

Scapegoating Saviors: Presidential Rhetoric in U.S. Government Shutdowns

by

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Abstract

This project extends research on how and why rhetors create enemies in political discourse. Previous literature has examined the construction of enemies for a number of purposes. One of these purposes is scapegoating. To combat problems within our social, economic, political, and religious structures rhetors often blame others. However, there is a lack of research examining the reflexive functions of enemy creation, such as the creation of a savior persona for the rhetor. There are times when the rhetor uses scapegoating as more than an opportunity to shift blame. I argue the rhetor's purpose then is not only to shift blame but to elevate their status. The focus of this project is the consideration of the reflexive function of scapegoating and how rhetors may use it to develop a savior persona. To illustrate this principle, I consider how and why presidents Trump, Obama, and Clinton enemized Congress to promote themselves as saviors in their State of the Union addresses given during government shutdowns.

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

This project expands current research on how and why rhetors create enemies in political discourse. This project will examine the construction of enemies for the purpose of scapegoating. By scapegoating an enemy, rhetors put the blame on another group or individual in an effort to keep save themselves from blame. The blamed party is then excluded from the community. Rhetors argue that the enemy's removal from the community will solve the problem at hand. However, there are times when the rhetor uses scapegoating as more than an opportunity to remove guilt and frustration over the community's problems. I argue that in such cases the rhetor's purpose goes beyond shifting blame to elevate their status in the community to that of a savior. The primary focus of this project is the illustration of the reflexive function of scapegoating and the development of the rhetor's savior posture. When problems arise within their social, economic, political, and religious structures, rhetors blame others as a means of avoiding addressing those issues. Rhetors seek to not only shift blame but elevate their position to savior by identifying and dividing the enemy, dehumanizing the enemy, creating a sense of urgency to the threat presented by the enemy, and finally scapegoating the enemy for their community's ills.

To illustrate this idea, I examine how presidents Trump, Obama, and Clinton made enemies of Congress as a means to promote themselves and their policies as saviors to the American people. All three of these presidents were burdened with a government shutdown around the time of their State of the Union addresses. These three shutdowns are also the three longest shutdowns in United States government history. Each president used the reflexive function of scapegoating to assume the posture of a savior in his State of the Union.

This project does not seek to examine partisan values and motives for scapegoating. Instead, it considers how rhetors frame violations to the moral standards and character of the American community. These moral standards include the protection of American citizens from outsiders or immigrants, affordable healthcare, and economic security for all classes. Each of these moral standards are the issue of debate between Congress and the president in this study. This project focuses how and why these presidents used Congress' violations against these moral standards through an enemy creation process. Enemizing Congress through this formulaic process allowed each of these presidents to promote themselves and their policies as saviors to the American people through their State of the Union addresses. Therefore, in this project Congress is considered as a complete institution, rather than simply as a coded term for the opposing party.

Additionally, the State of the Union is positioned as the central text in this analysis. This follows current trends of research into political rhetoric that considers the State of the Union a critical key in understanding how Presidents promote, position, and repudiate policies. There are certain traditional requirements which scholars have identified as recurrent in State of the Union addresses and in presidential rhetoric. According to Campbell and Jamieson (2008), the State of the Union is a tool used by the President to maintain tradition through public meditation, assessment, and policy recommendations (p. 137). Researchers have also found that State of the Union addresses require that Presidents acknowledge current policy workings and their positions in regards them, positioning Presidents role as chief legislators. According to Shogan (2011), Presidents elaborate on policy impacts via State of the Union addresses, meaning researchers can chart the progression of presidential terms through the policy emphases of their addresses each year they are in office (p. 7).

The Presidents' Rhetorical Circumstances

Before we can examine the form of these president's arguments in their enemy creation processes, we must first understand what situations brought about the need for these enemies to be created and scapegoated. On the surface, it appears that these presidents' State of the Union addresses don't have much in common. However, closer examination shows these presidents faced a similar rhetorical circumstance in that their political climates were defined by the chaos of a government shutdown. The context these presidents found themselves influenced how the presidents shifted blame for their respective government shutdowns onto Congress.

Donald Trump's Immigration Reform

President Donald Trump faced a debate over immigration reform. Trump said the border crisis was an immediate danger to the safety of the American people and argued that Congress should fund a border wall along the Mexican border. According to Shabad (2019), Congress' position leading up to the 2019 State of the Union was defined by their determination to not concede to Trump's demands for funding for the wall. Trump refused to relent contending that this wall would be better than traditional walls made from concrete and would include state of the art technology that would make it the most effective wall ever built in order to justify the cost (Colvin, 2019). But Congress was still not willing to negotiate on funding for Trump's border wall (Colvin, 2019), which led to a standoff between Trump and Congress. The standoff resulted in a government shutdown as the budget was not passed on time. The debate continued on leading to the longest government shutdown in history.

Amidst this crisis, Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, postponed Trump's State of the Union. Trump announced on January 23, 2019, that he would concede to Pelosi and postpone his address. Pelosi argued that "the shutdown is a crisis Trump alone created" (Gonyea, 2019). She accused Treasury Secretary Commerce Wilbur Ross and the entire Trump administration of having "a Marie Antoinette 'let them eat cake' attitude towards furloughed government workers (Gonyea, 2019). She said, "Secretary Ross does not understand why people without a paycheck are going to food banks. And I guess the president thinks they can call their dads." Pelosi argued that the most important issue for members of Congress and Trump to focus on was reopening the government instead of the upcoming State of the Union address (Gonyea, 2019). According to Collins (2019), without a passed budget many federal agencies were forced to close leaving 380,000 of federal employees furloughed and an additional 420,000 employees were forced to work without pay. According to Wagner (2019), polls offered consistent themes of blame, objection to the shutdown and the wall, and a failure to see the wall as an effective way to combat undocumented immigration. According to Desilver (2019) a poll conducted the week before Trump's State of the Union, 51 percent of Americans said it would be unacceptable if the only way to end the shutdown was to pass a bill that includes Trump's requested funding for the border wall.

Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act

Similarly, Barack Obama's rhetorical circumstance was defined by the debate over healthcare reform. The issue of debate in Obama's 2013 State of the Union was whether to fund the affordable care act. Obama (2013) argued that it was wrong to not provide affordable healthcare to Americans. Congress asked for funding to be removed from the Affordable Care Act. Obama refused to do so arguing the bill had already been upheld by the Supreme Court. The

Senate rejected the bill Congress proposed and after a squabble between the two chambers, the government shut down (Weissman & Rucker, 2013). However, according to Wollner (2013), 85% of necessary funding was already covered as part of the mandatory budget along with Social Security and Medicare. Speaker of the House John Boehner claimed the Affordable Care Act was killing jobs (Weissman, 2013). He argued for to defund the health law, delay it for a year, stop its requirement that employers pay for contraception, block the medical device tax, delay the individual mandate for a year, and take away Congressional employees' health subsidies. Boehner said of Congress' position on Obamacare, "Our message to the United States Senate is real simple: The American people don't want the government shut down and they don't want Obamacare" (Weissman, 2013). All of Congress' demands were rejected by the Senate resulting in a shutdown. The shutdown left 800,000 federal employees without pay. In addition, more than a million other working employees had their paychecks delayed (Weissman and Parker, 2013). According to Katz (2013), on day five of the shutdown, Congress voted to give the furloughed government employees retroactive pay. Meanwhile, some members of Congress kept collecting their paychecks, while others voluntarily gave theirs up (Weissman & Parker, 2013). Nonessential departments and employees were furloughed. National parks, the National Zoo and NASA were all closed. Polls showed a clear majority of Americans wanted Congress to keep the federal government open and deal with the Affordable Care Act separately (Breuninger, 2018). For example, a poll taken September 19-22 found that 63% of respondents — and 51% of Republicans — said Congress should provide the funding necessary to keep the government open, rather than shut it down in an attempt to defund Obamacare (Weissman, 2013). According to Wollner (2013), surveys found that 59% of Americans opposed shutting down the government and risking a default over the Affordable Care Act.

Bill Clinton' Economic Security

Bill Clinton's rhetorical circumstance was defined by a debate over economic security. Clinton (1996) claimed every American who was willing to work should have the right to economic prosperity. Clinton increased social programs to provide this opportunity. These increases were challenged in 1996 by the Republican Congress' "Contract With America" policies. While President Clinton was committed to economic security provided by a balanced budget, Clinton and Congress couldn't agree on which long-term budget projections to use (Mitchell, 1997). Clinton was pro-funding and Congress wanted to cut government programs. The Republican Congress's Contract with America Plan was designed to balance the budget with 10 points of policy amendments all aimed at budgetary cuts, tax cuts, and welfare reform (Little, 2018). Clinton claimed Congress had "failed to pass the straightforward legislation necessary to keep the government running without imposing sharp hikes in Medicare premiums and deep cuts in education and the environment" (Gonyea, 2018). Congress threatened that Clinton had to approve cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and other programs, or they would shut the government down (Gonyea, 2018). Clinton vetoed the bill, triggering a government shutdown between November 14 and 19, 1996 (Gonyea, 2018). This shutdown triggered yet another shutdown later in the year, which went on to become the longest in United States government history at that time. The budgetary standoff between House Speaker Newt Gingrich and President Bill Clinton kept the government shut down from December 16, 1995, to January 6, 1996, the longest failure of basic governmental function in American history up to that point (Earl, 2018). The government's spending authority expired on December 15, a Saturday. So, the impact of the shutdown wasn't noticed until 280,000 workers stayed home on Monday (Zaveri, 2018). As the debate continued between the President and Congress, the government's functionality reached an

all-time low. When the debate was finally resolved, the shutdown was further extended by two winter storms which shut the government down again on the same day federal employees were scheduled to return to work. According to Zaveri, (2018), before the U.S. government shutdown on November 14, 1995, President Clinton's job approval stood at 52%. It plummeted to 42 percent in an early January, 1996 during the shutdown. His favorability rating fell five percentage points to 54 percent in mid-January 1996 from 59 percent in early November.

Each of these presidents shared commonalities of rhetorical circumstances in regard to their State of the Union addresses. First, the issue of debate for each of these presidents was a policy matter of which they were advocating to reform. For Trump this was immigration, Obama's was healthcare, and Clinton's economic security. Second, the sides of the debate were the same for all of these presidents in that the debate was between Congress and the president. The government shutdowns resulted from the debate with Congress for each of these presidents. These shutdowns presented a crisis situation for all of these presidents to address in their State of the Unions.

However, the shutdown provided each of these presidents with the opportunity to create an enemy of our Congress, allowing them to shift blame for the shutdown crisis to Congress. I will illustrate the enemy creation process by explaining its form and function as it relates to reframing the rhetor with a savior persona. First, rhetors identify and divide an individual, group, or entity from the community to establish them as not sharing community values. Second, the enemy is dehumanized to justify their removal or destruction from the community. Third, the rhetor frames the enemy as a threat to the fundamental nature of the community to create a sense of urgency. Finally, instead of following a traditional pattern of scapegoating that focuses on the

enemy's destruction, I show how rhetors may use the enemy creation process to enhance their status in the community's hierarchy, assuming the role of savior for the community's problems.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Enemies in Political Discourse

Previous literature has examined how rhetors construct enemies for a number of purposes. One of these purposes is scapegoating. Communities are founded on “shared beliefs and values” that are shared and reinforced rhetorically (Ornatowski & Bekins, 2009, p. 253). These core principles function to reinforce ideology and refute opposition (Milford, 2012, p. 499). When problems arise within our social, economic, political, and religious structures rhetors often look to blame others as a way to avoid addressing those issues within their own communities. Burke’s (1939) concept of scapegoating explains that in such cases rhetors put the blame on another group or individual in an effort to avoid their own deficiencies (p. 5). The blamed party is then symbolically eliminated by excluding them from the group, punishing them in some form or fashion, or even destroying them in extreme cases. Rhetors argue that the enemy’s removal from the community will rectify the problems at hand. The research on scapegoating shows it to be a useful rhetorical tool in a number of contexts. Scapegoating has been used as a rhetorical tool in examining organizational values, strategic communication, and politics (Haslam, 2006; Sheckles, 2004; Zarefsky, 2004).

However, there is a lack of research examining the reflexive functions of enemy creation, most notably the creation of a savior persona for the rhetor. There are times when the rhetor uses scapegoating as more than an opportunity to remove guilt and frustration over the community’s struggles. I argue that in such cases rhetors extend a common pattern of enemy creation to promote their own personas. First, rhetors identify the enemy as different from them and divide them as a separate entity. Second the rhetor dehumanizes the enemy by emphasizing their lack of moral standards and character to argue they are less than human. Third, rhetors argue the enemy

presents a viable threat by creating a sense of urgency. Finally, the rhetor scapegoats the enemy by shifting blame onto them for the ills at hand, in doing so enhancing their own persona as the ultimate problem-solver for the community.

