The President's Legislative Influence from Public Appeals

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Despite scholars' long-standing appreciation of modern American presidents' plebiscitary powers, no study offers evidence that public appeals systematically facilitate influence, and some research indicates they can actually decrease presidential bargaining power. Our analysis resolves this disparity, developing a theoretical perspective of plebiscitary appeals and testing it on data from the nationally televised addresses of Presidents Eisenhower through Clinton. The perspective suggests that appeals should generate influence, but that this influence depends on presidents strategically choosing issues to promote to the public. In particular, a president will promote issues on which his position is popular, but for which Congress would not otherwise enact his preferred policy. To test this perspective, we analyze a simultaneous-equations model of the causes and policy consequences of presidential appeals over budgetary policy. The results support the hypotheses, establishing the effectiveness of public strategies and conditions to which this effectiveness is limited.

On July 27, 1981, less than forty-eight hours before the House was scheduled to vote on President Reagan's proposed income tax reduction of over 25 percent, the president promoted his proposal in a nationally televised address. Speaker of the House Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill, Jr. surmised that prior to the address, "we [the Democrats] had this won."[1] Yet following Reagan's speech, a number of Democrats switched positions, opting to vote with the president. Why did these members abandon their party? As described by an aide to Representative Beverly Byron, one of the Democrats that switched positions, Byron's office was "inundated with calls" in support of Reagan's proposal the morning after his speech. Offices across the Hill gave similar reports.[2] In the end, the tax cut won by a vote of 238 to 195.

Fifteen years later, with the partisanship of the presidency and House reversed (the Senate was again Republican), President Clinton promoted his budget proposals to the public following a breakdown in negotiations with Congress. Ultimately, these efforts helped enable Clinton to achieve his policy goals. As recounted by a Chief Clerk of the House Appropriations Committee, "The Republicans pushed their agenda too far, and Clinton was able to capitalize on the situation with the public . . . the next

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[1] "Tax Victory gives Reagan a Clean Sweep on Economic Proposals." *The National Journal.* 1 August 1981.

[2] Tom Raum, "Hill Flooded with Phone Calls, Telegrams." *The Associated Press.* 28 July 1981.

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year, they [the Republicans in Congress] didn't need to be told not to push that hard again."[3]

These legislative victories of Reagan and Clinton provoke a number of questions. Can presidents systematically gain legislative influence through public appeals? If so, under what conditions, and how does this ability affect the balance of power between the legislative and executive branches?

Arguably the most consistent finding in research on the plebiscitary activity of presidents is that they can utilize speechmaking and other rhetorical activities to increase the salience of issues. Beginning with Schattschneider's (1960, 14) observation that the president constitutes the "principal instrument" for attracting a national audience to a policy debate, a range of work has found that presidential speeches increase the public's attention towards the issues addressed.[4] According to research on Congress, this change in public salience affects legislators' behavior. In particular, members are found to be more responsive to constituency preferences on salient policies (Hutchings 1998; Kollman 1998). In combination, these various studies suggest that a president should be able to generate influence through public appeals; specifically, a president should be able to achieve policy goals by strategically publicizing issues for which he would like members to become more responsive to voters' policy positions.

Other research suggests, however, that a president may not systematically gain influence through plebiscitary activity. For example, Covington (1987) and Kernell (1993) argue that a president can impede executive-legislative bargaining by "going public." They observe that members have less flexibility to modify their positions on salient issues, preventing policy compromise. In addition, according to Kernell, members may be unwilling to bargain with a president who offers no explicit reward for supporting his position and instead goes over their heads to the people.

Existing empirical work does not resolve whether in fact presidents gain systematic influence from public appeals. Isolated cases of policy success have been documented, but as Tulis (1987, 45) notes, these cases number "a very few" within the literature. Moreover, prominent failures have also been documented, ranging from President Wilson's appeal for the League of Nations to President Clinton's advocacy for nationalized health care.[5] The work most suggestive of systematic influence is Mouw and MacKuen (1992), who show that when presidents Reagan and Eisenhower publicly addressed issues, congressional agenda-setters took more moderate positions. Mouw and MacKuen do not examine whether this behavior reflected presidents achieving their policy goals however.[6]

In sum, various studies suggest that presidents should be able to achieve legislative influence from public appeals, other research argues they may impede policy success, and previous work does not resolve this discord. This state of the literature suggests a need for analysis that contains two key components: (1) a theoretical perspective of the conditions under which a president should appeal to the public and those under which this action should generate influence, and (2) an empirical test of this perspective.

We develop analysis that contains these components. Specifying assumptions on the incentives of presidents, congressional members, and the public, we derive hypotheses about the causes and effects of public appeals. The hypotheses state that plebiscitary activity should generate influence, but in part because a president's decision to go public about an issue will be based on the popularity of his proposal with the electorate. A president will not, however, publicize proposals that are likely to be enacted absent plebiscitary activity, but instead those that are *least* likely to be enacted.

These predictions are tested on a data set of public appeals over budgetary policy constructed through content analysis of all the nationally televised addresses of Presidents Eisenhower through Clinton. To account for presidents' strategic behavior with respect to going public, a simultaneous system of equations is employed. It assumes not only that presidents' public appeals may affect policy success but also that expected success, in addition to other political conditions, may affect the likelihood of an appeal. The specification also controls for a variety of factors that could affect a president's influence, including the partisan composition of Congress, the

[3]Interview with Frank Cushing, Chief Clerk of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development, and Other Independent Agencies. August 1996. Washington, DC.

[4]Among others, Cornwell (1965) and Neustadt (1990, part 2) discuss this phenomenon. See Cohen (1995) and Hill (1998) for evidence of the phenomenon based on survey data.

[5]Among other excellent analyses of these failed endeavors, see Tulis (1987) for the former case and Jacobs and Shapiro (2000) for the latter.

[6]In recently developed work, Barrett (2000) finds that a president's likelihood of achieving legislative success is higher the more times he addresses the issue in written and spoken statements. Barrett does not, however, distinguish between statements that are directed to the public at large and those directed specifically at Congress.

prior salience of the policy issue, and expected public approval for the president's proposal.

The analysis is divided into four sections. In the second section of the paper, the theoretical perspective is developed. The empirical model and measurement of the data are described in the third section. The fourth section proceeds with the estimation and results, and the fifth section concludes with a discussion of the broader implications of the findings.

