab at your opponent's credibility with a derogatory remark than it is to construct a valid argument. With the tone set for the 1996 presidential debates to be about ideas not insults, one could hope that the candidates would construct good arguments to support their ideas.

Argumentation is a topic that crosses into many fields of study and occurs in many different forums. According to Freeley (1996) debate argumentation can be broken down into two categories: applied debate, and academic debate. Several kinds of argumentation fall under the general category of applied debates: judicial debates, which are conducted in the courts before some kind of judicial body according to the rules of a court of law; parliamentary debates, which are conducted using the rules of parliamentary procedure to pass motions or resolutions that come before the assembly of legislators or group representatives; special debates, which are conducted under special agreed upon rules drafted for a specific event; and non-formal debates; which take place without formal rules as one might find on a television talk show (Face The Nation) or in newspaper reports. Freeley (1996) categorizes the presidential debates as special debates, since they are neither judicial or parliamentary. The presidential debates are conducted under special rules that

have been agreed upon by the participants in advance.

Freeley (1996) saw academic debate as the most formal type of debate, but Toulmin (1958) recognized the courtroom as the most formalized forum for argumentation. The procedures in a courtroom are different from those in a presidential debate, but the basic principles of good argumentation and debate are upheld in the practice of law. The two fields of law and argumentation draw on similar ideas and vocabulary, such as evidence, reasoning, and warrants. Toulmin saw the professor of jurisprudence dealing with topics similar to what the professor of logic often contemplates.

In competitive academic debates, a trained judge is critical of procedure and argumentation forms. In a court of law, the lawyers and the judge are guided by many rules of procedure and precedence. But in a presidential debate, there is no judge who can rule on the admissibility of evidence or on an objection to an opponent's claim. The inconsistent use of formal rules and procedures in presidential debates prompts the following questions: What are the rules of public debate if they are not the same as academic debate? Should we hold politicians to a similar standard that we hold the student/scholar of argumentation and debate? Should the candidates be expected to construct arguments based on reason? Many scholars answer 'yes' to each of these questions.

"In a campaign season chock full of spot ads and news snippets viewers turn to debates to provide sustained analysis of issues and close comparison of candidates" (Jamieson & Birdsell, 1988, pg. 5). The candidates are expected to use their skills in argument and logic to demonstrate to the public that they are the right person for the presidency. Consider the words of James F. Klump (1990) for example, who contends that "Public debate is often conscious of itself; that is, those engaged in public argument are conscious of their choices of language in shaping the debate" (p. 8). We can then assume that the presidential candidates make conscious choices of what to include or exclude in their argumentation. Or consider Aristotle, who defined man as a "rational animal" whose highest ambition is to make important decisions based on rational grounds (Weiss, 1995). As a result, presidential candidates can reasonably be expected to provide support for their ideas. Whether it be expert testimony or statistics, we expect the candidates to include some type of supporting materials for their argumentation. We hope for clear and grounded arguments in support of their ideas. It is with this issue in mind that this study investigates informal argumentation within the context of presidential debates.

This study combines the growing research on informal argumentation and the study of presidential debate content. This study adds to research done on the presidential debates with regards to how the candidates construct their

arguments, the reasoning process behind them, and suggestions to improve the usefulness of presidential debates for the public. Using Toulmin's (1958) model to construct a basic framework of the arguments presented in the debates, this study explores how candidates justify their arguments and investigates possible changes in the use of explicitly stated warrants over the past few decades (The term warrant will later be discussed in detail).

The methods will also be discussed in detail in a later section. Before presenting the method and theory that directed this study, a brief history of presidential debating is provided. The history is followed by a review of past research on the presidential debates. Next, the study explores how arguments are constructed in the presidential debates and what role the warrant plays in presidential debate argumentation from 1960 to 1996.

II. History of Presidential Debates

Rhetoricians and scholars from fields such as history, psychology, and communication studies have been identifying traditions in political discourse for decades. The continuity between inaugurals given 100 years ago and ones given in the last decade have been studied and identified, but a new tradition has emerged in political communication in the last few decades: formal presidential debates.

It is just in the past few decades that presidential debates have become

an integral part of the campaign process. This may strike many as unusual because of the history-making Lincoln-Douglas debates in 1858. Many mistake these debates for the first presidential debates, when in actuality they occurred during a race for an Illinois Senate seat. It was not until 1960 that two presidential candidates appeared together under the general format of a debate. Prior to this time many joint speeches or press conferences were given, but no one 'debated' (Trent & Friedenberg, 1983). Before describing what criteria are necessary for a true 'debate' some additional information about the 1858 debates is needed.

Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas were both vying for the Illinois Senate seat in 1858. Lincoln challenged Douglas to a series of debates and as the front runner, Douglas accepted. There were to be seven debates on relevant political issues of the day, and Douglas dictated that he be allowed to open and close four of the seven debates. The average size of the audience attending each debate was about 12,000 (Freeley, 1996). The Lincoln-Douglas debates set the standard for what constituted a "good, fair debate" in academics and in the public arena (Hall Jamieson & Kohrs Campbell, 1990).

There are five criteria that J. Jeffrey Auer argues must be present for an encounter to qualify as a "true debate." Auer claims " a debate is (1) a confrontation, (2) in equal and adequate time, (3) of matched contestants, (4) on

a stated proposition, (5) to gain an audience decision" (1962, p. 156). Auer deemed the 1960 debates between Richard Nixon and John Kennedy as counterfeit since the televised debates did not adequately meet all of these criteria. The Kennedy-Nixon debates failed to meet even the first standard listed, confrontation. In a true debate this involves direct confrontation, which means that the candidates directly ask and respond to questions put forth by their opponent. In 1960, Kennedy and Nixon agreed before the debate that neither would be allowed to directly question the other, so a panel of journalists posed the questions, which resulted in a lack of confrontation. This lack of confrontation does not mean that the candidates are restricted from posing general questions to their opponent in their responses, just that there is no guarantee that the candidate will get an answer.

Several critics (Birdsell, 1994; Martel, 1983) have offered opinions about the so-called presidential debates that are similar to Auer's. All agree that the 1960 debates did not meet scholars' standards for a true debate, and all questioned the appropriateness of compromising argumentation standards to accommodate the television format. First, many were concerned about the journalists asking the questions, since several scholars had concluded that the journalists ignored question topics that concerned the public (Pfau, 1986). Too often, the public's concerns are not reflected in the journalists' questions, and if

their concerns are not reflected in the questions, then it is unlikely they will be reflected in the candidates' answers. (Jackson-Beeck & Meadow, 1979). The journalists frequently ask several question within another, making it difficult for the candidate to be responsive to all of the question parts (Jamieson & Birdsell, 1988).

The Kennedy-Nixon debates of 1960 attracted a lot of attention from the public and the press. Many political analysts and scholars in communication saw them as the start of a new tradition in presidential campaigns, but no one would debate again during a presidential campaign until 1976, when Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford met in several debates. Nixon was seen as the presidential favorite, but after Kennedy's debate performances the polls favored him to win the election. In the elections following the Kennedy-Nixon match up incumbent presidents felt that televised presidential debates only served to help their opponent. In 1976 Ford challenged Carter to debate, he accepted, and since 1976 each presidential campaign has had some form of a debate between major party candidates.

Why did it take until 1960 for any form of debating to find its way into the presidential campaign process? There are many reasons why presidential debating did not surface until a century after the Lincoln-Douglas debates to finally become an integral part of the campaign process. Trent and Friedenberg

(1983) argue that candidates would consider things like: whether it would be a close election, whether it would be advantageous for the candidate to debate, whether the candidate was a good debater, and whether the candidate's opponent was the incumbent. The answers to these questions and others are part of the reasons why presidential debates took so long to become an expected part of every presidential campaign.

There are also several external factors that contributed to the absence of presidential debating. Before the advent of mass media like radio and television, it would have been incredibly time consuming to try and conduct debates between major party candidates that a majority of the voting public could attend. The Lincoln-Douglas debates, though attracting large audiences, were by no means seen by a majority of Illinois natives. There were other ways of reaching the voting public, but these options presented their own problems.

Transcripts of the debates could have been printed in local papers across the country, as was done with many speeches that presidential candidates gave. But this by no means guaranteed a majority audience because there were issues of literacy, access to newspapers, and available space for printing the transcripts. Most of the seven debates between Lincoln and Douglas lasted three hours; that is a lot of typesetting.

Another factor that contributed to the absence of presidential debates

until 1960 was article 315a of the Communications Act of 1934. It read that "If any licensee shall permit any person who is a legally qualified candidate for any public office to use a broadcasting station, he shall afford equal opportunities to all other such candidates for that office in the use of such broadcasting station" (Kahn, 1978, p. 538). Even though the article does not state that the station has to provide the use of the station free of charge, many interpreted it that way. Few radio and television owners were willing to provide air time for all of the minor party candidates for any public office and as a result, very little time was spent on political campaign activities (Trent & Friedenberg, 1983). Article 315a inhibited debating if there were more than two candidates for a political office. In 1960 Article 315a was suspended by Congress so as to allow the Kennedy-Nixon debates to be broadcast on television and radio. It later took a 1975 ruling by the Federal Communications Commission, known as the Aspen decision, to make future televised presidential debates more feasible (Trent & Friedenberg, 1983). The Aspen decision allowed debates between candidates to be broadcast as bona-fide news events if they were not sponsored by the station, and broadcast live and in their entirety.

Now that broadcasting of presidential debates could take place, candidates could more easily choose to debate, but even that began to change in 1980. Jimmy Carter declined a three-way debate with Ronald Reagan and a

third-party candidate John Anderson; but Reagan agreed to two debates with Anderson. Reagan was acknowledged as a "good sport" for agreeing to debate, whereas Carter was subsequently labeled a "bad sport" by the press for not debating. After 1980 no one wanted to be labeled a "poor sport" and subsequently no candidate has declined an invitation to debate since (Freeley, 1996). The question candidates ask themselves now is not 'what are my reasons to debate', but 'do I have any valid reasons for not debating'?

III. Review of Research on Presidential Debates

When Kennedy and Nixon agreed to debate on television during the 1960 presidential election, Sydney Kraus had just started his career at Indiana University. He realized the significance of the first televised presidential debate and anticipated that other researchers would also be rushing to examine the media event (Kraus, 1988). Since all of the debates were televised, researchers concerned themselves with how to determine television's effect on the voting public's evaluation of the debates.

The 1960 Kennedy-Nixon debates were broadcast over television and radio stations around the country. What was interesting to researchers at the time were differing evaluations given by radio listeners of the debates versus those who watched them on television. The supposed Nixon television loss and radio victory raised some concerns with researchers about media interpretations

of the debates and how those evaluations impacted the political communication process (Kraus, 1996; Vancil and Pendell, 1987). The Nixon television loss and radio victory is seen now as just an urban myth, but the effects that television has on debate content and audiences evaluations is still significant.

A constant question being addressed by communication researchers has to do with the format of the debates. For example, some researchers ask whether journalists should be the ones to ask the candidates the questions, and whether or not minor party candidates should be allowed to debate (Eveland, McLeod, and Nathanson, 1994; Hellweg, Pfau, and Brydon, 1992; Twentieth Century Fund TASK Force, 1979). Hellweg et al. (1992) discussed the tendency of the panelists to take up a lot of time during the debate, frequently directing hostility towards the candidates, and not asking the kinds of questions that invite debate. Panelists are also often guilty of asking multiple questions within the framework of a single question (Hellweg et al., 1992). Many researchers agree that it would be best to experiment with different formats and to possibly eliminate the moderator/questioner component.