Identification and Division

The first step in enemy creation is to identify the enemy as a fundamentally different entity from the community. Burke (1939) says that identification is what binds us (p. 194). Identification binds communities by emphasizing the unique collection of values that give a them their character. Burke (1984) says these common bonds distinguish communities from one another by giving each a unique rhetorical shape (p. 59). Interactions within the community and between other communities serve both as reinforcements of those values while also dividing them from those who do not share the same values. Thus, division is a byproduct of identification. According to Burke (1937) this byproduct may run from simple differentiation to antagonism (p. 4). In such cases rhetors may seek to purposefully identify other communities as antithetical to the community. According to Connolly (2002), these instances use identity to convert difference into otherness in order to secure the community's own self-certainty (p. 63). As Schmitt (2000) observes, this contributes to a sense that certain communities cannot exist but in antagonism with an other (p. 102). For rhetors seeking to create an enemy, its construction is a matter of emphasizing differences in an effort to divide rather than to bind. Division defines our expectations, decisions, and judgments for those not in our community. According to Burke (1969) this identification of differences is a construction defined by the degree of likeness

between two subjects or substance. Substance is the likeness or shared interests of two subjects. When there is substance between two subjects, they perceive themselves to be together in some fashion. But when there is a lack of substance, parties fail to find the commonalities necessary for identification.

In these cases, rhetors may use division as a means to identification. Engels (2009) argues that one may use the creation of an “other” to solidify oppositional support (p. 38). For example, the foundation of creating solidarity in times of war is the “us versus them” framework that relies on a common opponent to create a sense of unity. Once divided, it is easier to vilify the enemy because they do not share the same substance as the community. Burke (1939) demonstrates the “wavering line” between identification and division in his discussion of Hitler’s rhetoric (404). According to Burke, Hitler’s labeling of the Jews as parasites did not necessarily precede the dividing of the Jewish people away from the German people (p. 207). Rather, the division of the Jewish people as a separate entity from the general German populace contributed to their identification as parasites. This means that in some ways identification and division are co-dependent on one another. Burke (1950) writes, “put identification and division ambiguously together, so that you cannot know for certain just where one ends and the other begins and you have the characteristic invitation to rhetoric” (p. 28).

Dehumanizing the Enemy

The second step in enemy creation is dehumanization. Once the enemy is differentiated from the community and placed in an antagonistic position, rhetors have to rationalize the

enemy's eventual destruction by making them less than human. The rhetor's goal is to create a simplified character for the enemy that becomes the primary lens through which the audience views them. According to Ivie (1980) American audiences view warfare is a last resort because humans are not comfortable in the role of the aggressor, so it must be pitched as absolutely necessary (p. 279). The rhetor uses imagery to construct a dehumanized portrayal of the enemy and emphasize its contrast with the community. According to Ivie (1980) rhetors use these contrasting values to cast the enemy as animalistic and irrational, seeking to subjugate the freedom-loving, rational, and passive community (p. 284). When the other is dehumanized in this way, their position as an enemy is rationalized because they no longer have any characteristics with which the community could identify.

There are two distinct forms for dehumanization. Haslam (2006) proposes two forms of dehumanization involving the denial to others of distinct senses of humanness: characteristics that are uniquely human and those that constitute human nature (p. 252). Denying uniquely human attributes to others represents them as animal-like, and denying human nature to others represents them as objects or automata. Schwartz and Struch (1989) developed a distinctive theoretical approach that emphasizes the central position of human values in dehumanization. People's values "express their distinctive humanity," so "beliefs about a group's value hierarchy reveal the perceiver's view of the fundamental human nature of the members of that group" (p. 153). When an outgroup is perceived to not have the same values as the ingroup, it is perceived to lack shared humanity and its interests are regarded as wrong. Schwartz and Struch (1989) argued that values reflecting that people have "transcended their basic animal nature and developed their human sensitivities and moral sensibilities" emphasize a group's humanity (p. 155). This inhuman essence is often assigned with a metaphor.

Metaphors are defined in broad terms as “that which contributes to the ornamentation of language not in its constitutive form” (Richards 1965, p. 90). According to Osborn and Ehninger (1962) a metaphor is not just a sign to denote something, but the meaningful use of a sign for a second purpose. Metaphors are purposefully used in certain roles throughout war rhetoric in political discourse (p. 225). According to Ivie (1982) metaphors are often used in war rhetoric as decivilizing vehicles by affirming threatening expectations (p. 241-48).

Metaphors affirm threatening expectations by identifying the enemy as a moral violator (Ivie, 1982, p. 242). Ivie (1980) illustrates this concept by examining America’s declaration of war against Great Britain in 1812. Ivie (1980) notes that American rhetors characterized Britain as a metaphorical barbarous bully. Ivie (1980) also recognizes that rhetors will incorporate the community within the metaphors to emphasize the enemy’s transgressions. For example, pro-war Republicans used dehumanizing terms such as “trampled, trodden, and pounded” to describe the way Britain had treated them. Defining the enemy metaphorically as inhuman and the community as human emphasizes their differences. For example, Jensen’s (1977) work on how enemy creation shows how colonists defined themselves as a collective family to affirm that it was wrong of the British to tax them when they were not a part of the same “family” or community (p. 44). The colonists’ values were not the same as the greedy, tyrannical British thus the British were less than human for the lacking moral standards and character of the colonist community.

When an enemy is affirmed as lacking the basic values of humanity and doing wrong to the community, the essence of that enemy is defined. Essentializing the enemy means creating an enemy whose substance is in opposition to the community’s morals. According to Burke (1941), once an enemy is “essentialized” ... all proof henceforth is automatic, meaning that each act the

enemy takes serves as a confirmation of their corrupt essence (p. 194). Essentialization is often accomplished through the use of metaphors to describe the essence of the enemy. One can see this principle at work in Hitler's characterization of the Jewish people. According to Burke (1941), Hitler defined the Jewish people as parasitical, suggesting that their very existence threatened the health of Germany and the safety of the German people (p. 194). Hitler's statement illustrates how the essentialization of an enemy can suggest a response. In the particular case of Hitler's argument this metaphorical implication was the removal of the parasite to save the body. Perry (1983) also discusses Hitler's dehumanization of the Jewish people, claiming that dehumanization is what gives the rhetor moral legitimacy for their aggression against the enemy (p. 232). It is through essentialization that aggression against the enemy is justified. A second example of this can be found in newspaper editors' characterization of the South during the Civil War as advocates for imperialism. In the Civil War era, associations with Great Britain were used by editor-politicians to associate the Confederacy with Britain, the rhetors reduced the South to an image of a power-hungry monarchy. According to Klees (2007), the rhetor's goal was to make Americans fearful of becoming subject to the same tyrannical power they escaped in Britain's treatment of the colonies (p. 75).