A Theoretical Perspective on Presidents' Public Appeals

Our theoretical perspective is based on the underlying assumption that the president is a rational political actor who has policy goals. The goals may derive from a variety of sources, including the desire to achieve a favorable historical legacy, ideological beliefs, or in the case of first-term presidents, from electoral motivations (Moe 1985). Congressional members are also presumed to be rational actors with policy objectives, and following the literature, we assume they are determined in part by members' desire to represent voters' policy positions (Fiorina 1974; Mayhew 1974). However, this desire is not the only factor allowed to affect the objectives. Research suggests members have incentives to enact policies preferred by their party (Aldrich 1995; Rohde 1991; Snyder and Groseclose 2000), congressional committees (Maltzman 1999) and interest groups that lobby them (Caldeira and Wright 1998; Hall and Wayman 1990). Moreover, a legislator's policy goals may also be affected by personal convictions (Arnold 1990). We therefore assume that on a given policy issue, a member may not want to enact legislation that comports with voters' preferences.

We further presume that a member is more likely to prefer legislation reflecting voters' preferences when the issue is publicly salient. Thus as the salience of an issue increases, Congress becomes more responsive to public opinion and less influenced by other political factors. A wide range of research supports this assumption. Perhaps most famously, Schattschneider (1960) argues that the visibility of an issue affects legislative politics, with Congress being more responsive to voters on issues that are publicized. Similarly, Kingdon's (1977) model of legislative-voting decisions suggests that members are more likely to vote with constituency preferences on salient policies.[7]

In our theoretical perspective, plebiscitary appeals have the effect of increasing the salience of the issues addressed. While appeals may also affect voters' underlying policy positions, this effect is assumed to be limited. In other words, plebiscitary activity does not enable a president simply to move voters' policy positions to any position he desires. These assumptions are supported by various public opinion studies. For instance, Cohen (1995) and Hill (1998) show that major presidential speeches increase the salience of issues, while Page and Shapiro (1984, 1992) and Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey (1987) demonstrate that the ability of a president to change voters' preferences is relatively limited. Specifically, such a change on voters' positions occurs only for presidents with approval ratings of at least 50 percent, requires repeated appeals, and even then involves only a five to ten percentage point change in mass public opinion.

Given these assumptions about presidential plebiscitary activity and legislators' behavior, a president has the incentive to go public strategically, publicizing issues on which he would like members to become more responsive to voters' positions, which are largely determined prior to an appeal.[8] In fact, a president's publicizing of an unpopular proposal could decrease his chances of legislative success. Members would become more responsive to citizens' preferences and therefore less willing to enact the proposal. The following two testable hypotheses are thus suggested.

Hypothesis 1: *The Influence Hypothesis.* A president should gain influence on policy issues he chooses to promote in public appeals.

Hypothesis 2: *The Proposal Popularity Hypothesis.* A president's likelihood of appealing to the public should be positively correlated with the popularity of his policy proposal.

The Influence and Proposal Popularity Hypotheses are clearly related since the influence generated from public appeals depends upon presidents' strategic choice of issues to promote to the public. We consider the predictions separately, however, because other research suggests that the Proposal Popularity Hypothesis could hold even if the Influence Hypothesis did not, or that the latter could hold independently. These alternative perspectives are discussed in turn.

As mentioned in the introduction, some previous work suggests that presidents may not typically generate influence from public appeals. Plebiscitary activity, according to one argument, can cause members to "dig in

[7] More recently, several scholars have provided quantitative evidence of this phenomenon (Hutchings 1998; Kollman 1998).

[8] See Canes-Wrone (forthcoming) for a game theoretic model that formalizes this logic.

their heels" against presidential requests by reducing the possibility of compromise (Covington 1987; Kernell 1993). Moreover, because a public strategy, unlike traditional bargaining techniques, fails to offer targeted rewards to individual members, they may feel "ill-disposed" towards a president that prefers such a strategy (Polsby 1978). Consistent with these arguments, Tulis (1987) notes that the only evidence for presidential influence from rhetorical activity consists of a small number of cases that do not necessarily reflect the normal conditions of legislative-executive bargaining. In combination, these studies indicate that even when presidents publicize relatively popular proposals, influence may not be generated. The alternative to the Influence Hypothesis is therefore the null that public appeals do not facilitate policy success.

Another body of work suggests that appeals do facilitate policy success, but that this success is not necessarily dependent upon the popularity of the president's proposal. For example, Schattschneider (1960) argues that plebiscitary politics increase the power of the presidency but does not discuss how this power might be limited by the degree to which the president's stated positions reflect public opinion. Similarly, Miller (1993) suggests that appeals generate presidential influence by decreasing the power of congressional committees relative to the floor, with which presidential preferences are presumably aligned, and does not examine the relationship between the floor's position and public opinion. According to these arguments, the president may potentially generate influence from appealing to the public even if voters do not support his position. The alternative to the Proposal Popularity hypothesis is thus the null that the popularity of a proposal should not affect the likelihood that a president promotes it to the public.[9]

Neither the Influence nor Proposal Popularity Hypotheses depend upon the number of public appeals a president can make. Regardless of whether a president can publicize one or an infinite number of issues, he should go public when his positions are in line with voters' preferences and achieve influence from this strategy. Yet by presuming presidents are constrained in the number of times they can appeal to the public, an additional prediction can be derived, and previous work supports this assumption. In particular, the literature suggests that public attention towards politics is limited (e.g., Brody 1991), and correspondingly, that media outlets limit the time allotted to presidential communications (Kernell 1993).

Accordingly, we incorporate into our theoretical perspective the assumption that a president can only make a limited number of appeals. Each one therefore extracts an opportunity cost; when the president focuses public attention on a given issue or set of issues, he reduces his ability to focus it on others. A president should thus not squander public appeals on policies over which he expects to achieve success without this action. Rather, among issues on which he prefers members to become more responsive to public opinion, he should publicize those for which he would otherwise have the *least* influence.

Hypothesis 3: *The Difficult Issue Hypothesis.* A president's likelihood of appealing to the public over an issue should be negatively correlated with his expected influence absent this action.

Like the first two hypotheses, the Difficult Issue Hypothesis is not the accepted conventional wisdom. In fact, a third alternative perspective predicts the opposite presidential behavior. In a recently developed paper, Clinton et al. (1999) argue that presidents have the incentive to appeal to the public when success is *most* likely without the action. Assuming that presidents primarily want to claim credit for policy reforms, the authors argue that presidents have the incentive to go public merely to create an illusion of power, engaging in plebiscitary activity when Congress would enact their stated preferences even without this activity. Thus, the alternative to the Difficult Issue Hypothesis is not merely the null, but that a president's likelihood of appealing to the public should be positively correlated with his expected influence absent this action.

The alternative hypothesis highlights that a positive correlation between public appeals and presidential influence in and of itself does not imply that appeals facilitate policy success. The correlation could derive either from the achievement of influence or the president's publicizing of issues over which success is predetermined. Likewise, the Difficult Issue Hypothesis underscores that a negative correlation does not imply that plebiscitary appeals beget policy failure. If a president employs appeals when they are most needed, they will not be associated with cases in which success is highly likely, but instead the issues on which the president expects to be least successful.