Researchers have also been concerned that the format of past presidential debates has too much resembled that of a press conference. The journalists ask the questions, and the candidates answer the journalists but do not debate each other (Hellweg et al., 1992). When Lincoln and Douglas

debated in 1858 the newspaper editorials focussed on the substance of the encounters, but today there is more press time and space given to the format and ground rules of the debate than to what was actually said by the candidates (Kraus, 1988). The media are reporting on how the media are effecting the event.

There is more research concerned with the television component of the debates, and it looked at different visual aspects of the debates (Morello, 1988; Pfau and Kang, 1991; Tiemens, 1978). Motello (1988) discussed the perceived clash, visual and verbal, between Mondale and Reagan in 1984; while other researchers examined the debates from a production perspective, a shot-by-shot analysis of the visual image compared to the verbal message (Messaris, Eckman, and Gumpert, 1979). These researchers found the format of television to have some effect on the viewer's perception of who won.

I found that a majority of the research on presidential debates involved how the debates affected voting behaviors and how journalistic reports of the debates effected voter's perceptions. The public's perceptions of the debates are fundamental to determining the usefulness of presidential debates. The bulk of the research on the presidential debates has been concerned with the possible effects of the televised debates on voting behavior. In 1996 it was reported that over three billion people tuned into at least part of the first presidential debate

between Bill Clinton and Bob Dole (Commission, January 15, 1998). Payne et al.(1988) confirmed the earlier findings that prior partisanship can predict responses from voters about who was thought to have won the debate. Rouner and Perloff's (1988) analysis found evidence somewhat stronger than that of Sigelman and Sigelman's (1984); selective perception affects voters' evaluations of who won the debates. A prior preference for Mondale caused individuals to believe that Mondale won the debate. However, being undecided did not predict the voters' perception of the debate outcome either by itself or in combination with a prior preference for a specific candidate.

Voting behavior was also looked at compared to the press' evaluations of the debates (Kang, 1991; Shields and MacDowell, 1987; Elliot and Sothirajah, 1993). Researchers were concerned that journalists' biases could be skewing the effects of the debates with regards to voting behavior. Shields and MacDowell (1987) found that the comments made by the newscasters after the 1984 vice-presidential Bush-Ferraro debate were affected by their own political affiliation. The newscasters commented on the appropriateness of different displays of emotion by the candidates and Shields and MacDowell (1987) found that 65% of the commentators mentioned Ferraro's emotions more than Bush's. These findings suggest that there are underlying gender biases that are present in journalistic and political evaluations of the debates. These biases then have the

potential to effect viewers' evaluations of the debates, thus effecting their vote.

Since 1976 there has been some form of a presidential debate between the major party candidates during every presidential election. This new communication tradition warranted attention from many different people, such as political science scholars and communication researchers. Many questions about the content and effects of the debates have been asked, but many questions remain unanswered.

Some researchers claim that the debates are too contrived, because the candidates often prepare answers in advance and because television producers present their own biases through camera angles, time spent showing each candidate, etc. Several articles discuss the appearance of agenda-setting in the 1960 and 1976 debates (Gadziala and Becker, 1983; Jackson-Beeck and Meadow, 1979; Bechtolt, Hilyard, and Bybee, 1977). Only issues that the journalists felt were relevant were discussed, and many question topics were repeated in different forms.

Other content analyses of the debates focussed on the general topics of the questions (Jackson-Beeck and Meadow, 1979; Riley and Hollihan, 1981). These researchers compared poll results from voters, on what they felt were the important issues of the campaign, to the topics of the questions asked in the debates. Jackson-Beeck and Meadow (1979) suggest that most of the time, the

candidates' answers to questions are not responsive and do not address the issues seen as most important by the public.

Another large portion of the research involves voters' evaluations of the candidates with regards to their images and debate performance (Powell and Wanzenried, 1993; Elliot and Sothirajah, 1993; Hellweg, Pfau, and Brydon, 1992). Zhu, Milavsky, and Biswas (1994) asked whether it is a candidate's image or their stance on certain issues that most influences voters. Bishop, Oldenick and Tuchfarber (1978) looked at how the 1976 debates influenced voter issue awareness and knowledge of the candidates (see also Drew and Weaver, 1991; Lemert et al., 1983). The debates were found to increase general knowledge of issues, regardless of political affiliation, but had little or no effect on voter's awareness of the candidates (Bishop et al, 1978). This was found to be related to prior partisanship by the viewers.

Martel (1983) outlined key elements in candidates' uses of debate strategies to help fulfill the candidates' goals. Ellsworth (1965) examined the 1960 debates for analysis and evidence use. Others looked more generally at the candidates' argumentation usage. Bitzer and Rueter (1980) found that in 1976 Carter advanced 45% more arguments than Ford. They also found that Ford committed 50 % more errors in evidence and reasoning. No research found whether these errors in logic and argumentation were perceived by the voting

public.

Persuasive attack and defense have been researched by Morello (1990), Hellweg and Verhoye (1989), and Benoit and Wells (1996). Morello (1990) reported 99 separate attack and defense statements in the 1988 debates. Hellweg and Verhoye (1989) found Dukakis to be more attack-oriented than Bush in the 1988 debates.

Samovar (1962 & 1965) looked at the ambiguous nature of the candidates' responses in the 1960 debates and identified characteristics of ambiguous and unequivocal language. Other researchers, such as Hellweg and Phillips (1981), looked at the candidates' use of jargon and loaded language. Leon (1993) used a computer analysis of the word choices made by Clinton, Bush, and Perot in the 1992 debates. She found that Clinton's language choices were neither highly powerful or highly powerless. Hart (1984) also looked at elements of style choices made by the candidates in earlier debates, and it is from this research that Leon (1993) got her criteria for determining presidential style portrayed by the candidates. She found that Perot had the most presidential style, while Bush had the least presidential style, and Clinton fell somewhere in the middle, but was found to make more references to those topics which the voters considered most important.

Hinck (1993) looked at the debates from an Aristotelian perspective,

studying debates from 1960 to 1988. He discussed the rhetorical problems that the candidates faced, looked at how well each candidate appeared presidential, and looked at their stances on critical issues.

All of this research represents many scholars putting in long hours of coding, reading of transcripts, and watching of video tapes to help us better understand the presidential debates and how they affect society. Given the large audiences that the presidential debates attract, the presidential debates assuredly play a major role in shaping the public's general understanding of argumentation and debate, and the candidates for the presidency. The research shows that presidential debates do have a significant effect on the public's voting behaviors, and these debates are watched (on television) by billions of people around the world. Presidential debates are now an integral part of the campaign process. It is for these reasons that the analysis of presidential debate content should be continued and expanded.

IV. Methods

Transcripts of debates from 1960, 1976, and 1996 were analyzed using Toulmin's(1958) descriptive model of human argument. Transcripts were obtained from the Commission on Presidential Debates' home page on the Internet (January 14, 1998).

1960 was the first year that two major party candidates for the

presidency met under the general format of a debate: the infamous debate between then Vice President Richard Nixon and Senator John F. Kennedy. Speeches given by both candidates had also been the subject of previous research using Toulmin's model (Lenrow, 1971; Hart, 1990). The first debate from the 1960 election was chosen for analysis. The question topics were restricted to domestic affairs.

The most recent presidential debates were in 1996 between President Bill Clinton and Senator Bob Dole. Since I had selected a debate from the very first set of presidential debates, it was necessary to include a debate from the most recent presidential campaign to analyze any changes over time. The first debate between the candidates during that election was also chosen. There were no restrictions on the question topics.

After the debates in 1960 the next presidential debate was not until 1976, when Governor James Carter debated President Gerald Ford. This was a 16 year gap that is comparable to the difference in time between 1976 and 1996. Again the first debate was chosen for the study and as in 1960 the questions were limited to issues of domestic affairs. Thus the three debates analyzed here represent the beginning, middle, and end of presidential debates up to this point in time.

The debates chosen have several common elements: all three debates

were televised (as were all other presidential debates); each debate was between only two candidates not three (as in the 1992 debates between Clinton, Bush, and Perot); each debate was between the Republican party's nominee and the Democratic party's nominee for the presidency; and finally, all of the debates were conducted with a third party acting as moderator. In 1960 and 1976 the moderator directed questions from a panel of journalists to each candidate, and in 1996 a journalist, Jim Lehrer, posed the questions to the candidates himself.

The format for each set of debates was agreed upon by the candidates prior to the event. What follows is a brief summary of the debate procedures for each year.

In 1960 the candidates were allowed eight minute opening statements, as well as three minutes for closing remarks. The moderator was Howard K. Smith and the questions were asked by journalists from networks including NBC, ABC, CBS, and Mutual News. In all of the debates the order of speaking for the opening and closing remarks, and the questioning, was determined by a coin toss. Each candidate was allowed to respond for approximately two minutes to the question posed to them, and their opponent was allowed the same time for a response if they desired. In the first of four debates between Nixon and Kennedy, the first question was posed to Senator Kennedy. Time limits were not as strictly enforced in the 1960 debates as in later ones, but generally each

candidate responded within two minutes. Each of the four debates in 1960 lasted one hour.

The next debate chosen for analysis was from the 1976 presidential campaign. The moderator for these debates was Edwin Newman. The journalist questioners this time were from ABC News, the Wall Street Journal, and the New Yorker. There were no opening statements made during the debate, but the candidates were allowed three minutes for closing remarks at the conclusion of the debate. The first question went to Governor Carter. Each candidate had three minutes to respond to the initial question, then a follow-up question would be asked. Each candidate then had two minutes to respond to the follow-up question before their opponent was allowed two minutes to respond. Each of the three debates in 1976 between Carter and Ford lasted approximately two hours.

In 1996 the debate chosen for analysis lasted ninety minutes. It was the first of two debates 1996 and the second debate was different from previous debates. The second debate was conducted as a pseudo-town hall discussion with the candidates. The moderator of the first debate was Jim Lehrer, who chose the question topics and acted as questioner to the candidates. The candidates were allowed two minutes for opening and closing remarks. The first question went to President Clinton. Each candidate had a minute and a half

to respond to their question, followed by a one minute response from their opponent, and this was followed by a thirty second rebuttal from the first candidate. Again, there were no restrictions on the topics of the questions.

Once a single debate from each year was chosen for analysis, the questions were examined for overlapping themes. The candidates had agreed upon what general topic areas the questions for each debate would involve. Two of the debates chosen, one from 1960 and one from 1976, limited the questions to domestic affairs, whereas the debate from 1996 had no restrictions on question topics. Many topics were discussed from education reform to reducing the national debt. Among the many issues, several questions focussed on the topic of executive leadership-- as the president and the federal government as a whole. Questions dealing with these themes were chosen to provide continuity between the kind of responses that would be expected from the candidates.