A third example of the essentialized enemy can be seen in Woodrow Wilson's transformation of Germany during World War I. According to Flanagan (2004), Wilson argued that the time would come when America would be forced to enter the war because of the challenges Germany presented to worldwide peace and honor (p. 130). Andrews (2002) asserted that by the end of World War I, "Wilson's rhetorical restructuring had transformed the long-held vision of America as a shining example of liberty for the world to emulate to its embodiment as the self-sacrificing defender of liberty" (p. 141).

Aside from lacking any sort of moral standards and character, there are times when the enemy has the wrong moral standards and character. In these situations, the rhetor dehumanizes the enemy for these moral wrongs. Ivie's (2011) work examining Obama's address at West Point discusses Obama's rhetorical argument that the lives being lost in Afghanistan was a reason to reduce military presence in the region (p. 735). With this rhetoric about lives being lost, Obama implies that anyone who advocates for increasing military presence in the region is inhumane. Each of these examples serve as evidence of how the rhetor essentializes the enemy as something less than human in an effort to rationalize their destruction to situated audiences.

Threats and Urgency

The third step in enemy creation is the development of a sense of urgency to justify the enemy's destruction. Rhetors create a sense of urgency by making issues moral imperatives rather than policy initiatives. The enemy the rhetor created is positioned as a threat to the community, most often its moral standards and character. As Brummett (1981) notes, the need for the community to maintain its unique social order is strong (p. 219). The rhetor's characterization of the enemy, as was previously discussed, is often in opposition to the community's order meaning that a lack of moral standards and character, at least according to the rhetor, puts the community in danger. Burke (1970) argues that when a wrong goes against the social order, it is conceived not just as a natural event but as a moral violation (p. 209). The terms moral and violation indicate a cognitive motivation to respond to a threat (Benoit 1995). Benoit (2018) demonstrates this principle by arguing that character is a more frequent topic of

presidential rhetoric than policy (p. 12). He goes on to argue that a rhetor can design discourse to emphasize one or more of factors of explanation, justification, or rationalization as motives in to urgent action. Benoit's (1995, 2018) ideas reveal that the enemy is viable because there is a cognitive motivation to respond to the threat presented by the enemy's moral violation.

One of the concepts that helps to illustrate this process is framing. Framing refers to the process of putting a message together in a way which sends cues about how to understand the content being covered. Framing theory was developed by Goffman (1974) to explain how people "locate, perceive, identify and label" events and occurrences (p. 14). According to Chong and Druckman (2008), framing is the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or change their thinking about an issue (p. 104). By presenting issues in a certain way, framing shapes how issues are presented. Communicators use frames to "organize everyday reality" (Tuchman 1978, p. 193) by providing "meaning to an unfolding strip of events" (Gamson & Modigliani 1987, p. 143; 1989) and promoting "particular definitions and interpretations of political issues" (Shah et al. 2002, p. 343). Frames are designed to diagnose, evaluate, and prescribe (Gamson, 1992).

Goffman (1974) identified two broad types of framing: episodic and thematic (p. 15). According Gross (2008), episodic frames illustrate an issue by providing a specific example, case study, or event-oriented report (p. 171). Thematic frames put issues into a broader context, for example offering commentary by economists or public officials on the impact of the economy on a larger issue such as unemployment. Politicians usually utilize communication frames used by other politicians, the media, or citizens (e.g., Riker 1996, Edwards & Wood 1999, Druckman et al. 2004). The political discourse in State of the Union Addresses would be considered thematic because it deals with broad issues. When the rhetor frames an issue,

particularly a political issue, they choose some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more important in a communicating text. They do this for a number of reasons: to define a specific problem, interpret causal forces, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.

Framing theory is particularly salient in considerations of enemy creation. According to Burke (1955) the quality of all human community depends on how the enemy, the competition, is framed (p. 404). Rhetors use frames to define problems and determine causal agency with an eye on costs and benefits. These are usually packaged in common cultural values to make moral judgments of those causal agents and their effects before suggesting solutions. Framing is particularly useful in political discourse to delineate a set of communication tactics that leaders may use to harness follower support for a vision of social change (Seyranian, 2013, p. 468). In this particular case, framing is used to moralize the enemy's violations rather than portray them as simple policy disputes. According to Zarefsky (2004), presidents can rely on frame shifting, postulating a different frame of reference from the one in which the subject normally is viewed, to orient the subject to the audience in an advantageous manner (p. 613). Riker (1990), in fact, suggests that "most of the great shifts of political life result from introducing a new dimension" such as the ones Zarefsky describes (p. 62).

One example is in George W. Bush's rhetoric about the War on Terror. According to Spielvogel (2005), Bush talked about the war as part of an ongoing struggle between "good and evil," positioning Iraq in direct opposition to American values (p. 552). Bush added the 9/11 attacks to this characterization to orient Iraq as an imminent threat to the American way of life. Similarly, Jamieson (2007) discusses how Bush justified the war in Iraq by saying Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction (p. 252). Bush's justification of the war was

made possible by the sense of urgency that he created around weapons of mass destruction. He argued that Hussein was ready to use these weapons of mass destruction just as readily as he had attacked the world trade center. Another example of rhetors using frame shifting to create a sense of urgency can be seen in Perry's (1983) work on Hitler's rhetoric against the Jewish people. Perry (1983) says the Jewish people were seen as a nuisance but not a threat (p. 231). So, Hitler used framing to shift the Jews public personas from citizens to an actual threat. According to Perry (1983), by saying the Jewish people were an infestation, Hitler was able to argue that they were wreaking havoc on the German people (p. 231). Perry (1983) says the German people needed a savior to save them from the threat the Jews presented. Thus, Hitler scapegoated the Jews to make himself a savior to the German people.