In the following sections, we conduct empirical analysis that moves beyond a basic correlation between appeals and success to test the predictions of the theoretical perspective. Importantly, the analysis allows that presidents may strategically choose the issues to promote in public appeals.

[9] The *Proposal Popularity Hypothesis* is consistent with Groseclose and McCarty (2001), which suggests that an elected official will not want voters to learn his political preferences if they diverge from voters' preferences. The Groseclose and McCarty analysis does not examine public appeals, but rather bargaining between two political actors in front of an audience of attentive voters.

Data, Model Specification, and Measurement

To test our three hypotheses, we analyze presidential proposals and legislative outcomes involving the federal budget during the presidencies of Eisenhower through Clinton. Budget data are valuable for the purposes of our analysis for several reasons. One benefit is that the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921 requires presidents to submit an annual budget with funding proposals for all agencies. For many other types of legislative decisions, such as roll-call votes, presidents can avoid stating positions, and as Covington (1987) finds, presidents are likely to do so under the same conditions in which salience is a political disadvantage. Thus data based on noncompulsory presidential positions should be biased towards a finding of legislative influence from plebiscitary appeals. Budget data avoids this bias.

A second attraction of the data is that many significant presidential initiatives of the past forty years are reflected primarily through the appropriations process. For example, President Ford's proposal to deregulate the trucking industry is not included in *Congressional Quarterly's* standard measure of presidential success, but is reflected in Ford's budget proposals for the Interstate Commerce Commission and the enacted appropriations.[10] Our data include this example among other significant initiatives such as President Kennedy's efforts to place a man on the moon, President Johnson's War on Poverty, and President Bush's War on Drugs.

A third benefit is that previous research establishes the appropriations process has involved active bargaining by the executive and legislative branches, at least since the mid-twentieth century. While some of this research emphasizes the influence of Congress (Brady and Volden 1998; Krehbiel 1998), other work the president (Kiewiet and Krehbiel 2000), and yet other research the influence of parties (Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991), these studies all suggest that budget legislation reflects conscious decision making by the president and Congress.[11] Thus to the extent that a president can generate influence from going public, appeals about budgetary programs should be reflected in the president's influence over enacted appropriations.

The specific data we examine consist of proposed and enacted budget authority for forty-three domestic agencies in fiscal years 1958 through 1997.[12] Because the timing of the budget process demands a newly elected president to submit proposals designed by the previous administration, we exclude the fiscal year from each president's first year in office. We focus on domestic agencies because previous research suggests that presidents have a greater ability to affect public opinion on foreign affairs (Page and Shapiro 1992). Our analysis is therefore biased *against* a finding of legislative influence from public appeals. Finally, our set of agencies is restricted to ones funded by discretionary spending. This type of funding requires Congress to enact new appropriations annually, thus for each agency and year we have an observation of the legislative enactment of budget authority.

General Specification of Model

While we reserve the details of the estimation until the measurement of the variables has been described, a general specification of the empirical model is offered at the outset to highlight the central variables. In traditional analyses of presidential influence in Congress, presidents' legislative success is regressed on various political factors (e.g., Bond and Fleisher 1990; Covington, Wrighton, and Kinney 1995). The direct analog for our study would therefore be a regression of presidential budgetary success on presidents' public appeals and other variables. Our theoretical perspective suggests, however, that the president's decision to issue an appeal should be a function of expected success in addition to other factors. The empirical analysis thus requires a simultaneous-equations model in which presidential budgetary success and public appeals are endogenous to each other. The following two-equation specification for each agency i in year t encompasses this end:

[10] For an analysis that demonstrates the significance of this Ford proposal, see Derthick and Quirk (1985).

[11] See also Su, Kamlet, and Mowery (1993).

[12] These agencies include: the Administration of the Public Debt, Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Mines, Bureau of Narcotics, Bureau of Reclamation, Census Bureau, Civil Aeronautics Board, Coast and Geodectic Survey, Commodities Future Trading Commission, Consumer Product Safety Commission, Customs Bureau, Drug Enforcement Administration, Economic Development Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Federal Communications Commission, Federal Prison System, Federal Trade Commission, Fish and Wildlife Service, Food and Drug Administration, Forest Service, Geological Survey, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Internal Revenue Collection, Interstate Commerce Commission, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, National Institute of Standards, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Park Service, Natural Resources and Conservation Service, National Science Foundation, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Patent and Trademark Office, Rural Electrification Administration, Secret Service, Securities and Exchange Commission, Small Business Loans and Investment, Soil Conservation Service, United States Mint, and the Weather Bureau.

(1) $Presidential\ Budgetary\ Success_{it} = f(Public\ Appeal_{it}, Unified\ Government_{it}, Proposal\ Popularity_{it}, Control\ Variables_{it}, \varepsilon_{it})$,

(2) $Public\ Appeal_{it} = f(Presidential\ Budgetary\ Success_{it}, Agency\ Size_{it}, Proposal\ Popularity_{it}, Control\ Variables_{it}, u_{it})$,

where ε_{it} and u_{it} are normally distributed error terms.

The model tests the Influence, Proposal Popularity and Difficult Issue Hypotheses, accounting for a set of control variables that are subsequently defined. Specifically, Equation (1) captures the Influence Hypothesis by regressing the president's budgetary success on the president's decision to make a public appeal. The Proposal Popularity and Difficult Issue Hypotheses are reflected in Equation (2), which specifies public appeals to be a function of the popularity of the president's proposal and expected budgetary success. Since previous research suggests that proposal popularity may directly affect policy outcomes (e.g., Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson 1995), this factor is also included as a regressor in Equation (1). More generally, we include all exogenous factors in each equation unless we specifically justify the exclusion, as is standard in instrumental variable models. The excluded instruments include *Agency Size* and *Unified Government*, and as specified in Equations (1) and (2), the former instrument identifies public appeals and the latter presidential budgetary success. The justification for this identification is given below as we describe the measurement of the variables.[13]

[13] We note that analysis has also been conducted with an endogenous regime-switching specification to assess whether presidential influence from public appeals differs by whether the president or Congress desires higher spending, and the results indicate the influence is statistically equivalent between the regimes. (In a two-tailed Wald test of the hypothesis that asymmetry exists, $p = 0.728$). The regime-switching estimation was applied to Equation (1) given a predicted value of Public Appeal equaling the fitted values from a probit regression of Public Appeal regressed on all exogenous variables listed in Equations (1) and (2). The regime indicators equaled the fitted values from a probit regression of Pr (Presidential Proposal > Enacted Appropriations) = 1 regressed all exogenous factors in the other equations, a set of appropriations bill indicators, and indicators for the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings bill and 1990 Budget Enforcement Act. A two-stage instrumental variables, regime-switching approach was adopted because the solution to a model of endogenous regime switching and simultaneous equations has not been derived. In fact, the only work we could find commenting on such a model is an *Econometrica* article that describes the system as too "costly" to estimate (Lee and Porter 1984, 406).