However interesting questions of Foreign Policy are, they provide an unfair advantage to the candidate who has had experience in office with making those kinds of decisions. Questions regarding domestic issues and policies are less discriminating with regards to presidential experience. There were several questions in each debate that dealt with executive leadership and the role of the federal government. These questions provided the candidates with

opportunities to elaborate on their political philosophies about the nature of government and about executive leadership. The President of the United States is often called the leader of the free world, so it seemed appropriate to analyze the candidates' arguments about leadership related topics. The nature of leadership has probably changed very little in the last few decades, so the candidates' responses should be comparable over time. A single question from each representative debate was analyzed.

Each question and the candidates' responses to them are included in the Appendices A, B, C, and D. The layout of each candidate's response according to Toulmin's (1958) model are also included. The model chosen for laying out the candidates' arguments was developed by Stephen Toulmin and it is considered by most to be the earliest model for analyzing informal argumentation (Wohlrapp, 1987). In 1958 Toulmin developed a new descriptive model for informal arguments that he presented in his book The Uses of Argument. The model has six basic elements: (1) the data, or facts provided as the basis for a claim; (2) the claim, a conclusion to be established; (3) the warrant, a general statement that justifies the leap from data to claim; (4) the backing, specific information that supports the more general warrant; (5) the rebuttal statement, a statement of possible exceptions to the warrant or claim; and (6) the qualifier, a term that represents the certainty or strength of the claim.

Specific elements of the Toulmin model will be discussed further as needed in the following analysis and discussion sections.

The primary goal of this research is descriptive, which means any differences or similarities found, in the use of explicit warrants or in the overall argument construction, will be discussed. The goal here is to describe any changes in argument construction in the presidential debates from 1960 to 1976, and from 1976 to 1996. Discussion of reasons why a change might have occurred is beyond the scope of this project, but the author reserves the right to speculate on the reasons and suggest future research possibilities.

V. Why Use The Toulmin Model

Stephen Toulmin's Model of Argument, as described in his 1958 book The Uses of Argument, was chosen to examine some of the argumentation from three presidential debates. The choice to use Toulmin was not random, but came after careful consideration of the criticisms and the positive responses that Toulmin's Model has received since its publication.

Toulmin's model for laying out arguments prompted a variety of responses from scholars in philosophy and communication. Although several rhetorical scholars found Toulmin's approach very useful for looking at argument in non-traditional forums, several logicians and argumentation critics found Toulmin's ideas to be unoriginal and not useful (Van Eemeren &

Grootendorst, 1992; Cooley, 1959). Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992) found it difficult to apply the Toulmin model to real-life argumentation, because " the crucial distinction between data and warrant is only really clear in certain well-chosen examples" (p. 32). They continued by saying that the indistinguishable nature of data and warrant reduces Toulmin's model to a variant of the syllogism or the enthymeme. Cooley (1959) found Toulmin's comments "interesting" but discovered nothing to which conventional logic could not accommodate.

Despite criticisms such as these, Toulmin's model has continually appeared in textbooks over the past 25 years and has been influential at the theoretical level (Van Eemeren, 1996). Hill and Leeman (1997) write this about Toulmin's model in their argumentation textbook; "By identifying clearly the components of an argument, we can more easily assess the points of logical strength and weakness in the argument"(p. 40). Condon and Yousif (1984) also recognize one of the advantages of the Toulmin model to be its emphasis on the tentative or controversial nature of claims established in arguments, and how new evidence affects the evaluation of claims. Finally, Lewis (1972) wrote in an article titled "Stephen Toulmin: A Reappraisal" that "Toulmin's logic is audience centered" (p. 52). Toulmin used such terms as 'acceptable,' 'generally understood,' and 'common ground'.

Lenrow (1971) used Toulmin's model to analyze several speeches given by several Kennedys, and found that John F. Kennedy rarely left the warrant unstated in his arguments/speeches. In an analysis of Richard Nixon's "Checkers Speech" using Toulmin's model, Hart (1990) found that a majority of Nixon's arguments also contained explicitly stated warrants. We can then assume that this study will find that Kennedy and Nixon also use explicit warrants in their presidential debate argumentation.

VI. Argumentation and Stephen Toulmin

Argumentation can be defined as the process by which people give reasons to justify acts, beliefs, attitudes, and values (Freeley, 1996). The presidential debates are a specific communicative situation where the candidates are supposed to do just that: give reasons for their acts, beliefs, attitudes, and values. The candidates have several different things going on at the same time in presidential debates such as: image building, giving reasons why the people should vote for them, and demonstrating their abilities as critical thinkers and debaters. Toulmin (1958) describes the goal of most human argumentation as that which is most acceptable to the audience in support of a given position. The candidates want you to find their given position acceptable, so you can vote for them on election day. But how do we know if the most acceptable argument was the better argument?

The building blocks of argumentation are individual arguments. What is an argument? Hill and Leeman (1997) define an argument as "the reasoning that supports a stated proposition." Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992) say that in an argument an effort is made to defend a position. A third definition of argument is that it is "a form of thinking in which certain reasons are offered to support a conclusion" (Chaffee, 1994). These definitions seem similar, but there are some important differences. First, Hill and Leeman say that the proposition (or claim) is 'stated' but the other two definitions make no reference to the explicitness of the proposition, thus a claim could be implied. Second, Chaffee wrote that 'reasons are offered', meaning that the arguer supplied them, not the listener. Conversely, Hill and Leeman identify 'the reasoning that supports' a claim, but this reasoning could be explicit or implicit. So which definition is correct? A tentative answer is that an argument can take many forms. Toulmin (1958) writes that "arguments are set out and produced in support of an initial assertion." Toulmin's choice of the words 'produced' and 'assertion', suggest that the claim and the reasons given in support of that claim should be explicitly stated. If this is true, then according to Toulmin a claim by itself does not constitute an argument; there needs to be explicitly stated data or facts provided in support of that claim for it to qualify as a complete argument. These definitions are fairly general as to what constitutes an argument, but

many argument forms have very specific components of an argument that must be present.

A popular argument form in the teaching of logic is the syllogism. The syllogism consists of a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. The major premise is usually a general statement, such as 'All men are mortal.' The minor premise is a specific instance of the major premise, for example 'Socrates is a man.' The term man/men acts as the middle term which connects the minor term with the major term, thus the conclusion would be stated that 'Socrates is mortal.' In the syllogism, all three propositions need to be explicitly stated.

Aristotle identified a form of the syllogism, known as the enthymeme, that was to apply to real-world arguments (*Rhetoric*, I, 1-2). Aristotle wrote this about the enthymeme, "If one of the premises is a matter of common knowledge, the speaker need not mention it, since the hearer will himself supply the link" (*Rhetoric*, I, 2, 1357a). It has long been recognized that real-world or everyday argumentation does not always fit logical argument forms. Many real-world arguments contain implicit statements that the audience is expected to provide.

Regardless of what parts are necessary for a given argument form, how do the arguments we construct support our claims? How are the arguers reasoning from their evidence to their claims? Govier (1989) sees reasoning as

something that takes place within argument; that reasoning in an argument happens before and during argument construction--it is a process and the argument is the product.

Two forms of reasoning are deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning. Chaffee (1994) defines an argument as deductive when "one reasons from premises that are known to be true or are assumed to be true to a conclusion that follows logically from these premises (p. 563)." The key to understanding deductive arguments is whether the conclusion 'follows logically' from the premises. Most everyday argumentation does not take this logical deductive form. Many everyday arguments are inductive. An inductive argument, as defined by Chaffee (1994), is "an argument form in which one reasons from premises that are known or assumed to be true to a conclusion that is supported by the premises but does not follow logically from them (p. 582)." "We make claims about the future, and back them by reference to our experience of how things have gone in the past" (Toulmin, 1958, p. 124).

In The Uses of Argument, Stephen Toulmin remarks "that 'logical demonstration' was one thing, and the establishment of conclusions in the normal run of life something different"(1958, p. 2). At that time, a popular argument form taught and used in philosophy and logic classes was the syllogism. Toulmin felt the models from formal logic were too static for

dealing with the dynamics of human thought (Hart, 1990). A gap existed between the study of logic and the use of it in everyday argumentation. Since everyday argumentation did not always fit the prescribed logical models, it was seen as inferior argumentation and the study of it was also seen as inferior to the study of formal logic. Aside from Toulmin's, few descriptive models existed for such informal argumentation.

VII. The Warrant

The warrant is one of the six basic elements of the Toulmin model, and the primary focus in the analysis of the presidential debate argumentation. Toulmin's idea of the warrant is a unique aspect of his model. The fact that it is labeled a warrant, versus being called a premise, differentiates this argument component from all others. Webster's (1980) dictionary defines the verb 'to warrant' as:

> "1. (a) to give (someone) authorization or sanction to do something; (b) to authorize (the doing of something). 2. to serve as justification or reasonable grounds for (an act, belief, etc.)" (pg. 2062).

The second definition refers to reason and the justification of an act or belief. The warrant in an argument is the statement that acts as the justification for a claim (a belief). The grounds, which also serve to justify the claim, are similar to the data in Toulmin's model. The thought process involved in constructing

the argument should be reasonable to the public. Additional definitions of warrant, which include terms such as 'guarantee' and 'certify', can also help you understand the role of the warrant in Toulmin's argument model.

"I have a warrant for your arrest." "His actions were unwarranted!" The term warrant is not foreign to us in its everyday uses. We understand that police obtain warrants for peoples' arrests and search warrants for their property. The warrant is a document issued by a state official, usually a judge, that 'authorizes' the search or arrest. The police are held to legal standards as to what qualifies as 'legitimate' grounds for issuing a warrant. Both of the terms 'authorize' and 'legitimate' can be used when defining what it means to warrant something. Warrant can also be likened to the terms 'licence' or 'permit'. The warrant gives the police 'permission' from the state to search the premises.

This relationship between the term warrant and the law is integral to understanding why Toulmin probably chose this specific term. A lot of Toulmin's work with everyday argumentation has drawn from the legal system and the way in which arguments are presented in the courtroom. It comes as no surprise that legal terminology would find its way into his work on describing argument construction.

Toulmin (1958) defines the warrant as a general, hypothetical statement that acts as a bridge to authorize the sort of step to which a particular argument

is committed. The warrant is designed to register explicitly the legitimacy of the step involved. Many warrants can be stated in simple 'If D, then C' form, but as mentioned earlier, not all informal argumentation is stated in such straightforward terms. Warrants can be rules, principles, assumptions, and a variety of other statements that could be considered common knowledge.

Usually an argument would have a single warrant statement justifying the step from a piece of data to the claim. Walton (1992) expresses some concern, that many people do not naturally argue within these prescribed boundaries. What if there is a set of statements, two or three, that work together to warrant the claim? Toulmin (1958) discussed the possible difficulty in distinguishing the warrant from another piece of data, and expressed that a single statement, in given circumstances, could act as data in one and the warrant in the other. (Toulmin fails to provide an example of this.) Both Walton and Toulmin agree that this standard is too strict for most natural argumentation, but if given a set of related statements (an argument) a competent analyst should be able to identify each statements' function. Toulmin's model identifies only one statement as the warrant, and other supporting statements for the warrant as backing.

Toulmin (1958) also takes into account the implied nature of many warrants: " The warrants to which we commit ourselves are implicit in the

particular steps from data to claims we are prepared to take and to admit"(p. 98).

If the argument is fairly simple and straightforward, then the hearer may actually provide the intended warrant. But many arguments are complex and layered, which make providing the intended warrant more difficult and less probable.