In sum, rhetors rely heavily on framing to create a sense of urgency. Framing is a tool used by the rhetor to make the enemy and their value systems appear starkly different and oppositional to their own communities. Rhetors frame the enemy's values as moral violations. The rhetor then uses these moral violations to trigger a response to the threat they claim these moral violations present. These create a sense of urgency begging for the violators of the community's values to be enemized. These moral violations, which are framed as threats to create a sense of urgency, are what makes the enemy viable. Through the frame which the rhetor presents an issue, they model an attitude toward conflict and present the poles of conflict as calling for them to step into in the role of the aggressor. Action and choice are reduced by the rhetor to a matter difference and blameworthiness. Without the enemy and their transgressions being framed as moral violations presenting an immediate threat, the enemy would not be justified.

Scapegoating for Self-Promotion

In the final step, the rhetor scapegoats the enemy. According to Burke (1984), scapegoats are the “sacrificial receptacle for the ritual unburdening of one’s sins” (p. 16). Scapegoating is a rhetorical strategy that involves placing the blame on another individual, group, organization, etc., for what the rhetor identifies as the ills in the community (Sheckels 2004). According to Burke (1982), the rhetor offloads the guilt created by the community’s problems onto another, and rationalizes that by destroying them in some fashion, symbolically or even physically, the community is cleansed of its problems (p. 404). In instances of conflict, when rhetors find themselves in situations where they may be blamed for crises, they choose to shift blame onto a scapegoat in an attempt to cleanse themselves of all wrong. According to Jamson and Scotch (1964) Scapegoating is a convenient, anxiety reducing act which the rhetoric uses as a means of enhancing their own cleanliness (p. 70). Scheidlinger (1982) noted that authoritarian leaders tend to use scapegoats to direct the attention of the group from their own shortcomings. At the largest collective level, political scapegoating serves as a reminder of the process of assigning blame and fault for the failings associated with a turbulent social system (Bergensen, 1977). According to Cloud, scapegoating is the factional identification and purging of pollution or evil (p. 390). To purge this evil, community values encourage scapegoating (Cloud, 1998, p. 391). When the rhetor scapegoats an enemy, the rhetor’s community develops closer bonds as a result. According to Burke (1959), the scapegoat is alienated from the rest of the community by the rhetor in order to justify its destruction (p. 406). The vicious behavior of scapegoating is, as Burke (1955) argues, a case of “faulty means-selection” in the struggle toward what is presumed to be a “better life” (p. 406). Burke does not advocate for this this exclusionary

“upward” mobility process but instead says it is unavoidable. Burke (1955) claims the scapegoating process is symbolic and stands in place of actual bloodletting in human conflict (p. 407). The need to protect the political, social, and moral order allows rhetors to justify aggression against an enemy who threatens their cleanliness.

The previously mentioned examples demonstrate how this process is most commonly enacted in public discourse. This project extends that research by arguing that enemies serve an additional function beyond scapegoating. Rhetors who have alienated the scapegoat by burdening it with their guilt emerge with a purified identity after this ritual is complete. I argue that rhetors may use enemies to redefine their role in the community as its savior. Rhetors redefine themselves as a savior at the end of the enemy creation process. Instead of only blaming the enemy, the rhetors celebrate themselves as the saviors who can eradicate the evil of the enemies. The first step of this process occurs when the rhetor points out the failures of the enemy. It is then that the rhetor is presented with the opportunity to champion those moral standards and the community’s character. The second step occurs when rhetors become the voice of reason against the corrupt character of the enemy. The third step is the creation of a sense of urgency that makes the enemy a viable threat. Rhetors argue they know best in terms of how to cope with the threat presented. The final step is the rhetor scapegoating the enemy. When the rhetor shifts blame onto a scapegoat, they provide the audience with a resolution for the conflict, and in the process assume the role of savior.

Previous research has collectively identified a process for enemy creation detailed above. The rhetor justifies their enemy’s creation through this process. Before the enemy is justified, they are simply known as “the other”. But after the rhetor successfully goes through this process, the essence of the enemy is defined, and the enemy is justified. First, the rhetor identifies and

divides the enemy to differentiate the enemy. Second, the rhetor dehumanizes the enemy to justify their destruction. Third, the rhetor creates a sense of urgency around the threat the enemy presents to make the enemy viable. Finally, the rhetor scapegoats the enemy to shift blame them for ills within their communities. A justified enemy is scapegoated and symbolically eliminated from the group. This exclusion from the community is argued by the rhetor to solve their community's issues. However, previous literature leaves a gap in the understanding of the possibility of a reflexive function for enemy creation, specifically the creation of a savior persona for the rhetor. For example, does step one, identification and division, reflexively allow the rhetor to champion the community's moral standards and character? Does step two, dehumanization, allow the rhetor to become the voice of reason against a corrupt enemy? Does step three, creating a sense of urgency to make the enemy a viable threat, allow the rhetor to restore the order that the enemy has disrupted? Can instances occur in the last step, scapegoating, when the rhetor uses scapegoating as more than an opportunity to remove guilt and frustration over the community's struggles? I argue that in these instances, the rhetor's purpose then is not only to shift blame but to elevate their status to that of a savior.

Chapter 3: ANALYSIS

As noted in the last chapter, I argue rhetors may create enemies to redefine themselves as a savior. Rhetors redefine themselves as a savior in a four-step process. First, rhetors differentiate an individual, group, or entity from the community in order to case them as antithetical to the community's nature. Second, the enemy is dehumanized to justify their removal or destruction from the community. Third, the rhetor casts the enemy as a threat to the fundamental nature of the community to create a sense of urgency. Lastly, instead of following a traditional pattern of scapegoating that centers on the enemy's destruction, I demonstrate how rhetors may use the process to enhance their status in the community's hierarchy, appearing as a savior for the community's problems.

The Enemy Creation Process

Each step of the above process allows for the president to assume the role of savior. For example, in the first step, the rhetor juxtaposes herself or himself with an enemy that is lacking moral standards and character. This allows them to champion those moral standards and the community's character. In the second step, rhetors position themselves as the voice of reason against the corrupt character of the enemy. In the third step, the rhetor asserts that she or he has the means to alleviate the threat imposed by the enemy. Rhetors argue they know best in terms of how to cope with the threat presented. In the final step, the rhetor scapegoats the enemy as a means of resolution for the conflict, and in the process assume the role of savior. The

characteristics of a savior include first, assuming a moral leadership position within the community, second, demonstrating the soundness of the one's moral standards and character, and third, establishing a problem solver ethos within the community. This chapter will illustrate this concept by analyzing three texts: Trump's 2019 State of the Union, Clinton's 1996 State of the Union, and Obama's 2013 State of the Union. The analysis of these texts will demonstrate how rhetors can use the rhetorical construction enemies to assume the posture of a savior.