Given previous research, the result of statistically equivalent influence between the regimes is not surprising. Recent work indicates that presidential influence over appropriations should not be affected by whether the president desires more or less spending than Congress (Kiewiet and Krehbiel 2000; Krehbiel 1998). Moreover, while Kiewiet and McCubbins (1988) find that presidential influence is greater when presidents desire less spending, public-opinion research suggests a countervailing effect in the case of plebiscitary activity. In particular, this literature suggests that citizens generally support higher spending on individual budgetary policies, implying appeals should be more effective when presidents desire higher spending than Congress (see Hansen 1998 for a review of this literature and a challenge to it). Thus our result of statistically symmetric influence is consistent with both recent work that finds influence should not be asymmetric, and the combination of studies that predict countervailing asymmetric effects.

Variables Subject to Testing

Equations (1) and (2) specify five key variables for purposes of the testing. Three of them—Presidential Budgetary Success, Public Appeal, and Proposal Popularity—are directly mentioned in the theoretical hypotheses. The remaining two, Agency Size and Unified Government, serve as instrumental variables that identify Public Appeal and Presidential Budgetary Success, respectively.

Presidential budgetary success. The dependent variable of Equation (1) equals the negative of the absolute difference between the percentage change in appropriations requested by the president and that enacted for agency i and fiscal year t:

$$-|\%\Delta\text{Presidential Proposal}_{it} - \%\Delta\text{Enacted Appropriations}_{it}|.$$

The variable is based on traditional presidential success measures, which assume a president is most successful when Congress adopts his policy position. Specifically, Presidential Budgetary Success presumes that the greater the difference between a president's position and the outcome, the less successful the president.[14] The measure is based on the percentage change in spending because research emphasizes the incrementalism of the budgetary process (White 1995; Wildavsky 1992). In addition, the differencing reduces autocorrelation that would otherwise affect the estimation.[15]

In using the president's proposals as a proxy of presidential preferences, we recognize that the former may reflect strategic behavior on the part of the president. Notably, we employ a specification in which any such behavior would not affect the signs or significance of the coefficients, only the magnitudes. Moreover, in terms of the magnitudes, strategic proposing would *understate* the

[14] Thus, like spatial models of the budgetary process, (e.g., Ferejohn and Krehbiel 1987), Presidential Budgetary Success assumes that the president's preferences are single-peaked and symmetric, to use the terminology of such spatial models.

[15] With the transformation, the Durbin-Watson statistic for the reduced-form equation predicting Presidential Budgetary Success does not reject the null of autocorrelation in each of the analyses that we conduct (dw = 1.990 for the sample of all budgetary observations and dw = 2.243 for the Proposal Popularity sample).

estimated impact of plebiscitary activity on presidential influence, reducing the size of the coefficient on Public Appeal. The behavior would not affect the estimated impact of proposal popularity on public appeals, and would exaggerate the estimated effect of presidential budgetary success on appeals, whether this effect was positive or negative.[16] Other possible specifications entail problems that could bias in favor of accepting the theoretical hypotheses; because our specification only affects the magnitudes of the coefficients, but not the signs or standard errors, it avoids this possibility.[17] Moreover, the only magnitude for which strategic proposing would exaggerate the importance of a predicted presidential behavior would be the magnitude of a negative coefficient on presidents' budgetary success. We therefore interpret the size of this effect with caution, focusing instead on the sign and significance.

[16] If the president tried to increase his bargaining position by offering a proposal further from the congressional preferred outcome than is his true preference, then Presidential Budgetary Success would on average be higher by a multiplicative factor k. Additional random measurement error might exist, but importantly, this would not affect the testing of the hypotheses since Presidential Budgetary Success is a dependent variable in Equation (1) and an instrumented endogenous variable in Equation (2). Measurement error in these types of variables is not problematic (Greene 1993, 280–281). Thus the only effect with which we need be concerned is the factor k.

To understand the effect of k on the coefficient for Public Appeal, note that the latter equals the effect of Agency Size (the instrument for Public Appeal) in the reduced form of Equation (2) divided by the effect of Agency Size in the reduced form of Equation (1). (See Heckman 1978 for this derivation). Assuming that Presidential Budgetary Success were inflated by k, the coefficient on Agency Size in Equation (1) would be inflated by k while the coefficient on Agency Size in Equation (2) would not be affected. The effect of Public Appeal would therefore be understated by $1/k$, but the standard error and sign would not be affected; the result would simply be a linear transformation that understates the true value. Similarly, the effect of Presidential Budgetary Success would be overstated by k regardless of sign and significance.

[17] An alternative would be to add to the current specification an equation predicting Presidential Proposal from a separate first-stage equation. However, this produces an unidentified system since a variable that predicts Presidential Proposal should clearly also predict $-|\%\Delta\text{Presidential Proposal} - \%\Delta\text{Enacted Appropriations}|$. A theoretically identified alternative would be to regress Enacted Appropriations on the predicted value of Presidential Proposal; this value interacted with all variables that are assumed to affect presidential influence, and the main effects of these variables, with all of these effects estimated separately by whether the president is estimated to prefer more or less spending than Congress. A critical problem with this specification, however, is that it entails an extraordinary amount of multicollinearity. Presidential Proposal would be involved in thirty-four separate terms (thirty-two of them interaction terms), and moreover, each factor assumed to affect presidents' influence would be involved in four terms. Preliminary analysis suggests that at least twelve of these factors are correlated at above 0.9, thus not only the standard errors but also the signs of the coefficients could be affected (Greene 1993, 267), potentially in favor of our hypotheses.

Public appeal. We have conducted content analysis of all presidential addresses that were nationally televised between 1957 and 1996, the years during which appropriations for fiscal years 1958 through 1997 were enacted.[18] These addresses include speeches on specialized issues as well as State of the Union addresses and were coded from the *Public Papers of the President.* For a given agency and fiscal year, Public Appeal equals one if the president explicitly promoted his proposal or policy issues that could only refer to it, and equals zero otherwise.[19] The data include eighty-seven instances of a president promoting one of the budgetary issues to the public, suggesting an average of two to three such appeals per year. Other descriptive statistics on Public Appeal are given in the appendix, which also provides descriptive statistics on all variables.