VIII. Analysis

> "The rules of logic may not be tips or generalizations: they none the less apply to men and their arguments--not in the way that laws of psychology or maxims of method apply, but rather as standards of achievement which a man, in arguing, can come up to or fall short of, and by which his arguments can be judged" (Toulmin, 1958, p. 8).

According to Toulmin (1958) everyday logic is concerned with the soundness of our claims, the solidity of the grounds we produce to support them, and the firmness of the backing we provide. Everyday logic can be likened to a generalized jurisprudence, where our arguments would be considered reasonable to a general audience.

This research focussed on the function of the warrant in presidential debate argumentation; to what extent are the candidates' arguments warranted?

How do the presidential candidates' arguments measure up to these standards of everyday logic and reasoning? Toulmin's model was chosen as an implement to aid in the evaluation of the candidates' arguments.

Previous research using Toulmin's model varied in its format for analysis. Lenrow (1971) used Toulmin to provide a description of the argument patterns of the speakers. The analysis was written in a list form; first stating the presence of explicit data and claims, then moving on to warrants, backing, and qualifiers. The bulk of Lenrow's analysis was descriptive. For example, one point Lenrow made in her analysis of Robert Kennedy's speeches states:

> 3. Although, as a general rule, Backing for the Warrants was not given, it did appear in support of some Warrants. When Backing, or support, was used, it usually took the form of explanation or specific example (1971, pg. 247).

In contrast, Hart's (1990) analysis of a speech given by Nixon, using a modified version of Toulmin's model, dealt with how the topic of the argumentation related to the structure of the arguments. Hart found that in the beginning of Nixon's speech he explicitly stated the warrants for his arguments, whereas later in the speech he did not. The first half of the speech Nixon defended himself against accusations of wrong doing, but the latter half of the speech was about politics and the Democratic party. Hart had this to say about

Nixon's speech after using Toulmin's model to layout Nixon's arguments:

> Perhaps the most interesting thing about Mr. Nixon's remarks is how explicitly he warrants his d-c [data to claim] movements. This single feature probably explains why the 'Checkers Speech' has been the object of so many political barbs by journalists over the years. Journalists appreciate subtlety and Mr. Nixon was anything but subtle. Apparently, he felt that he could not take the chance that the members of his audience would voluntarily warrant his arguments, so he did so himself (1990, pg. 148).

In this study, the analysis of the candidates' arguments in presidential debates from 1960, 1976, and 1996 is done at several levels. First, at a descriptive level, each statement is labeled using Toulmin's model. Identifying and labeling each statement provides a sort of diagram of how the statements work together to support the candidates' claims. Conversely, labeling each statement exposes incomplete arguments, such as stated claims without any supporting data.

The next level of analysis compares the argumentation structures used in each debate year. Are there any differences between years with regards to the amount of claims each candidate makes, the use of explicitly stated warrants, and what kinds of data are used to support those claims? A comparison will

show how the argumentation structure in presidential debates has changed from 1960 to 1996.

The final level of analysis is evaluative. How do changes in the basic construction of arguments in presidential debates affect the overall quality of the argumentation? What are some of the implications of argumentation with no explicitly stated warrants? What are some of the possible reasons for a lack of explicit warrants? These questions will be entertained throughout this section. Since presidential debates do not take place in a vacuum, some background on the social climate surrounding the selected debates is provided in the following descriptions.

Description

1960 Nixon & Kennedy

Senator John F. Kennedy and Vice President Richard M. Nixon debated in 1960 when communism was still America's biggest fear, and television was changing how Americans viewed the world. Some of the major issues during the debate involved federal funding for education, subsidizing farmers, medical care for retired citizens, and the candidates' leadership qualifications. The question selected for analysis focussed on the issue of executive leadership and the candidates' political experience.

Nixon responded first to the question and advanced five different claims

within his response, as well as restating his second claim, which was that President Eisenhower had sometimes accepted his advice (and sometimes he had rejected it). This claim was in direct response to an implicit claim in Mr Vancour's question. Vancour interpreted something President Eisenhower had said to mean that he (Eisenhower) had never adopted any of Nixon's ideas. Nixon's claims and his response in general were relevant to the topic of the question asked (refer to Appendix B).

Kennedy was allowed to respond to the question as well as to Nixon's statements. Kennedy explicitly stated three claims and a fourth claim was implied from the data given. In Mr. Vancour's question the phrase 'it's experience that counts' was discussed as one of Nixon's slogans on his campaign posters. Vancour stated that this implied that Nixon had more 'governmental executive decision-making experience' than Kennedy. Kennedy listed several pieces of data to support the implied claim that he had governmental decision-making experience as a member of Congress and as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Like Nixon, Kennedy's claims were relevant to answering Mr. Vancour's question about the candidates' experience and executive leadership abilities.

Generally both candidates used examples from their own personal experience as support for their claims. The one piece of data that stands out,

which was presented by Kennedy, referred to how Lincoln came to the presidency in 1860. Kennedy claimed that taking one road or another does not guarantee that you will be a successful president. Up to this point Nixon had defined himself as the best candidate for the presidency because he had executive leadership experience as the Vice President. Kennedy pointed out that Lincoln had served in the House of Representatives and had been defeated for a seat in the Senate in 1858, yet Lincoln was able to be a distinguished president. The general statement that Kennedy used to warrant this argument is simply that "there's no certain road to the presidency." If there was one certain path to the presidency, then what would be the purpose of having an election? This statement was the only explicit warrant that Kennedy provided.

Nixon had three explicitly stated warrants in his argumentation. The warrants are of a similar nature to the one given by Kennedy. All of Nixon's explicitly stated warrants draw on years of protocol and common definitions related to how the president makes decisions.

To summarize, both Kennedy and Nixon advanced three or more claims that were relevant to the topic of the question asked, and both candidates drew primarily from their own experiences when providing data statements to support their claims. Nixon provided three explicit warrant statements versus Kennedy's one. All of the warrants fit the prescribed definition of a warrant as

a general statement or understanding of how the world works.

1976 Ford & Carter

The next debate took place in 1976 between President Gerald Ford and Governor James Carter at a time of immense controversy in America. The Vietnam War had just ended and Nixon had resigned two years earlier because of Watergate. The current women's movement was in full swing and the debates in 1976 were sponsored by The League of Women Voters. The critical topics of the year's campaign were: farming subsidies, federal funding for education, Social Security and Medicare, and discussion about the general anti-government feeling prevalent throughout the nation. The question chosen from this debate dealt with the current anti-government feeling and how the candidates saw this problem being resolved. The topic of the anti-government feelings towards Washington encompasses similar issues that the topic of executive leadership from the 1960 debate included. Both questions involved discussion about the role of the president as a leader and as a representative of the people.

The question about the anti-government feeling towards Washington was directed to President Ford. In his response to the question, Ford made four different claims regarding his opinion about where the anti-government feelings should be directed. Ford's claims were relevant to the question topic. Ford

claims that it is the majority in the Congress that should shoulder the blame because they spend too much money, they have too many employees, and there is some question about their morality. The last reason corresponds to some background information given by Mr. Reynolds when he asked Ford the question. Mr. Reynolds acknowledged the end of an investigation by the House Ethics Committee on the publishing of congressional reports, and a pending investigation by the Senate Select Committee on Standards and Conduct of a United States senator alleged to have been receiving illegal corporate funds.

President Ford was asked a follow-up question by Mr. Reynolds, that given his ill feelings towards the majority in the Congress, would he be able to get along with a Democratic Congress? Ford made six claims and none of them discuss 'getting along with' a Democratic Congress, but rather serve to uphold that he will not be able to get along with a Democratic Congress. Ford makes three initial claims about his predictions for gains in the House and the Senate for the Republican party. His next three claims deal with the relationship between the party affiliation of the president versus the majority in the Congress. He first states that having a Democratic president as well as a Democratic majority in the Congress is contrary to our system of checks and balances. The fifth claim states the dangers of having a Democratic majority in the Congress and a Democratic president who wants to spend a billion dollars

on programs. Ford concludes with the claim that the American people want a Republican president to check the excesses that come out of a Democratic Congress.

Carter then responded with a claim that it is not about Republicans and Democrats, but about leadership or no leadership. Carter made a total of ten claims and all were direct attacks on Ford's effectiveness as a president and his inability to work with a Democratic Congress. For example, Carter claimed that President Ford frequently put forward a program just as a public relations stunt, and never intended or tried to work with the Congress to get it approved.

The kinds of data that Ford and Carter used to support their claims was more varied than that of Kennedy and Nixon. Both Ford and Carter used some form of statistics for support; Ford referred several times to Carter's plan to spend a billion dollars on new programs, and Carter claimed that Ford vetoed four times as many bills per year as Nixon.

Like Nixon and Kennedy, Ford drew on his own personal experiences to support some of his claims whereas Carter did not. A good portion of Carter's data consist of historical references to the presidencies of Eisenhower and Nixon. Kennedy had also made use of historical facts to support his claims.

The next step would be to describe what kinds of warrants the candidates provided for their arguments, but neither Carter of Ford gave any

explicit warrants for their arguments. The very absence of warrants in the 1976 debate will be one of the topics of discussion in the coming sections.

A summary of the similarities in Ford's and Carter's arguments include: both advanced ten claims, both had at least one reference in their data to statistical information, and neither provided explicit warrant statements for their arguments. The basic difference between Carter and Ford was that Ford relied heavily on personal experience whereas Carter relied on references to the history of past presidents.

1996 **Clinton & Dole**

In 1996, Senator Bob Dole debated President Bill Clinton. The debates were sponsored by The Commission on Presidential Debates, and Ross Perot had decided not to run a second time for the presidency. The debates were at a time when access to the information super highway (the Internet) was a hot topic and e-mail was quickly becoming popular. The Berlin wall had been down for several years and the former Soviet Union was disseminating into many smaller countries and provinces. The government's greatest fear was no longer communism. The major topics of this campaign were Social Security, federal funding for education, the environment, and taxes. Throughout these topics there was an underlying theme of what role the federal government should play in people's lives. The first question of the debate dealt with how the

candidates' ideas differ with regards to the role of the federal government.

Clinton responded first to the question and was allowed a rebuttal after Dole's response. All of Clinton's arguments made with respects to the initial question will be treated as a whole. Clinton made three claims within his initial response and advanced six more in his rebuttal. Clinton's claims agreed with the general claim that Jim Lehrer advanced in the first question, that Clinton and Dole differ in their interpretations of the role of the federal government.

Dole makes a total of six claims and the first claim is simply that he trusts the people. Dole's second claim is that Clinton trusts the government, and this is what Dole sees as the basic difference in their philosophies on government.

Clinton's arguments start out by answering the question of differences in governmental philosophy but quickly change to defending actions taken during his presidency. Dole's claims are also not completely relevant to the question topic. Dole tries to boil the difference down to who you trust, whether you trust the government or the people, but when he is done making his arguments you are still not sure exactly what role Dole believes the federal government should play in the United States today.

What is interesting about both Clinton's and Dole's arguments is what kinds of data they rely upon to support their claims. Both heavily cite programs

supported or passed by the president and other statistical information about the government. Clinton produces data about having reduced the size of the federal government to its smallest in thirty years and his endless efforts to support programs like the Medical Leave Law and the assault weapons ban. Dole mostly cites the seventeen new taxes, the $35 million gas tax, and the national health care plan that Clinton proposed.