Presidential Enemy Creation

Trump's 2019 State of the Union argued that Congress was to blame for the ongoing government shutdown because they refused to fund a Mexican border wall to stop illegal immigration. Trump was able to justify Congress as this enemy by identifying them as cruel and dividing them from his policies, dehumanizing them for allowing illegal immigrants into the country, creating a sense of urgency that made Congress a viable threat to the moral standards and character of the nation, and finally scapegoating Congress for the government shutdown. Similarly, Obama's 2013 State of the Union blamed Congress for the government shutdown because Congress opposed the Affordable Care Act. Obama was able to justify Congress as an enemy by dehumanizing Congress as careless body with a lack of moral standards and character to protect the health of Americans, creating a sense of urgency around this morally corrupt Congress who presented a viable threat by attempting to eradicate the possibility of affordable healthcare, and finally scapegoating Congress for the government shutdown. Likewise, Clinton's State of the Union in 1996 blamed Congress for the government shutdown because Congress had propositioned Contract for America, a policy which would have cut economic programs aiding working class Americans. Clinton justified Congress as an enemy by identifying them as morally inept for taking away resources from the working class and dividing their 'Contract for America'

cuts from his pro-funding policies, dehumanizing Congress as an entity whose goal was to disadvantage working people who deserve economic security, creating a sense of urgency around Congress' attempts to retract critical funding of economic programs, and finally scapegoating Congress as to blame for the shutdown.

As you can see from these examples, each of these presidents confront their shutdown crises with a similar enemy creation formula. When each of these presidents are presented with a shutdown crisis, they make Congress the enemy of the American people, scapegoating them for the shutdown. I will further examine this formula in more depth by analyzing how these presidents identify and divide Congress as the enemy, dehumanize Congress, create a sense of urgency around the threat Congress presents, and finally scapegoat Congress for the shutdown.

Identification Through Division

The first step in enemy creation is to identify the enemy as a different from the rhetor and their community. Rhetors may build community by creating a sense of identification or by dividing the people from another. In either case, differentiation is important as it is how the enemy is explained to not possess the same values as the rhetor's community. This is the rhetor's primary way to generate unity within the community while also justifying action against the enemy. The rhetor accomplishes this by isolating the enemy for their moral failures. In identifying and dividing the enemy from the community, the enemy's evil essence is revealed and "essentialized" as fundamentally opposed to the community, which empowers rhetors to call

for their destruction of these presidents identify Congress as an enemy by characterizing its members as fundamentally in opposition to the community's value system.

I will demonstrate this process by illustrating these themes in the way these presidents juxtaposed their positions on critical issues to Congress's responses. The first step of the process is to claim Congress lacks moral standards and character. In all three addresses these presidents claim Congress lacks the moral standards and character that make up of the American identity. This strategy enhances the savior status. Trump does this with the issue of immigration, Obama with healthcare reform, and Clinton with economic security. After the presidents have identified Congress as lacking moral standards and character, the second step is for the president to set themselves and their policies in opposition to Congress. Specifically, each president emphasizes a moral divide between Congress and the American value system. In their State of the Union addresses Trump, Obama, and Clinton's frame their policy solutions, particularly those related to the government shutdown, as moral issues, orienting Congress in opposition to those issues. Trump, Obama, and Clinton identify Congress as an enemy whose agendas are motivated by partisan politics rather than moral standards and character. Specifically, each of these presidents argue that their goal is to free the poor and middle class from the burdens Congress' policies have put on them, identifying Congress as a part of the greedy, carless, elite. Each president claims Congress is working for its own interests instead of serving the country. In the third step, the president is given the opportunity to champion moral standards and the community's character having set themselves apart from the morally inadequate Congress. Subsequently, these presidents make themselves saviors who champion the moral standards and community values of the American people. Trump, Obama and Clinton assert that their enemy, in these cases Congress, is selfishly obstructing them from following the community's moral imperative. I will

examine these strategies in each speech by explain how the presidents identify Congress as lacking moral standards and character, how they set themselves and their policies apart from Congress, and how they champion moral standards and character.

Donald Trump and the Identification and Division of Congress

Trump claims that Congress lacks the moral standards and character which make up the American identity for their position on illegal immigration. Trump says Congress' failure to close the border is an act of cruelty because Americans are being harmed as a result. Trump identifies Congress as lacking the moral standards and character to defend American lives. Trump claims that Congress lacks the moral backbone to care that Americans are being raped and murdered by illegal immigrants. Trump says Congress lacks moral standards and character by directly calling the immigration debate a moral issue. Trump says, "This is a moral issue. The lawless state of our southern border is a threat to the safety, security, and financial well-being of all Americans" (para. 30). Trump says both he and Congress campaigned "to create an immigration system that is safe, lawful, modern and secure; and to pursue a foreign policy that puts America's interests first" (para. 4). But then, Trump claims Congress has not upheld their promises. He identifies himself as a leader who is fighting for what Americans were promised. Trump says, "There is a new opportunity in American politics, if only we have the courage to seize it" (para. 5). He identifies himself as a leader who cares about the safety of American lives and Congress an enemy who does not. Trump says, "Over the last 2 years, my Administration has moved with urgency and historic speed to confront problems neglected by leaders of both parties over many decades" (para. 16). The identification of Congress as a body who is not acting on moral standards and character allows for Trump to divide Congress from the larger American community.

Trump juxtaposes himself and Congress on the issue of immigration. Trump says his agenda is that of the American people. That agenda includes creating an immigration system that is “safe modern and secure” (para. 14). Trump sets himself apart from Congress as a leader who values America’s interests by putting America first. Trump identifies Congress as a morally corrupt enemy and himself as morally untarnished. For each difference he identifies between Congress and himself, Trump makes it clear that his differences are what makes him a better leader than Congress. Trump says, “My Administration has sent to the Congress a commonsense proposal to end the crisis on our southern border. It includes humanitarian assistance, more law enforcement, drug detection at our ports, closing loopholes that enable child smuggling, and plans for a new physical barrier, or wall, to secure the vast areas between our ports of entry. In the past, most of the people in this room voted for a wall -- but the proper wall never got built. I’ll get it built” (para. 51). Trump is painting Congress as an enemy who is complacent and naïve about the dangers illegal immigrants present. He tells the story of Debra Bissell whose parents were shot to death by an illegal immigrant burglarizing their home. Trump tells this story, among others like it, to show how immigrants are threatening the United States by entering the country to pillage and kill whomever stands in their way. In stating these things, Trump identifies differences between the nation’s moral standards and character and that of Congress. He holds himself up as a morally respectful individual who fulfills the sacred duty of his office in contrast to a morally corrupt Congress with no regard for duty. Trump says to the victims of illegal immigrants’ violence, “To Debra, Heather, Madison, please stand: few can understand your pain. But I will never forget, and I will fight for the memory of Gerald and Sharon, that it should never happen again” (para. 56). Trump says the reason Congress has not acted on behalf of people such as Debra, Heather, and Madison is because they are serving their party’s interest. In other words,