Proposal popularity. The variable is based on responses to the following survey question: "We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money, too little money, or about the right amount on [the particular problem]." The question has been asked in either the General Social Survey or a national Roper survey in almost every year since 1971 for six policy issues that correspond to agencies in our data set.[20] For the years in which each survey was conducted, Proposal Popularity is based on the average between the responses in the Roper survey and General Social Survey conducted most recently prior to the president's proposal. If only one survey was conducted, the variable is based on these responses alone.

Specifically, Proposal Popularity equals the percentage of respondents that at least weakly agree with the president's proposal. For example, if the president

[18] Typically, appropriations for a given fiscal year are enacted in the previous calendar year.

[19] This coding minimizes any noise that could result from the mismatching of an appeal to a program. Preliminary analysis of general proclamations such as "I am the environmental president" supports Cohen (1997), who finds that such statements are largely symbolic rather than related to specific policy initiatives. In particular, while the public appeals of our data comply with presidents' actual proposals, general proclamations can not always be linked to the proposals.

[20] The matching of issues with agencies is as follows: crime and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the environment and the Environmental Protection Agency, space and the National Aeronautics Space Administration, poverty assistance and the Economic Development Administration, parks and the National Park Service, and drugs and the Drug Enforcement Agency.

requests a 5 percent increase in spending for the Environmental Protection Agency, the variable equals the percentage of respondents whom did not report a preference for less spending on the environment.[21] Because the data on proposal popularity exist for only a subset of the agencies and years, we analyze the budgetary data that correspond to the survey data in addition to all budgetary observations. The appendix gives descriptive statistics for each sample of the data.

Agency size. The variable equals agency appropriations in the fiscal year prior to last as a percentage of total discretionary spending that year. The factor is an excluded instrument since it should be correlated with public appeals but not the president's budgetary success. Larger programs have a greater impact on other fiscal policies because total spending, even allowing for deficits, is not unconstrained.[22] The more spending allocated to a given agency, the less available for other agencies (or tax cuts). Thus between two programs that a president is otherwise indifferent about publicizing, he should appeal to the public about the one with a greater impact on the budget as a whole. Aside from this effect however, a president should not have more influence over large programs. That is, if the size of a program did not affect the president's likelihood of appealing to the public, then the factor would not increase the president's likelihood of success. The direct effect of Agency Size can therefore be excluded from Equation (1) and included only in Equation (2).

Unified government. This instrument, which identifies Presidential Budgetary Success, is an indicator that equals one if both chambers have a majority of members in the same party as the president. Following previous research, we expect presidents to be more successful in the legislative arena given unified partisan control. Even Brady and Volden (1998) and Krehbiel (1998), who find legislative outcomes are not generally affected by whether government is unified or divided, suggest that this difference is relevant for budget politics.[23] The factor should not otherwise affect a president's incentive to go public however; if unified partisan control did not affect presidents' budgetary success, then we would not expect the variable to affect the likelihood of an appeal. Since Equation (2) already accounts for the direct effect of presidential success, Unified Government can be excluded from the equation.

Control Variables

We include a number of control variables to account for other factors that could affect a president's influence over budget appropriations. These variables include the following.

Prior issue salience. We employ two control variables, *Most Important Problem* and *Prior Media Salience*, to account for the fact that an issue may be salient before a president promotes it in a national address.[24] The first measure is constructed from responses to the Gallup Organization Most Important Problem survey, which asks individuals "What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?" Since the interval between an appeal and the most recent survey varies greatly across time, we base Most Important Problem on all surveys given in the year prior to an appeal if one was given, and on all surveys in the year prior to the president's proposal if no appeal was given. Specifically, Most Important Problem equals the percentage of surveys in which an issue particular to the agency was cited by least one percent of respondents. The measure has the attractive property of directly reflecting public opinion, but entails the disadvantage of only involving issues that qualify to a percentage of citizens as the *most* important problem.

We therefore also capture prior issue salience with a less direct, but more comprehensive, measure based on

[21] We have also conducted analysis with Proposal Popularity equaling the percentage of responses strongly agreeing with the direction of the proposal and received substantively similar results.

[22] Even ignoring the macroeconomic implications of infinitely high deficits or taxes, public opinion research suggests that solid majorities have consistently opposed high deficits and taxes throughout the twentieth century (Modigliani and Modigliani 1987). Thus to the extent that public opinion has any effect on congressional members' and presidents' behavior, total spending should not be unconstrained.

[23] In particular, this work suggests that majority rule determines legislative politics on the budget; the possibility of a filibuster and veto are not pivotal in this context due to the extreme status quo of zero appropriations. Thus to the extent that partisanship measures politicians' preferences, budgetary outcomes should be affected by whether government is unified or divided. For work indicating that this factor generally affects policy outcomes, see Cameron (2000) and Howell et al. (2000).

[24] We have also tested for whether presidents' influence from public appeals depends on the prior salience of the issue and in general do not find that this interaction has a significant effect. When including interaction terms between each of the prior salience variables and Public Appeal, only the interaction term with Most Important Problem in the sample of all budgetary observations has a significant coefficient, which is positive. The interaction term with Prior Media Salience is never significant, and neither is the interaction with Most Important Problem in the sample with the data on popularity of the proposal. In each case however, the coefficient on the main effect of Public Appeal remains significantly positive. These results are available upon request.

media coverage. The variable equals the number of front-page *New York Times* articles on the agency or its budgetary programs during the two months prior to the appeal if one was given, and during the two months prior to the president's proposal if no appeal was given. Front-page *Times* articles are an established measure of media attention to an issue (Brody 1991). While periods shorter than two months are often used to estimate coverage prior to a particular event (e.g., Edwards, Mitchell, and Welch 1995), we adopt this length to capture the longest possible period during which presidents would generally plan a major address.[25]

Targeted address. The variable controls for any influence that a president achieves by giving speeches to specialized public audiences and was constructed through content analysis of all minor presidential addresses in the *Public Papers of the Presidents*. The variable equals one if the president gave a targeted address about an agency, or programs particular it, and equals zero otherwise.[26]

Priority. The factor accounts for the fact that a president will likely exert more pressure on members to enact his priorities as compared to other proposals (Fett 1994; Peterson 1990). To construct the variable, we conducted content analysis of all executive Budget Messages and Statements of Budget Priorities for the years of the data. Presidential Priority equals one if the president designated the agency a priority in his executive budget of that year and equals zero otherwise.