Clinton's and Dole's arguments were more about establishing Clinton's record as a good or bad president and less on their philosophical views of the role of the federal government. Clinton's and Dole's arguments were responsive with respect to each other's argumentation, but their arguments seemed not relevant to, or in the spirit of, the question asked. As in 1976, there were no explicitly stated warrants provided for any of the arguments made by either candidate.

To summarize the arguments from the 1996 debate: both candidates' claims were only vaguely relevant to the question, both drew on similar kinds of data for supporting material, and neither candidate included explicit warrants for their arguments.

The following table quantifies each candidates' use of claims, data, and warrants in 1960, 1976, and 1996. The claims will be categorized as either having data to support them or that just a claim was provided without any data.

	1960		1976		1996	
	Nixon	Kennedy	Ford	Carter	Clinton	Dole
claims w/data	5	2	4	4	3	2
claims only	0	2	6	4	6	4
total claims	5	4	10	8	9	6
warrants	2	1	0	0	0	0

Table 1

Comparison

In an earlier section, I talked about what parts are necessary for a complete argument to exist. A claim alone hardly seems sufficient to constitute an entire argument. It was discussed that parts of an argument can be implied, but we cannot expect everyone to be able to identify the implicit parts of our arguments with any accuracy. A single claim without any given data, for this study, will not constitute an entire argument. The majority of the statements identified in this analysis are no more than unsubstantiated claims, since they were not supported by any explicit data.

If you look at the above table you can see that only one candidate, Nixon, provided data for each of his claims. Kennedy only provided data for 50% of the claims he made. Ford provided data for 40% of his claims and Carter did the same for 50% of his arguments. The most interesting percentages belong to Clinton and Dole, who both only supplied data for 30% of their

arguments. Both Clinton and Dole made the claim "I trust the people", and neither one provided any data to back up this claim.

This kind of simple statement sounds very much like a campaign slogan or a sound bite from the nightly news. And that there was no supporting data given reinforces the simplicity of the message which gives it that slogan-like quality. In the question from the 1960 debate, Mr. Vancour referenced Nixon's campaign slogan that read "It's experience that counts." Nowhere in Nixon's or Kennedy's response did either of them repeat the slogan. In 1960 it was still common practice to have posters and billboards all over cities and towns to promote the candidates. Today it is common practice to have a sixty second television spot to promote the candidates. Given the litany of data-less claims that Clinton and Dole put forth, I wonder if the presidential debates are becoming an extension of the campaign commercial, full of sound bites and campaign promises. This idea can be backed up by another observation that was made earlier in the analysis.

My observation was that Clinton and Dole were the least responsive to the question analyzed. Their claims were not completely relevant to the question topic. The arguments focussed on Clinton's record as president and not on their views of the role of the federal government, which supports my claim that the presidential debate in 1996 seems more like a campaign

commercial spot than a traditional debate.

The image that the television produces is seen as a powerful tool in persuasion. The candidate with the better "image" will win the election, but the presidential debates should not be about looking good for 90 minutes but sounding good. Polsby and Wildavsky wrote in 1967 that since television occupies such an important position in American life that a candidate's ability to make a good impression is not trivial. They also said that "we are headed for a society in which TV performers can run for public office and expect to win." Ronald Reagan and his advisors knew that his experience in front of the camera would help him with his image, but it is ironic that Polsby and Wildavsky wrote this 13 years before Reagan was elected.

Another level of comparison begins with the kinds of data each candidate used to support their claims. Clinton and Dole relied more on statistical data than the candidates from the other two years. Toulmin (1958) defined data as the facts that one produces in support of a claim. Many consider statistical data as entirely factual, but often statistics are misinterpreted or miscalculated. The source of the statistics should be considered and whenever possible the methods for determining the statistics should be considered. Clinton and Dole made no reference to their sources of information or how they came about these figures. Their audience has little information to use when

determining the validity of the data used in support of their claims.

Frequently it was agreed to by the candidates that no one would be allowed to bring in previously prepared notes. While on the one hand this might be used to maintain the spontaneity of the interaction it also fosters the use of inaccurate or incomplete information. I for one would like to know where Dole and Clinton got their statistical information. This practice is one that should be taken under consideration for changes that could make the presidential debates in the future more useful to the purposes of democracy.

Moving from the kinds of data each candidate used to the warrant we see that, ideally the warrant is a general statement or practical rule about the world that links the data to the claim. Toulmin (1958) wrote that often the warrant is left unstated because it is common knowledge and easily supplied by the audience. If we look again at the table presented earlier, we can see that in 1976 and 1996 no explicit warrant statements were included in the candidates' arguments. It is possible that the warrants needed to complete their arguments are common knowledge. Here is one of Dole's arguments; what are the possible warrants?

Data	Claim
I carry a little card in my pocket called the Tenth Amendment.	Where possible, I want to give power back to the states and back to the people.

This argument makes sense, since the Tenth Amendment gave individual states the authority to make laws concerning all matters not directly covered in the Constitution. I am not sure that a majority of the American viewing audience knows off the top of their head what the Tenth Amendment says. You can assume from the conclusion that it has something to do with empowering individual states. A possible warrant for this argument is that if you carry something around in your pocket, then you must truly believe in what it stands for. As Americans we can relate to this sentiment; many of us keep pictures of family members or letters they have written in our wallets.

Take another example argument from Dole's response, but this time the warrant is not as easily arrived at.

Data	Claim
A tax increase, a tax on everybody in America. Not just the rich. If you made 25,000 as the original proposal, you got your Social Security taxes increased.	The President trusts the government.

The assumption in this argument is that if you increase Social Security taxes you trust the government, not the people. But what if it was the people who demanded the federal Social Security plan be maintained? It would be naive to

think that the government can fund a program without collecting taxes. Another way to look at this argument is to assume that Dole believes individual people can better plan and provide for their retirement, and that it should not be in the hands of the government. Neither of these statements/assumptions meet Toulmin's (1958) criteria for what constitutes a warrant: a general rule, principle, or inference licence that links the data directly with the claim. The acceptability of the warrant depends on what the audience holds as common knowledge.

Tabula rasa is Latin for blank slate. This term is frequently used in academic debate to describe a specific judging philosophy. The tabula rasa judge is assumed to come to the debate with a blank slate, and will only consider statements and arguments that were explicitly stated in the debate round. The concept of a judge being a blank slate has been the subject of some debate itself, but nonetheless it is a common term used. The main problem with the blank slate concept is that we are not blank slates and complete objectivity is not possible.

What does the concept of tabula rasa have to do with the role of the warrant in presidential debates? Again, the acceptability of the warrant is sometimes dependent upon what common knowledge the audience brings to the debates. If you assume that your audience is a blank slate, then it would be

necessary for you to explicitly state all of the relevant pieces of an argument. We know that the audience is not composed of blank slates, but of thinking human beings with complex lives. So, would it be necessary in a presidential debate, where candidates have time limits for responding, to provide every piece of the argument? Some believe the answer to this question is no, but there are a few things that need to be considered first.

As mentioned earlier, if a piece of an argument is left unstated then the candidate runs the risk of being misunderstood. Also, the warrant is supposed to be a statement that is generally accepted and known by a majority of the audience. For many of the arguments in the 1976 debate and the 1996 debate the warrant needed to make the leap from the data to the claim did not meet this requirement. The level of misunderstanding is now two-fold: the fact that there is no explicit warrant gives rise to misinterpretation, and having an argument that requires a warrant that is not a general statement accepted by the audience also invites misinterpretation.

Another way of looking at the lack of explicit warrants is that it provides the audience with room to interpret the candidates' arguments in their own way. The lack of an explicit warrant in an argument lends itself to multiple interpretations, thus possibly appealing to a more diverse audience. This could account for the difference in the use of explicit warrants between 1960 and

1996, but it is less clear exactly how this might have effected the use of warrants in 1976. Recent statistics have shown that several minority populations have doubled or tripled in the last thirty years (Time, 1997). There are even projections that whites or Caucasians will no longer be the majority in our population sometime in the next thirty to fifty years. The growing diversity of our population also makes determining what is common knowledge more difficult.

Evaluation

Clinton remarked in his opening statement of the 1996 presidential debate that he wanted this debate to be about ideas not insults. Clinton and Dole had a significant number of claims where no data was provided to support them. It is difficult to know if the audience was able to evaluate whether those ideas were good without any grounds to support them.

Willard (1983) states that "actors objectify their thinking by testing it against others' views through the most explicit public means available to them. Their arguments reveal the judgmental and veridical standards they trust" (p. 13). The presidential candidates are testing their ideas about government and our society against the values and standards that the audience trusts. To be understood there needs to be common ground, and this is wherein the warrant lies. The warrant of an argument is a direct appeal to those standards and values

that the American people hold. The very absence of warrants in the 1976 and especially in the 1996 debates creates a gap between the values and standards of the candidates and those of the people. The audience is left with the task of filling in the missing information, and the candidate runs the risk of being misinterpreted.

Another reason that the absence of explicit warrants, or implied warrants that are reasonable, should be of concern to scholars is the example that the presidential debates set for argumentation and debate in general. Toulmin (1958) said that "when we turn from the special case of the law to consider rational argument in general, we are faced at once by the question whether these must not be analyzed in terms of an equally complex set of categories" (p. 96). These standards may be too high for the average citizen, but the presidential candidates are supposed to be examplerary citizens. They should be setting the standard to which the average citizen would strive.

IX. Conclusion

What is the role of the warrant in presidential debates? The warrant is the critical missing link that shows how we get from our experiences to our claims. Some arguments require substantial leaps from the evidence to the claim which cause the claims to be tentative and less likely that the audience will be persuaded by them. One of the greatest risks for speakers is that their

arguments will not be understood by the audience, and without explicit warrants they are more likely to be misunderstood. The presidential debates of late contain fewer developed arguments and more claims without any supporting data. Are these kind of debates in the best interest of a nation faced with choosing a leader?

Before I attempt an answer to the last question, I should mention two limiting factors of this current study. The first limiting factor involves the amount of data that was examined in detail. I took careful steps in my selection of the questions and responses that would be analyzed from three Presidential Debates that took place between 1960 and 1996, but there is always the possibility that if more questions and responses had been looked at that the findings would be slightly different.

The second limiting factor involves the method of analysis that was chosen for this study, the Toulmin model. Another form of argument analysis may also have caused the results of this study to be different.

Now back to the question of whether the presidential debates of late are serving their purpose. "By virtue of being ad free, sustained encounters, debates assert the seriousness of the judgement they and the candidates court" (Jamieson & Birdsell, 1988). The decision is one that should not be taken lightly. The presidential candidates' ultimate goal is to have the public vote for them, but the

candidates express a similar desire for better quality debates. In February of 1988, Jesse Jackson expressed his frustration with the debate formats; "We're trapped in these 90-second sound bites trying to say things that make a difference." Given a fair environment for the presentation of well developed ideas by competent advocates, our founding fathers assumed that the best ideas would triumph over all others. But the current debate formats and trends in content fall short of this productive environment, and instead foster the presentation of the same slogans and phrases heard earlier in their campaigns. The voters are presented with the same sound-bites they have heard in ads on television and radio, they are just packaged differently (Hellweg, Pfau, & Brydon, 1992).