Congress puts their political agenda above the best interests of the American people. Trump claims that Congress is motivated by the Democratic party and Nancy Pelosi's agenda. Trump accuses Congress of acting on partisan, morally corrupt motivations. He argues that Congress is more motivated by their party values than moral standards and character. According to Trump, the only duty Congress is upholding is their duty to the Democratic Party. Instead of acting on an agenda to help the American people, Congress is acting on an agenda to advance their party's initiatives. Trump says victory is not winning for a party but winning for the country as a whole. Trump claims nothing can compete with America because America is right in their moral standards and character. Since Congress' initiatives do not align with the moral standards and character Americans hold, Congress' initiatives would not protect American citizens from dangerous illegal immigrants as Trump's would.

These juxtaposing claims are what allows Trump to champion the moral standards of his community as a leader who acts independently of his party's agenda. Trump claims he is acting independently of party agenda. He positions himself as the leader of the American people's initiatives not that of a political party. Trump's claims allow him to fulfill the function of assuming a savior status. In this savior role Trump can make changes to the wellbeing of the American people because he is bound by no party's agenda. Trump (2019) says of Congress' opposition to his border wall solution, "we must reject the politics of revenge, resistance, and retribution -- and embrace the boundless potential of cooperation, compromise, and the common good" (para. 8). Trump goes on to say, "We have a moral duty to create an immigration system that protects the lives and jobs of our citizens" (para. 36). Later, Trump says of Congress "...they are allowing innocent American lives to be lost. Not one more American life should be lost because our Nation failed to control its very dangerous border" (para. 12). Ultimately,

Trump champions the community's moral standard and character of protection from illegal immigrants by saying, "There is a new opportunity in American politics, if only we have the courage to seize it. Victory is not winning for our party. Victory is winning for our country" (para. 4). Trump promotes community values by saying how he is not complacent, he is caring, and he is fulfilling his duty by advocating for a border wall to stop the influx of illegal immigrants. The primary community value at work in this instance is that of the protection of American lives from outsiders. When Trump celebrates these moral standards, he becomes a champion to the American people who can save them from the immigration fueled shutdown crisis at hand.

Barack Obama and the Identification and Division of Congress

In a similar fashion Obama argues that Congress lacks the moral standards and character to assist Americans through healthcare reform. Obama (2013) uses his State of the Union address to argue that Congress was committing a moral violation by not supporting the Affordable Care Act. Obama claims that cuts to healthcare benefits are moral violations against the American people and identifies Congress as violators of the American people. Obama says, "The American people have worked too hard, for too long, rebuilding from one crisis to see their elected officials cause another" (para. 21). Obama asserts that by opposing the Affordable Care Act, Congress is halting the advancement of human rights. Obama says, "We'll bring down costs by changing the way our government pays for Medicare, because our medical bills shouldn't be based on the number of tests ordered or days spent in the hospital..." (para. 44). Obama claims that affordable healthcare is a basic human right and that by denying this right to the American people and that Congress has acted immorally. He argues that affordable healthcare is something all Americans have long wanted and deserve. Obama (2013) references Congress' failure to uphold their

promise to prioritize like affordable healthcare as an example of their lack of moral character, stating, "Our government shouldn't make promises we cannot keep—but we must keep the promises we've already made" (para. 17). In doing so, Obama identifies himself as a leader who cares about the health of Americans and Congress an enemy who does not. The identification of these differences sets the stage for division.

Obama identifies a moral divide between himself and Congress when he equates his values with those of the American people, suggesting that Congress' values system isn't compatible. Obama positions himself as an advocate for equality. He says he does not believe in taxing the majority middle class for the benefit of the elite and seeks to restore prosperity or the lower classes. Obama (2013) says, "It is our unfinished task to restore the basic bargain that built this county" para. 34). He argues that Congress is being too subjective by putting party politics before the people by pointing out how Congress' plans are starkly different and irrational compared to "most Americans" (para. 55). Obama says of Congress that they "...work on behalf of the many not the few" (para. 51). Obama claims that he is not a puppet driven by immoral partisan motives. He, instead, promotes himself as a representative of the majority whose values are moral. This assertion allows Obama to set his policies apart from Congress'. Obama (2013) says he is an advocate of the American people who value moral rightness over close-minded politics (para 41). This division from the majority is what ultimately identifies Congress as a divided entity from Obama, his policies, and most importantly, the American people.

This argument is what allows Obama to champion the moral standards and character of the community as an objective leader. Obama (2013) says, "Most Americans—Democrats, Republicans, and independents—understand that we can't just cut our way to prosperity. They know that broad-based economic growth requires a balanced approach to deficit reduction, with

spending cuts and revenue, and with everybody doing their fair share” (para. 20). As someone who claims to share the values of the majority, Obama is able to become the champion of the nation’s moral standards and character against a Congress opposes them. Obama cites how the Affordable Care Act has already helped millions of Americans to champion moral standards and character of valuing healthcare and the overall wellbeing of the American people. Obama (2013) says, “Already, the Affordable Care Act is helping to slow the growth of health care costs. And the reforms I’m proposing go even further. We’ll reduce taxpayer subsidies to prescription drug companies and ask more from the wealthiest seniors. We’ll bring down costs by changing the way our government pays for Medicare, because our medical bills shouldn’t be based on the number of tests ordered or days spent in the hospital; they should be based on the quality of care that our seniors receive” (para. 16). Obama further boasts the morals and values of the community by claiming he is fighting for a basic right that should belong to all people. Obama (2013) says, “After all, why would we choose to make deeper cuts to education and Medicare just to protect special interest tax breaks? How is that fair? Why is it that deficit reduction is a big emergency justifying making cuts in Social Security benefits but not closing some loopholes? How does that promote growth?” (para. 17). Obama cites Americans who have stood up for the growth of the nation such as Brian Murphy who was shot in the line of duty protecting religious freedom and Desiline Victor, who, at 102 years old, waited in line for 6 hours to exercise her right to vote. Obama gives these examples of Americans defending their basic rights to argue affordable healthcare is also a basic right that should be defended against the tyrannical Congress. Obama champions the community’s character by saying his moral standards ensure the nation’s prosperity. Obama says, "It captures the enduring idea that this country only works when we accept certain obligations to one another and to future generations, that our rights are

wrapped up in the rights of others; and that well into our third century as a nation, it remains the task of us all, as citizens of these United States, to be the authors of the next great chapter of our American story” (para. 52). By championing the community’s moral standards and character against the corruption of Congress, Obama positions himself as a savior who will end the government shutdown.