Personal popularity. The factor accounts for any legislative influence that derives from a president's personal approval ratings.[27] As is standard, we construct our measure of popularity from the longstanding Gallup poll that asks respondents "Do you approve or disapprove of the way [the current president] is handling his job as president?" Because budget negotiations occur throughout the year, we use the president's average approval during the period in which the budget proposal is submitted and appropriations enacted. Also, because previous research suggests that any effect of approval should be greater if the factor is measured in ranges (Bond and Fleisher 1990), we code popularity as an indicator variable that equals one if approval is at least fifty percent, and equals zero otherwise.[28]

Start of term. The variable equals one for the first year of a presidential term and zero for the other years. Previous research suggests that presidents should be more successful in the legislative arena immediately following their election to office due to the so-called "honeymoon effect" (McCarty 1997).

% change in Gross Domestic Product (% Δ GDP). The factor equals the percentage change in GDP over the year prior to the president's proposal and is included to account for any effects that the macroeconomy could have on proposed and enacted budget authority.

Indicator variables for the individual presidents. We include the set of indicators to capture any influence that is unique to the president in office. Each indicator is given the name of the president so that, for example, *Eisenhower* equals one for the years in which Eisenhower held office and otherwise equals zero.

Estimation and Results

The estimation of Equations (1) and (2) requires a simultaneous-equations approach in which one of the dependent variables, Public Appeal, is dichotomous and the other, Presidential Budgetary Success, is continuous. Amemiya (1978), building on the two-stage analytical method developed by Heckman (1978), provides a maximum-likelihood function for such a system, assuming a probit estimation of the equation with dichotomous dependent variable. We adopt this approach. Specifically, we maximize the following likelihood function:

$$\log L = \sum_{it} \log f_1(x'_{it}\beta) + \sum_{it} Public\ Appeal_{it} \log F(x'_{it}\gamma + \rho\, Presidential\ Budgetary\ Success_{it}) + \sum_{it} (1 - Public\ Appeal_{it}) \log [1 - F(x'_{it}\gamma + \rho\, Presidential\ Budgetary\ Success_{it})],$$

[25] See for example the descriptions of presidential speechmaking in Dallek (1998), Hartmann (1980), and Schlesinger (1965).

[26] We do not include addresses given to the agency itself since research on targeted addresses (Hager and Sullivan 1994; Kernell 1993) describes them as addresses to the public, not to other members of the executive branch.

[27] See Brody (1991) for a review of this literature.

[28] One could argue that Personal Popularity should be interacted with Public Appeal in Equation (1) since presidents may have greater influence from appealing to the public when they are popular. We have conducted analysis of each sample of our data with such a specification, and find no statistically significant difference between presidents' influence from public appeals when popular and unpopular; the main effect on Public Appeal is consistently positive and significant but the interaction term is never significant.

where F is the standard normal distribution function, f_1 is the density function of $N(0, \sigma_1^2)$ with σ_1^2 the sum of squared residuals for Equation (1), x is the set of exogenous variables previously defined, and β, γ, and ρ are parameters to be estimated. The way in which these estimated parameters translate into the coefficients on the right-hand side variables of Equations (1) and (2) is described in Amemiya's (1978) article, to which we refer interested readers.

The results of the estimation strongly support our theoretical perspective, and we begin by describing the parameter estimates on the determinants of public appeals. The estimates address the Proposal Popularity Hypothesis, which predicts that presidents will be more likely to publicize popular proposals, and the Difficult Issue Hypothesis, which predicts that presidents will be more likely to publicize proposals otherwise unlikely to be accepted. Table 1 presents the results. As mentioned previously, the empirical analysis has been conducted on all budgetary observations in addition to those with data on the popularity of the president's proposal.

The results for the Proposal Popularity sample provide strong support for the Proposal Popularity Hypothesis. The key coefficient is positive, equaling 6.602, and highly significant ($p < 0.05$). Interpreting the coefficient at the means of the independent variables, as is standard in probit analyses, a 10 percentage point increase in approval for the president's position increases the probability that he goes public about the issue by 22 percent. Thus as expected, the president's decision to appeal to the public depends upon the popularity of his proposal.

In addition to this finding regarding marginal changes in the popularity of presidential proposals, the raw data show that in only one of the eighty-eight Proposal Popularity observations did a president appeal to the public about an issue for which a majority of the public disapproved of his position.[29] In 23 percent of the cases, a president did offer a proposal that faced this level of disapproval, but he generally did not publicize the issue. Instead, as predicted by our theoretical perspective, presidents promoted issues on which their positions were relatively popular. The results thus indicate any influence presidents obtain from appealing to the public derives part from their strategic choice of issues.

This strategic choice extends to the degree of expected success on a policy. Consistent with the Difficult Issue Hypothesis, the results suggest that between two otherwise equivalent policies, a president is more likely to appeal to the public about the one on which he could expect to achieve less success without this action. The coefficient on Presidential Budgetary Success is negative with at least marginal significance ($p < 0.1$ in a two-tailed test) in each sample, and strong significance ($p < 0.05$, two-tailed) in the Proposal Popularity sample. Also consistent with the theoretical perspective, the exogeneity of Presidential Budgetary Success is rejected, indicating that expected presidential success not only affects the likelihood of an appeal but is also affected by an appeal. As Table 1 shows, the log-likelihood test (Greene 1993, 617) strongly rejects the exogeneity of Presidential Budgetary Success in each sample, providing support for the simultaneous equations specification.

Overall, the parameter estimates on Presidential Budgetary Success imply that appeals are employed during genuine policy negotiations. The Clinton et al. (1999) hypothesis that presidents go public on predetermined legislative victories is refuted. Plebiscitary activity is instead focused on policies over which presidents would not achieve success without this activity. This finding indicates that a positive correlation between presidents' success and public appeals should not be an artifact of presidents promoting policies on which success would have occurred absent the appeals.

Correspondingly, the finding highlights why a negative correlation between a set of appeals and presidents' success on these issues would not necessarily imply that appeals impede influence. Ex ante, such a negative correlation could imply that the appeals had detracted from presidents' ability to achieve their policy goals, or simply that presidents had appealed to the public over the most difficult of negotiations. The parameter estimates on Presidential Budgetary Success suggest that in fact, presidents do tend to employ this strategy the greater the need to obtain policy influence.

The remaining key variable in Table 1 is the excluded instrument Agency Size, and like the other key variables, the parameter estimates on this factor comport with our predictions. Presidents are found to be significantly more likely to go public over larger budgetary programs. The primary purpose of including Agency Size was not, of course, to test a specific prediction of the theoretical perspective but instead to ensure that Public Appeal would be identified by an equation distinct from that explaining Presidential Budgetary Success. The nonlinearity of the probit structure naturally contributes to this goal, but the results on Agency Size suggest that in addition, the predicted value of Public Appeal is not simply a function of the exogenous factors that predict Presidential Budgetary Success.