Toulmin's (1958) model can be useful in many ways but frequently it was difficult to distinguish a piece of data from a claim. A piece of data is defined as a factual statement, but often it appeared that the candidates would offer opinions as data for a claim. I found the most useful part of Toulmin's model to be the warrant. If our goal is to foster a more traditional and grounded argument style in presidential debates, then Toulmin's work on the warrant may prove to be useful again in the future. This assumes that complete arguments, not a litany of unsubstantiated claims, would best serve the idea of Democracy and the task of choosing a president. But if the trend in presidential debates is

going to continue in its present direction, that of a joint press conference or extended campaign commercial, then we will need new ways of determining who has the 'best ideas'. Kraus (1988) wrote that "the candidates are not interested in educating the public or in arriving at the truth, but in winning the election" (pg. 30).

The next step is to decide what the public and the candidates want the presidential debates to be. Future research should focus on what kind of debates best serve the American public. The only debates a majority of the American public will see are the televised presidential debates. We should care about what forms of argument the candidates are displaying and how those are being reinforced for the audience. "It is conceivable that unsound methods of argument could retain their hold in society, and be passed on down the generations" (Toulmin, 1958, p. 4). If the debates are not about ideas, then why continue to have them. These kind of sound bite debates would only be serving the same purpose as a television ad, that of name recognition and the reinforcing of a candidate's image. We should hope that a president is chosen for being more than just another pretty face.

References

Annas, P.J., & Tenney, D. (1996). Positioning Oneself. In *Argument Revisited; Argument Redefined.* (pp. 127-152). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Aristotle. (1954). *Rhetoric.* Translated by W.R. Roberts. New York: Random House.

Auer, J.J. (1962). Essay: "The Counterfeit Debates" as in *The Great Debates: Kennedy vs. Nixon, 1960,* ed. Sidney Kraus. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Bechtolt, W.E., Hilyard, J., and Bybee, C.R. (1977). "Agenda Control in the 1976 Debates: A Content Analysis." *Journalism Quarterly* 4: 674-681.

Birdsell, D. (1994). "What Should Debates Be? Standards of Public Discourse." In *Presidential Campaigns and American Self Images,* edited by Miller, A.H. and Gronbeck, B.E., 128-142. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Carlin, D.P. (1992). "Presidential Debates as Focal Points for Campaign Arguments." *Political Communication* 9: 251-265.

Chaffee, J. (1994). *Thinking Critically, Fourth Edition.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Clark, J.H. (1896). *The Presidential Battle of 1896.* Washington, D.C.: Globe Bible Publishing Co.

Commission on Presidential Debates. Http://www.debates.org. January 14, 1998.

Drew, D., and Weaver, D. (1991). "Voter Learning in the 1988 Presidential Election: Did the Debates and the Media Matter?" *Journalism Quarterly* 68: 27-37.

Eemeren, F.H. van, et al. Editors. (1996). *Fundamentals of Argumentation Theory.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Eemeren, F.H. van, Grootendorst, R., Jackson, S., & Jacobs, S. (1993). *Reconstructing Argumentative Discourse.* Tuscaloosa: The University of

Alabama Press.

Eemeren, F.H. van, & Grootendorst, R. (1992). *Argumentation, Communication, and Fallacies.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Eveland, W.P., McLeod, D.M., and Nathanson, A.I. (1994). "Reporters Versus Undecided Voters: An Analysis of the Questions Asked During the 1992 Presidential Debates." *Communication Quarterly* 42: 390-406.

Fahnestock, J., & Secor, M. (1996). Classical Rhetoric. In *Argument Revisited; Argument Redefined.* (pp. 97-123). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Fisher, A. (1988). *The Logic of Real Arguments.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fisher, A. (1987). Using Assertibility Conditions to Extract and Evaluate Arguments. In Eemeren, F.H. van, Grootendorst, R., Blair, J.A., Willard, C.A., editors. *Argumentation: Analysis and Practices. Proceedings of the Conference on Argumentation 1986.* (pp. 25-33). Providence: Foris Publications.

Freeley, A.J. (1996). *Argumentation and Debate.* 9th edition. Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Friedenberg, R.V., and Trent, J.S. (1983). *Political Campaign Communication.* New York: Praeger Publishers.

Fulkerson, R. (1996). The Toulmin Model of Argument and the Teaching of Composition. In *Argument Revisited; Argument Redefined.* (pp. 45-72). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Gadziala, S.M. and Becker, L.B. (1983). "A New Look at Agenda-setting in the 1976 Election Debates." *Journalism Quarterly* 60: 122-126.

Govier, T. (1992). *A Practical Study of Argument, Third edition.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Grennan, W. (1987). A 'Logical Audit' Scheme for Argument Evaluation. In Eemeren, F.H. van, Grootendorst, R., Blair, J.A., Willard, C.A., editors.

Argumentation: Analysis and Practices. Proceedings of the Conference on Argumentation 1986. (pp. 17-24). Providence: Foris Publications.

Hall Jamieson, K., and Kohrs Campbell, K. (1990). *Deeds Done in Words.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Hart, R.P. (1990). *Modern Rhetorical Criticism.* Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company.

Head, S. (1976). *Broadcasting In America.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Hellweg, S.A., Pfau, M., and Brydon, S.R. (1992). *Televised Presidential Debates: Advocacy in Contemporary America.* New York: Praeger Publishers.

Hill, B., and Leeman, R.W. (1997). *The Art and Practice of Argumentation and Debate.* Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Hinck, E.A. (1993). *Enacting the Presidency: Political Argument, Presidential Debates, and Presidential Character.* Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

Jackson-Beeck, M., and Meadow, R.G. (1979a). "Content Analysis of Televised Communication Events: The Presidential Debates." *Communication Research* 6; 321-344.

Jackson-Beeck, M. and Meadow, R.G. (1979b). "The Triple Agenda of Presidential Debates." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 43: 173-180.

Jacoby, J., Troutman, T.R., and Whittler, T.E. (1986). "Viewer Miscomprehension of the 1980 Presidential Debate: A Research Note." *Political Psychology* 7: 297-308.

Jamieson, K.H. and Birdsell, D.S. (1988). *Presidential Debates.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Kraus, S. (1996). "Winners of the First 1960 Televised Presidential Debate Between Kennedy and Nixon." *Journal of Communication* 46: 78-96.

Kraus, S. (1988). *Televised Presidential Debates and Public Policy.* Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Lanoue, D.J. (1991). "The 'Turning Point': Viewers' Reactions to the Second 1988 Presidential Debate." *American Politics Quarterly* 19:80-95.

Lanoue, D.J. and Schrott, P.R. (1991). *The Joint Press Conference*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Lemert, J.B. (1993). "Do Televised Presidential Debates Help Inform Voters?" *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 37: 83-94.

Lemert, J.B., Elliot, W.R., Bernstein, J.M., Rosenberg, W.L., and Nestvold, K.J. (1991). *News Verdicts, the Debates, and Presidential Campaigns.* New York: Praeger Publishers.

Lenrow, A. (1971). A Toulmin Analysis of the Argumentation Patterns in Selected Speeches by John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Ted Kennedy. Dissertation for Columbia University.

Lowry, D.T., Bridges, J.A., and Barefield, P.A. (1990). "Effects of Television 'instant analysis and querulous criticism' following the first Bush-Dukakis Debate." *Journalism Quarterly* 67: 814-825.

Martel, M. (1983). *Political Campaign Debates: Images, Strategies, and Tactics.* New York: Longmans.

McLeod, J.M., Bybee, C.R., and Durall, J.A. (1979). "Equivalence of Informed Political Participation: the 1976 Presidential Debates as a Source of Influence." *Communication Quarterly* 6: 463-487.

Motello, J.T. (1988). "Argument and Visual Structuring in the 1984 Mondale-Reagan Debates: the Medium's Influence on the Perception of Clash." *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 52: 277-290.

Payne, J.G., Golden, J.L., Marlier, J., and Ratzan, S.C. (1989). "Perceptions of the 1988 Presidential and Vice-Presidential Debates." *American Behavioral Scientist* 32: 425-435.

Pfau, M., and Kang, J.G. (1991). "The Impact of Relational Messages on Candidate Influence in Televised Political Debates." *Communication Studies* 42: 114-128.

Rouner, D., and Perloff, R.M. (1988). "Selective Perception of Outcome of First 1984 Presidential Debate." *Journalism Quarterly* 65:141-147, 240.

Sigelman, L., and Sigelman, C.K. (1984). "Judgements of the Carter-Reagan Debate: The Eyes of the Beholders." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 48: 624-628.

Summerfield, J. (1996). Principles for Propagation. In *Argument Revisited; Argument Redefined.* (pp. 153-180). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Thomas, S. (1986). *Practical Reasoning in a Natural Language.* 3rd edition. Prentice Hall.

Toulmin, S., Rieke, R., & Janik, A. (1984). *An Introduction to Reasoning.* 2nd edition. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.

Toulmin, S. (1972). *Human Understanding: The Collective Use and Evolution of Concepts.* Princeton University Press.

Toulmin, S. (1958). *The Uses of Argument.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Trapp, R. & Schuetz, J., editors. (1990). *Perspectives on Argumentation.* Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, Inc.

Twentieth Century Fund TASK Force. (1979). *With the Nation Watching: Report of the Twentieth Century Fund TASK Force on Television Presidential Debates.* Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Ulrich, W. (1987). Argumentative Validity as a Function of the Argumentative Forum. In Eemeren, F.H. van, Grootendorst, R., Blair, J.A., Willard, C.A., editors. *Argumentation: Analysis and Practices. Proceedings of the Conference on Argumentation 1986.* (pp. 7-16) Providence: Foris Publications.

Vancil, D.L. and Pendell, S.D. (1987). "The Myth of Viewer-Listener disagreement in the First Kennedy-Nixon Debate." *Central States Journal* 38: 16-27.

Walton, D.N. (1992). *Plausible Argument in Everyday Conversation.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Willard, C.A. (1989). *A Theory of Argumentation.* Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press.

Willard, C.A. (1983). *Argumentation and the Social Grounds of Knowledge.* The University of Alabama Press.

Zhu, J., Milavasky, J.R., and Biswas, R. (1994). "Do Televised Debates Affect Image Perception More than Issue Knowledge? A Study of the First 1992 Presidential Debate." *Human Communication Research* 20: 302-333.

Appendix A

Partial Transcript from 1960 Debate

MR. VANOCUR: Uh - Mr. Vice President, since the question of executive leadership is a very important campaign issue, I'd like to follow Mr. Novins' question. Now, Republican campaign slogans - you'll see them on signs around the country as you did last week - say it's experience that counts - that's over a picture of yourself; sir uh - implying that you've had more governmental executive decision-making uh - experience than uh - your opponent. Now, in his news conference on August twenty-fourth, President Eisenhower was asked to give one example of a major idea of yours that he adopted. His reply was, and I'm quoting; "If you give me a week I might think of one. I don't remember." Now that was a month ago, sir, and the President hasn't brought it up since, and I'm wondering, sir, if you can clarify which version is correct - the one put out by Republican campaign leaders or the one put out by President Eisenhower?