[29] This case involved President Nixon, who in 1972 appealed to the public abut increased funding for NASA even though the survey data suggest that 66 percent of the public believed there was too much spending on space exploration.

Table 1 Determinants of Public Appeals: Simultaneous Equations Results

	Proposal Popularity Observations	All Budgetary Observations
Budgetary Success**	−19.589 (9.406)	−17.016 (10.343)
Proposal Popularity	6.602 (3.010)	—
Size of Agency	0.867 (0.469)	0.252 (0.104)
Prior Media Salience	0.252 (0.385)	0.181 (0.116)
Most Important Problem	−0.694 (0.769)	0.994 (0.213)
Priority	0.257 (0.475)	0.403 (0.173)
Targeted Address	0.737 (0.691)	0.837 (0.335)
Personal Popularity	0.144 (0.564)	0.269 (0.243)
Honeymoon	0.568 (0.951)	0.076 (0.252)
% D GDP	−0.032 (0.987)	−0.027 (0.039)
Constant	−6.362 (2.511)	−2.761 (0.365)
President Fixed Effects	Dropped due to Multicollinearity	Jointly Significant $\chi^2_{(8)}$=18.783 (p=0.009)
Number of Observations	88	1124
Joint Fit of Estimates	$\chi^2_{(11)}$=25.221 (p=0.008)	$\chi^2_{(18)}$=354.949 (p<0.000)
Exogeneity of Budgetary Success	$\chi^2_{(11)}$=58.005 (p<0.000)	$\chi^2_{(18)}$=566.453 (p<0.000)

Structural Probit Estimates of Equation (2) from the simultaneous system of Equations (1) and (2). Standard errors given in parentheses. Budgetary Success** is a function of Equation (1), the results of which are described in Table 2.

The other coefficients in Table 1, those for the control variables, are not significant in the Proposal Popularity sample, although several are significant in the sample of all budgetary observations. For example, the results for the latter indicate that presidents are significantly more likely to appeal to the public about issues that are personal priorities, that have prior salience as measured by the Most Important Problem survey, and that are also issues of targeted addresses. We do not dwell on these findings since the variables were merely included as controls, but do note two potential rationales for the difference in significance of the coefficients across the two samples. First, the difference may simply result from the fact that the popularity of the president's proposal is accounted for in the analysis of the smaller sample. Second, the Proposal Popularity observations consist only of policy issues that are of enough continuing public interest to warrant a recurring poll, and it is possible that presidents have different incentives regarding the publicizing of these issues.

As noted in the table, the president indicators are also jointly significant in the sample of all budgetary observations, but are dropped due to the multicollinearity in the Proposal Popularity sample. In the latter sample, which as mentioned previously dates back only to 1971, the Carter indicator and Unified Government, which is the instrument for Presidential Budgetary Success, are correlated at $\rho = 0.8$.[30] Thus as predicted by econometric

[30] In the sample of all budgetary observations, the correlation between any given president indicator and Unified Government is less than $\rho = 0.6$.

theory, when the president indicators are included, the standard error on Presidential Budgetary Success increases significantly and the president indicators are not jointly significant (Greene 1993, 267). However, the effect of Proposal Popularity, which lacks the collinearity problems, remains positive, significant, and nearly identical in magnitude.[31]

Overall, the results on the determinants of public appeals provide strong support for our theoretical perspective. The higher the popularity of a president's proposal, the more likely he is to appeal to the public about it. Moreover, unpopular proposals are almost never publicized. Presidents do not, however, go public about issues on which victory is predetermined. Instead, between two policies that are otherwise equivalent, a president will go public over the one on which he is likely to be *less* successful. Of course, the fact that presidents appeal to the public as if they are trying to generate influence does not prove that influence is in fact obtained. It remains possible that the Proposal Popularity and Difficult Issue Hypotheses hold, but that the Influence Hypothesis does not.

Table 2 presents the results that directly test this hypothesis, those on the determinants of Presidential Budgetary Success.The table shows that presidents do indeed gain significant influence from public appeals. For each sample, this effect is positive and highly significant. In addition, the magnitude is relatively similar across the samples, suggesting that a president's budgetary success increases by twelve to thirteen percentage points when he promotes the issue in a nationally televised speech. That is, the percentage change in appropriations from the previous year is twelve to thirteen percentage points closer to the president's requested change in appropriations.[32]

Importantly, the results do not imply that a president can appeal to the public on any given issue and achieve policy success. Instead, as predicted by our theoretical perspective, the choice to go public is found to be endogenous to budgetary success. The log-likelihood exogeneity test rejects the exogeneity of Public Appeal, and as shown in Table 2, this finding is significant at $p < 0.000$ for each sample of the data. Thus the results, in combination with those of Table 1, suggest that presidents' influence from appealing to the public is due in part to their strategic behavior. Presidents achieve success from plebiscitary activity, but their likelihood of engaging in this activity depends upon the extent to which salience is a political asset.

Also supporting our predictions, the effect of the instrumental variable Unified Government is positive and significant. This significance most importantly suggests that the predicted value Presidential Budgetary Success in Equation (2) is identified. That is, the regressor is not solely a function of the other variables in the equation. In terms of Equation (1), the estimates on Unified Government indicate that presidents are more successful when their party controls each chamber of Congress. Interestingly, the magnitude of the effect approximates that of Public Appeal, implying that the policy impact of a (strategically given) public appeal is relatively similar to that obtained from a shift in divided to unified government.

Among the control variables in Table 2, the most notable results are those on the variables Most Important Problem and Prior Media Salience, which measure prior issue salience. These effects are generally not significant, the exception being the *negative* effect of Most Important Problem in the Proposal Popularity sample. This effect, and the lack of significance of the other coefficients, supports our theoretical perspective. In particular, the results suggest that the publicizing of issues does not facilitate presidential influence when the president does not strategically select the issues. On policy matters that are salient prior to appeals, presidents have no more influence than on nonsalient issues, and if anything have less influence.

Among the remaining control variables, the only significant effects are those for the popularity of the president's proposal and the differences among individual presidents. The former is consistent with the Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson (1995) finding that voters' policy positions affect the content of public policy; the president's budgetary success is higher the more popular is his position. With regards to the president indicators, the coefficients are again jointly significant in the sample of all budgetary observations, suggesting that individual presidents differ in their legislative influence. As previously discussed, the indicators are not included in the Proposal Popularity analysis due to the collinearity between the Carter indicator and Unified Government for this sample. When the indicators are included, the only notable change is that the effect of Unified Government declines in significance. The Influence Hypothesis still receives strong support, and the president effects themselves are not jointly significant.

We do not provide a lengthy discussion about the remaining insignificant effects since they concern factors that were included simply as control variables, although a possible rationale for their insignificance is suggested by

[31] These results are available upon request.