MR. NIXON: Well, I would suggest, Mr. Vanocur, that uh - if you know the President, that was probably a facetious remark. Uh - I would also suggest that insofar as his statement is concerned, that I think it would be improper for the President of the United States to disclose uh - the instances in which members of his official family had made recommendations, as I have made them through the years to him, which he has accepted or rejected. The President has always maintained and very properly so that he is entitled to get what advice he wants from his cabinet and from his other advisers without disclosing that to anybody - including as a matter of fact the Congress. Now, I can only say this. Through the years I have sat in the National Security Council. I have been in the cabinet. I have met with the legislative

leaders. I have met with the President when he made the great decisions with regard to Lebanon, Quemoy and Matsu, other matters. The President has asked for my advice. I have given it. Sometimes my advice has been taken. Sometimes it has not. I do not say that I have made the decisions. And I would say that no president should ever allow anybody else to make the major decisions, The president only makes the decisions. All that his advisers do is to give counsel when he asks for it. As far as what experience counts and whether that is experience that counts, that isn't for me to say. Uh - I can only say that my experience is there for the people to consider; Senator Kennedy's is there for the people to consider. As he pointed out, we came to the Congress in the same year. His experience has been different from mine. Mine has been in the executive branch. His has been in the legislative branch. I would say that the people now have the opportunity to evaluate his as against mine and I think both he and I are going to abide by whatever the people decide.

MR. SMITH: Senator Kennedy.

MR. KENNEDY: Well, I'll just say that the question is of experience and the question also is uh - what our judgment is of the future, and what our goals are for the United States, and what ability we have to implement those goals. Abraham Lincoln came to the presidency in 1860 after a rather little known uh - session in the House of Representatives and after being defeated for the Senate in fifty-eight and was a distinguished president. There's no certain road to the presidency. There are no guarantees that uh - if you take uh - one road or another that you will be a successful president. I have been in the Congress for fourteen years. I have voted in the last uh - eight years uh - and the Vice President was uh - presiding over the Senate and meeting his other responsibilities. I have met met uh - decisions over eight hundred times on matters which affect not only the domestic security of the

United States, but as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The question really is: which candidate and which party can meet the problems that the United States is going to face in the sixties?

Partial Transcript from 1976 Debate

MR. REYNOLDS: I suspect that uhh - we could continue on this tax argument for some time. But I'd like to move on to another area. Mr. President, uh everybody seems to be running against Washington this year. And I'd like to raise two coincidental events and ask you whether you think perhaps this may have a bearing on the attitude throughout the country. The House Ethics Committee has just now ended its investigation of Daniel Schorr, after several months and many thousands of dollars, trying to find out how he obtained and caused to be published a report of the Congress that probably is the property of the American people. At the same time. the Senate Select Committee on Standards and Conduct has voted not really to begin an investigation of a United States senator because of allegations against him that he may have been receiving corporate funds illegally over a period of years. Do you suppose, sir, that events like this contribute to the feeling in the country that maybe there's something wrong in Washington, and I don't mean just in the executive branch but throughout the whole government?

MR. FORD: There is a considerable anti-Washington feeling throughout the country. But I think the feeling is misplaced. In the last two years, we have restored integrity in the White House, and we've set high standards in the executive branch of the government. The anti-Washington feeling, in my opinion, ought to be focused on the Congress of the United States. For example, this Congress, very shortly, will spend a billion dollars a year for its housekeeping, its salaries, its expenses and the like. It - the next Congress will probably be the first billion-dollar Congress in the history of the United States. I don't think the American people are getting their money's worth from the majority party that run this Congress. We, in addition, see that uh - in the last uh - four years the number of employees hired by the Congress

has gone up substantial- uh much more than uh - the gross national product, much more than any other increase throughout our society. Congress is hiring people by the droves, and the cast as a result has gone up. And I don't see any improvement in the performance of the Congress under the present leadership. So it seems to me instead of the anti-Washington feeling being aimed at everybody in Washington, it seems to me that the focus should be where the problem is, which is the Congress of the United States, and particularly the majority in the Congress. They spend too much money on themselves. They have too many employees. There's some question about their morality. It seems to me that in this election, the focus should not be on the executive branch but the corrections should come as the voters vote for their members of the House of Representatives or for their United States senator. That's where the problem is and I hope there'll be some corrective action taken so we can get some new leadership in the Congress of the United States.

MR. REYNOLDS: Mr. President, if I may follow up. Uh - I think you've made it plain that you take a dim view of the uh - majority in the Congress. Isn't it quite likely, sir, that you will have a Democratic Congress in the next session, if you are elected president? And hasn't the country uh - a right to ask whether you can get along with that Congress, or whether we'll have continued confrontation?

MR. FORD: Well, It seems to me that uh - we have a chance - the Republicans - to get a majority in the House of Representatives. We will make some gains in the United States Senate. So there will be different ratios in the House, as well as in the Senate, and as president I will be able to uh - work with that Congress. But let me take the other side of the coin, if I might. Supposing we had - had a Democratic Congress for the last two years and we'd had uh - Governor Carter as President. He has, in effect, said that he would agree with all of - he would disapprove of the

vetoes that I have made, and would have added significantly to expenditures and the deficit in the federal government. I think it would be contrary to one of the basic concepts in our system of government - a system of checks and balances. We have a Democratic Congress today, and fortunately we've had a Republican president to check their excesses with my vetoes. If we have a Democratic Congress next year, and a president who wants to spend an additional one hundred billion dollars a year, or maybe two hundred billion dollars a year, with more programs, we will have in my judgment, greater deficits with more spending, more dangers of inflation. I think the American people want a Republican president to check on any excesses that come out of the next Congress, if it is a Democratic Congress.

MR. NEWMAN: Governor Carter.

MR. CARTER: Well, it's not a matter of uh - Republican and Democrat. It's a matter of leadership or no leadership. President Eisenhower worked with a Democratic Congress very well. Even President Nixon, because he was a strong leader at least, worked with a Democratic Congress very well. Uh - Mr. Ford has vetoed, as I said earlier, four times as many bills per year as Mr. Nixon. Mr. Ford quite often puts forward a program just as a public relations stunt, and never tries to put it through the Congress by working with the Congress. I think under presidents For- uh - Nixon and Eisenhower they passed about 60 to 75 percent of their legislation. This year Mr. Ford will not pass more than 26 percent of all the legislative proposals he puts forward. This is government by stalemate, and we've seen almost a complete breakdown in the proper relationship between the president, who represents this country, and the Congress, who collectively also represent this country. We've had uh - Republican presidents before who've tried to run against a Democratic - uh Congress. And I don't think it's uh - the Congress is Mr. Ford's

opponent; but if uh - if - if he insists that uh - that I be responsible for the Democratic Congress, of which I'm - have not been a part, then I think it's only fair that he be responsible for the Nixon administration in its entirety, of which he was a part. That, I think, is a good balance. But the point is, that - that a president ought to lead this country. Mr. Ford, so far as I know, except for avoiding another Watergate, has not accomplished one single major program for this country. And there's been a constant squabbling between the president and the Congress, and that's not the way this country ought to be run. I might go back to one other thing. Mr. Ford has uh - misquoted an AP uh - news story that was in error to begin with. That story reported several times that I would lower taxes for low and middle-income families and uh - that correction was delivered to the White House and I am sure that the president knows about this uh - correction, but he still insists uh - on repeating an erroneous statement.

Partial Transcript from 1996 Debate

LEHRER: Mr. President, first question. There is a major difference in your view of the role of the Federal government and that of Senator Dole. How would you define the difference?

CLINTON: Well, Jim, I believe that the Federal government should give people the tools and try to establish the conditions in which they can make the most of their own lives. That, to me, is the key. And that leads me to some different conclusions from Senator Dole.

For example, we have reduced the size of the Federal government to its smallest size in 30 years. We reduced more regulations, eliminated more programs than my two Republican predecessors. But I have worked hard for things like the Family and Medical Leave Law, the Brady Bill, the assault weapons ban, the program to put 100,000 police on the street. All of these are programs that Senator Dole opposed that I supported, because I felt they were a legitimate effort to help people make the most of their own lives. I've worked hard to help families impart values to their own children. I supported the V-chip so that parents would be able to control what their kids watch on television when they're young, along with the ratings systems for television and educational television. I supported strong action against the tobacco companies to stop the marketing, advertising, and sale of tobacco to young people. I supported a big increase in the safe and drug-free schools program. These were areas on which Senator Dole and I differed, but I believed they were the right areas for America to be acting together as one country to help individuals and families make the most of their own lives and raise their kids with good values and a good future.

LEHRER: Senator Dole, one minute.

DOLE: I think the basic difference is, and I have had some experience in this, I think the basic difference, I trust the people. The President trusts the government. We go back and look at the healthcare plan that he wanted to impose on the American people. One seventh the total economy, 17 new taxes, price controls, 35 to 50 new bureaucracies that cost $1.5 trillion. Don't forget that, that happened in 1993. A tax increase, a tax everybody in America. Not just the rich. If you made 25,000 as the original proposal, you got your Social Security taxes increased. We had a BTU tax we turned into a $35 million gas tax, a $265 billion tax increase.

I guess I rely more on the individual. I carry a little card in my pocket called the Tenth Amendment. Where possible, I want to give power back to the states and back to the people. That's my difference with the President. We'll have specific differences later. He noted a few, but there are others.

LEHRER: Mr. President, 30 seconds.

CLINTON: I trust the people. We've done a lot to give the people more powers to make their own decisions over their own lives. But I do think we are right when we try to, for example, give mothers and newborns 48 hours before they can be kicked out of the hospital, ending these drive-by deliveries.

I think we were right to pass the Kassebaum-Kennedy bill, which says you can't lose your health insurance just because you change jobs or because someone in your family's been sick. Our government is smaller and less bureaucratic and has given more authority to the states than its two predecessors under Republican presidents. But I do believe we have to help our people get ready to succeed in the 21st Century.

Appendix B

Analysis of responses from 1960 Kennedy-Nixon debate.

1960-Mr. Vancour: Uh-Mr. Vice President, since the question of executive leadership is a very important campaign issue, I'd like to follow Mr. Novins' question. Now, Republican campaign slogans-you'll see them on signs around the country as you did last week-say it's experience that counts-that's over a picture of yourself; sir uh-implying that you've had more governmental executive decision-making uh-experience than uh- your opponent. Now, in his news conference on August twenty-fourth, President Eisenhower was asked to give one example of a major idea of yours that he adopted. His reply was, and I'm quoting; "If you give me a week I might think of one. I don't remember." Now that was a month ago, sir, and the President hasn't brought it up since, and I'm wondering, sir, if you can clarify which version is correct-the one put out by Republican campaign leaders or the one put out by President Eisenhower?

NIXON

DATA-1
I have made them (recommendations) through the years to him which he has accepted or rejected. (3)

CLAIM-1
If you know the President that was probably a facetious remark. (1)

WARRANT-1
It would be improper for the President of the United States to disclose- uh- the instances in which members of his official family had made recommendations (2)

BACKING-1
The President has always maintained and very properly so that he is entitled to get what advice he wants from his cabinet and other advisors without disclosing that to anybody-including as a matter of fact Congress. (4)

DATA-R1
Sometimes my advice has been taken.(10) Sometimes it has not. (11)

DATA-2
Through the years I have sat in the National Security Council. (5)

DATA-2
I have met with the legislative leaders. (6)

DATA-2
I have met with the President when he made the great decisions with regard to Lebanon, Quemoy and Matsu, other matters. (7)

DATA-2
The President has asked for my advice. (8) I have given it. (9)

CLAIM-2*
I have been an advisor to the president on many decisions.

*Implicit in response.

DATA-3
I do not say that I have made the decisions. (12)

CLAIM-3
I would say that no president should ever allow anybody else to make the major decisions. (13)

WARRANT-3
The President only makes the decisions. (14)

BACKING-3
All advisors do is to give counsel when he asks for it. (15)

DATA-4
Mine has been in the executive branch. (20)

DATA-4
His has been in the legislative branch. (21)

CLAIM-4
His experience has been different from mine. (19)

DATA-5
My experience is there for the people to consider. (16)

DATA-5
Senator Kennedy's is there for the people to consider. (17)

DATA-5
We came to the congress in the same year. (18)

CLAIM-5
the people now have the opportunity to evaluate his as against mine and I think both he and I are going to abide by whatever the people decide. (22)

KENNEDY

CLAIM-1
I'll just say that the question is of experience and the question also is what our judgement is for the future, and what our goals are for the United States, and what ability we have to implement those goals.(1)

DATA-2
Abraham Lincoln came to the presidency in 1860 after a rather little known uh- session in the House of Representatives and after being defeated for the Senate in fifty-eight and was a distinguished president. (2)

CLAIM-2
There are no guarantees that uh- if you take uh- one road or another that you will be a successful president. (4)

WARRANT-2
There's no certain road to the presidency. (3)

DATA-3
I have been in the Congress for fourteen years. (5)

↓

DATA-3
I have voted in the last uh- eight years- and the Vice President was presiding over the Senate and meeting his other responsibilities. (6)

↓

DATA-3
I have met uh- decisions over eight hundred times on matters which affect not only the domestic security of the United States, but as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. (7)

→ CLAIM-3*
I have governmental decision-making experience.

↓

WARRANT-3*
It's experience that counts.

*Implicit in response.

CLAIM-4
The question really is: which candidate and which party can meet the problems that the United States is going to face in the sixties? (8)

Appendix C

Analysis of responses from the 1976 Ford-Carter debate.

1976-Mr. Reynolds: I suspect that uhh- we could continue on this tax argument for some time. But I'd like to move on to another area. Mr. President, uh everybody seems to be running against Washington this year. And I'd like to raise two coincidental events and ask you whether you think perhaps this may have a bearing on the attitude throughout the country. The House Ethics Committee has just now ended its investigation of Daniel Schorr, after several months and many thousands of dollars, trying to find out how he obtained and caused to be published a report of the Congress that probably is the property of the American people. At the same time the Senate Select Committee on Standards and Conduct has voted not really to begin an investigation of a United States senator because of allegations against him that he may have been receiving corporate funds illegally over a period of years. Do you suppose, sir, that events like this contribute to the feeling in the country that maybe there's something wrong in Washington, and I don't mean just in the executive branch but throughout the whole government?

FORD

DATA-1
In the last two years, we have restored integrity in the White House, and we've set high standards in the executive branch of the government. (2)

CLAIM-1
There is a considerable anti-Washington feeling throughout the country, but I think that it is misplaced. (1)

DATA-2
For example, this Congress, very shortly, will spend a billion dollars a year for its house keeping, its salaries, its expenses and the like. (4)

↑

DATA-2
It-the next Congress will probably be the first billion-dollar Congress in the History of the United States. (5)

→

CLAIM-2
The anti-Washington feeling, in my opinion, ought to be focussed on the Congress of the United States. (3)

DATA-3
We, in addition, see that uh- in the last uh- four years the number of employees hired by the Congress has gone up substantially- uh much more than uh- the gross national product, much more than any other increase throughout our society. (7)

↑

DATA-3
Congress is hiring people by the droves, and the cost as a result has gone up. (8)

↑

DATA-3
I don't see any improvement in the performance of the Congress under the present Leadership. (9)

→

CLAIM-3
I don't think the American people are getting their money's worth from the majority party that runs this Congress. (6)

DATA-R2
They spend too much money on themselves. (11)

↓

DATA-R2
They have too many employees. (12)

↓

DATA-R2
There's some question about their morality. (13)

CLAIM-R2
So it seems to me instead of the anti-Washington feeling being aimed at everybody in Washington, it seems to me that the focus should be where the problem is, which is the Congress of the Unites States, and particularly the majority in the Congress. (10)

CLAIM-4
It seems to me that in this election, the focus should not be on the executive branch but the corrections should come as the voters vote for their members of the House of Representatives or for their United States Senator. (14)

CLAIM-R4
That's where the problem is and I hope there'll be some corrective action taken so we can get some new leadership in the Congress of the United States. (15)

FORD: FOLLOW-UP

CLAIM-1
Well, it seems to me that uh- we have a chance - the Republicans - to get a majority in the House of Representatives. (1)

CLAIM-2
We will make some gains in the United States Senate. (2)

CLAIM-3
So there will be different ratios in the House, as well as in the Senate, and as president I will be able to uh- work with that Congress. (3)

DATA-4
Supposing we had - had a Democratic Congress for the last two years and we'd had uh- Governor Carter as President. (4)

DATA-4
He has, in effect, said that he would agree with all of- he would disapprove of the vetoes that I have made and would have added significantly to expenditures and the deficit in the federal government. (5)

DATA-4
We have a Democratic Congress today, and fortunately we've had a Republican president to check their excesses with my vetoes. (7)

CLAIM-4
I think it would be contrary to one of the basic concepts in our system of government- a system of checks and balances. (6)

CLAIM-5
If we have a Democratic Congress next year, and a president who wants to spend an additional one hundred billion dollars a year, with more programs, we will have in my judgement, greater deficits with more spending, more dangers of inflation. (8)

CLAIM-6
I think the American people want a Republican president to check on any excesses that come out of the next Congress, if it is a Democratic Congress. (9)

CARTER

DATA-1
President Eisenhower worked with a Democratic Congress very well. (3)

DATA-1
Even President Nixon, because he was a strong leader at least, worked with a Democratic Congress very well. (4)

CLAIM-1
It's not a matter of uh- Republican and Democrat.(1) It's a matter of leadership or no leadership. (2)

DATA-2
Mr. Ford has vetoed, as I said earlier, four times as many bills per year as Mr. Nixon. (5)

DATA-2
Mr. Ford quite often puts forward a program just as a public relations stunt, and never tries to put it through the Congress by working with the Congress. (6)

DATA-2
This year Mr. Ford will not pass more than 26 percent of all the legislative proposals he puts forward.(8)

DATA-2
I think under presidents Nixon and Eisenhower they passed about 60 to 75 percent of their legislation. (7)

CLAIM-2
This is government by stalemate, and we've seen almost a complete breakdown in the proper relationship between the president, who represents this country, and the Congress, who collectively also represent this country. (9)

DATA-3
We've had uh - Republican presidents before who've tried to run against a Democratic Congress. (10)

CLAIM-3
I don't think it's uh- the Congress is Mr. Ford's opponent (11)

CLAIM-4
If he insists that uh- that I be responsible for the Democratic Congress, of which I'm - have not been a part, then I think it's only fair that he be responsible for the Nixon administration in its entirety, of which he was a part. (12)

CLAIM-5
That, I think, is a good balance. (13)

CLAIM-R1
The point is, that- that a president ought to lead this country. (14)

CLAIM-6
Mr. Ford, so far as I know, except for avoiding another Watergate, has not accomplished one major program for this country. (15)

CLAIM-7
And there's been a constant squabbling between the president and the Congress, and that's not the way this country ought to be run. (16)

DATA-8
Mr. Ford has misquoted an AP news story that was in error to begin with. (18)

DATA-8
That story reported several times that I would lower taxes for low and middle-income families and uh-that correction was delivered to the White House (19)

DATA-8
and I am sure that the president knows about this correction, but he still insists on repeating an erroneous statement. (20)

CLAIM-8*
Mr. Ford is intentionally misleading the public.

*Implicit in response.

Appendix D

Analysis of the responses from the 1996 Clinton-Dole debate.

1996-Mr. Lehrer: Mr. President, first question. There is a major difference in your view of the role of the Federal government and that of Senator Dole. How would you define the difference?

CLINTON

DATA-1
For example, we have reduced the size of the Federal government to its smallest in 30 years. (3)

|

DATA-1
We have reduced more regulations, eliminated more programs than my two Republican predecessors. (4)

|

DATA-1
I have worked hard for things like the Family Medical Leave Law, the Brady Bill, the assault weapons ban, the program to put 100,00 police on the street. (5)

→

CLAIM-1
I believe that the Federal government should give the people the tools and try to establish the conditions in which they can make the most of their own lives. (1)

DATA-2
All of these programs that Senator Dole opposed that I supported, because I felt they were a legitimate effort to make the most of their own lives. (6)

→ CLAIM-2
And that leads me to some different conclusions from Senator Dole. (2)

DATA-3
I supported the V-chip so that parents would be able to control what their kids watch on television when they're young, along with the ratings systems for television and educational television. (8)

DATA-3
I supported strong action against the tobacco companies to stop marketing, advertising, and sale of tobacco to young people. (9)

DATA-3
I supported a big increase in the safe and drug-free schools program. (10)

→ CLAIM-3
I've worked hard to help families impart values to their own children. (7)

CLAIM-R1&3
I believed they were the right areas for America to be acting together as one country to help individuals make the most of their own lives and raise their kids with good values and a good future. (11)

CLAIM-1
I think the basic difference is, and I have had some experience in this, I think the basic difference, I trust the people. (1)

DATA-2
We go back and look at the health care plan that he wanted to impose on the American people. (3)

DATA-2
One seventh the total economy, 17 new taxes, price controls, 35 to 50 new bureaucracies that cost $1.5 trillion.(4) Don't forget that, that happened in 1993. (5)

DATA-2
A tax increase, a tax everybody in America.(6) Not just the rich.(7) If you made 25,000 as the original proposal, you got your Social Security taxes increased. (8)

DATA-2
We had a BTU tax we turned into a $35 million gas tax, a $265 billion tax increase. (9)

CLAIM-2
The President trusts the government. (2)

CLAIM-3
I guess I rely more on the individual. (10)

DATA-4
I carry a little card in my pocket called the Tenth Amendment. (11)

CLAIM-4
Where possible, I want to give power back to the states and back to the people. (12)

CLAIM-5
That's my difference with the President. (13)

CLAIM-6
We'll have specific differences later. (14) He noted a few, but there are others. (15)

CLINTON

CLAIM-4
I trust the people. (1)

CLAIM-5
We've done a lot to give the people more powers to make their own decisions over their own lives. (2)

CLAIM-6
But I do think we are right when we try to, for example, give mothers and newborns 48 hours before they can be kicked out of the hospital, ending these drive-by deliveries. (3)

CLAIM-7
I think we were right to pass the Kassebaum-Kennedy bill, which says you can't lose your health insurance just because you change jobs or because someone in your family's been sick. (4)

CLAIM-8
Our government is smaller and less bureaucratic and has given more authority to the states than its two predecessors under Republican presidents. (5)

CLAIM-9
But I do believe we have to help our people get ready to succeed in the 21st Century. (6)