[32] As mentioned in the previous section, this magnitude is a lower bound on the effect of public appeals. To the extent that presidents propose strategically, our estimates *understate* the actual effect.

Table 2 Determinants of Presidential Budgetary Success: Simultaneous Equations Results

	Proposal Popularity Observations	All Budgetary Observations
Public Appeal**	0.124 (0.061)	0.134 (0.066)
Proposal Popularity	0.753 (0.091)	—
Unified Government	0.114 (0.056)	0.091 (0.046)
Prior Media Salience	–0.035 (0.035)	–0.011 (0.123)
Most Important Problem	–0.114 (0.054)	–0.005 (0.021)
Priority	–0.046 (0.041)	–0.031 (0.016)
Targeted Address	0.054 (0.060)	0.007 (0.040)
Personal Popularity	–0.057 (0.044)	0.007 (0.017)
Honeymoon	0.029 (0.087)	0.008 (0.022)
% Δ GDP	0.005 (0.009)	–0.008 (0.003)
Constant	–0.650 (0.081)	–0.156 (0.049)
President Fixed Effects	Dropped due to Multicollinearity	Jointly Significant $\chi^2_{(8)}$= 35.362 (p=0.009)
Number of Observations	88	1124
Joint Fit of Estimates	$\chi^2_{(11)}$= 140.753 (p<0.000)	$\chi^2_{(18)}$= 286.258 (p<0.000)
Exogeneity of Budgetary Success	$\chi^2_{(11)}$= 67.029 (p<0.000)	$\chi^2_{(18)}$= 428.289 (p<0.000)

Structural Least Squares Estimates of Equation (1) from the simultaneous system of Equations (1) and (2). Standard errors given in parentheses. Public Appeal** is a function of Equation (2), the results of which are described in Table 1.

Covington and Kinney (1999).[33] In particular, this work argues that factors such as presidential popularity should primarily affect the content of the legislative agenda, but not the way in which congressional members vote on it. Since discretionary appropriations are by nature on the agenda each year, our results should not capture any such agenda-setting influence. Even assuming that Covington and Kinney are correct however, the control variables still serve an important purpose in our analysis by ensuring that the effect of a public appeal is not overestimated due to the exclusion of one of these factors.

[33] These results on the control variables are also consistent with the findings of Bond and Fleisher (1990).

Conclusion

James Madison in *Federalist 49* argued that frequent public appeals by politicians would disrupt the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches. Notably, Madison predicted that the executive branch

would lose policy influence from such appeals. Congressional members would have more numerous "connections of blood, of friendship and of acquaintance" and thus a greater ability to generate public support, Madison reasoned.

For some time, however, presidents and political scientists have been aware that the reverse hypothesis is true. Schattschneider (1960) argued forty years ago that presidents have greater legislative influence when executive-legislative conflicts are publicized. More recently, Tulis (1987) suggested that Presidents Roosevelt and Wilson founded a "rhetorical presidency" at the beginning of this century. Yet despite the longstanding appreciation of the plebiscitary nature of the American presidency, no study has offered evidence that presidents systematically gain legislative influence from this capacity. In fact, the isolated cases of legislative success have if anything been overwhelmed by prominent legislative failures and by the argument that a public strategy may decrease presidential influence.

This state of affairs has stood in stark contrast to the overwhelming evidence that presidents have increasingly employed public strategies over time (e.g. Edwards 1983; Gamm and Smith 1998; Hager and Sullivan 1994; Kernell 1993). And while research accounts for this increase with a range of factors, such as communications developments and presidential primary reforms, these arguments generally presume that public strategies afford at least some degree of legislative influence. Our article provides evidence that justifies this trend in presidential behavior. In particular, it suggests that modern presidents systematically achieve policy goals by promoting issues to the public.

Examining the enactment of spending for forty-three agencies across four decades, we find that presidents obtain significant legislative influence by promoting their proposals in nationally televised speeches. This influence is independent of that deriving from presidential priorities, presidential approval, expected public support for the policy, and the prior salience of the issue. Moreover, the effect is not an artifact of presidents appealing to the public about issues on which legislative victory is predetermined. Instead, presidents are found to publicize those proposals for which influence is most needed.

Yet despite this evidence of systematic influence, we do not argue that a president can achieve any policy goal by appealing to the public about it. Consistent with Covington's (1987) claim that "staying private" can be a dominant bargaining strategy, we show that presidents are strategic in selecting the issues promoted to the public. In particular, a president is found to be significantly more likely to publicize an issue the more popular is his position, and unpopular proposals are almost never the subject of appeals. Our results therefore suggest that the influence generated from plebiscitary activity depends in part upon presidents' strategic behavior in choosing the issues to advocate to the public.

The analysis provokes a number of issues for future research. Most obviously, data on other types of legislative outcomes should be used to analyze modern presidents' influence from public appeals. Research suggests that presidents have a greater ability to change public preferences on foreign issues as compared to domestic ones (Page and Shapiro 1992), and thus presidential influence from appealing to the public may be even greater in the area of foreign policy. Nonbudgetary outcomes should also be examined.

With regards to the development of the American presidency, the article motivates the question of how the president's influence from appealing to the public has varied over time. Previous research establishes that presidential attempts to mobilize public opinion date as early as the nineteenth century (Gamm and Smith 1998; Geer 1996; Tulis 1987). It is possible, and the literature would suggest likely, that the political institutions and communications mediums of the 1800s prevented presidents from achieving systematic success through plebiscitary activities. Given the evidence we have presented for modern presidents' systematic influence from public appeals, future work should examine the degree to which such influence is limited to the past forty years.

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Appendix
Descriptive Statistics

	All Budgetary Observations (n = 1124)				Proposal Popularity Observations (n = 88)	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Public Appeal	0.065	0.247	0	1	0.273	0.448
% Δ Enacted Appropriations	0.086	0.252	−0.731	5.367	0.152	0.600
% Δ Presidential Proposal	0.089	0.326	−1.006	5.686	0.068	0.697
Proposal Popularity	—	—	—	—	0.701	0.220
Agency Size	0.249	0.549	0.004	6.416	0.701	0.781
Unified Government	0.335	0.472	0	1	0.188	0.394
Prior Media Salience	0.116	0.486	0	8	0.318	0.617
Most Important Problem	0.097	0.282	0.000	1.000	0.496	0.464
Targeted Address	0.021	0.145	0	1	0.125	0.333
Priority	0.192	0.394	0	1	0.580	0.496
Personal Popularity	0.539	0.499	0	1	0.500	0.503
Start of Term	0.092	0.289	0	1	0.068	0.254
% Δ GDP	3.315	2.536	−2.146	8.477	2.901	2.405

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