Bill Clinton and the Identification and Division of Congress

In the same way Trump and Obama differentiated Congress, Clinton also asserts that Congress lacks the moral standards and character to support the nation’s poor and middle class with economic security. Clinton (1996) says Congress’ “Contract for America” would cut programs whereas Clinton seeks to fund them. Clinton claims that poor and middle class America cannot afford to live without government assistance. He argues that if Congress cuts these assistance programs it would take the food out of the mouths of the poor. Clinton says that too many American citizens are working hard just to keep up. Since Congress was cutting programs for the working class, Clinton argued that they were taking away the opportunity for a better life from people who had worked hard to earn such a life. Clinton says, “More and more Americans are working hard without a raise. Congress sets the minimum wage” (para. 39). Clinton is identified in this rhetoric as a leader who is compassionate for the poor and Congress is identified as an enemy who is not.

Clinton sets himself and his policy plan for the nation in opposition to a Congress who is striving to stand in the way of economic security. Clinton accomplishes this when he argues that Congress’ “Contract for America” policy would hurt the poor and middle class financially. Clinton sides with those who need help. He advocates for giving to the needy and being a leader who upholds their duty of taking care of the citizens by funding programs to assist the poor.

Clinton aligns himself with the American people saying, “Now, each of us must hold high the torch of citizenship in our own lives. None of us can finish the race alone. We can only achieve our destiny together—one hand, one generation, one American connecting to another” (para. 48). Clinton uses the example of minimum wage to further illustrate the divide between himself and American values and Congress’s selfishness by emphasizing how millions of Americans depend on minimum wage as their only source of income. Clinton advocates for helping Americans by funding programs to help the poor rather than cutting them as Congress is doing with their Contract for America. Clinton says, “Four dollars and 25 cents an hour is no longer a living wage, but millions of Americans and their children are trying to live on it. I challenge you to raise their minimum wage” (para. 45). With this statement, Clinton argues that Congress’ proposed funding cuts would further impoverish Americans. He contends that their wages will not be enough to provide food for their families. Clinton then challenges Congress to increase the minimum wage and fund more programs for working class Americans rather than cutting them with Contract for America. Clinton (1996) says that hard working people still need the support of the government to assist them in achieving financial security. He says of these hard-working Americans, “They need education and training for a lifetime. They need more support for families raising children. They need retirement security.” (para. 30). Clinton goes on to say, “Our third challenge is to help every American who is willing to work for it, achieve economic security in this new age” (para. 38). This challenge is indicative of Clinton dividing himself and his pro-funding initiative away from a Congress who wishes to cut such programs. Clinton argues Congress is guilty of partisan politics for being reluctant to agree on a welfare reform bill that would aid the poor, saying, “I challenge this Congress to send me a bipartisan welfare reform bill that will really move people from welfare to work and do the right thing by our

children. I will sign it immediately” (para. 47). Clinton says that Congress has not even sent him a bill to sign. He says this lack of viable legislation is the result of partisan politics getting in the way of progress for the moral good. Congress only sees the issues of economic security through a selfish lens. They only want what is best for their partisan policy initiatives. The form of Clinton’s argument allows him to espouse the American community’s moral standards and character as a group who values assisting the poor and government programs.

Clinton champions moral standards by saying he values economic security for all Americans. Clinton champions moral standards and character stating that government leaders should set the standard for caring for their citizens from the lower classes up. He says he is a leader who is fighting for the prosperity of that lower-class community. Clinton references how rates of teen pregnancy, welfare dependency, and poverty have gone down over the three years of his presidency, but claims Congress is threatening to destroy all the progress that has been made with their policies. Clinton says, “To improve the state of our Union, we must ask more of ourselves, we must expect more of each other, and we must face our challenges together” (para. 15). Clinton identifies Congress as being deliberately against the progress made. We ought to resolve our remaining differences. Clinton says, “I am willing to work to resolve them. I am ready to meet tomorrow. But I ask you to consider that we should at least enact these savings that both plans have in common and give the American people their balanced budget, a tax cut, lower interest rates, and a brighter future” (para. 55). He says their policies are taking a step back not a step forward. Clinton claims that if his plans for economic security are left be, rates of teen pregnancy, welfare dependence, and crime rates will continue to decrease and prosperity will increase for the American people.

These presidents identify Congress as morally corrupt to divide Congress from the community. When they charge Congress for a lack of moral standards and character, they are differentiating them for not sharing the community's values. Differentiation is what allows the president to demonstrate a moral leadership position within the community, the soundness of the leader's moral standards and character, and establish credibility as a problem solver within the community. Identification is what justifies Congress' alienation from the American community as an enemy. Identification and division serves the purpose of moving the enemy out of the rhetor's community.

Dehumanizing the Enemy

The second step in enemy creation calls for the rhetor to dehumanize the enemy by depicting them as less than human. In this claim, the rhetor is able to humanize themselves in contrast. The presidents examined here dehumanize Congress by asserting that Congress lacks the basic human values and empathy to help the American people. First, the president defines the essence of the enemy as void of moral standards and character. Trump, Obama, and Clinton dehumanize Congress by asserting that their plans lack empathy for the American people's needs. These presidents must essentialized the enemy so that "all proof henceforth is automatic," meaning that once their substance is framed as non-human, all of their actions may be interpreted through that lens (Burke, 1939, p. 194). Second, the president positions himself and his policies as having the essence of moral rightness, taking the opposition position from a less-than-human

Congress. Finally, this refashions the president into a voice of reason against an enemy whose essence is corrupt, contributing to the elevation of their savior status.

Donald Trump and the Morally Corrupt Congress

Trump dehumanizes Congress by defining their essence as morally corrupt over immigration. Trump does this by stating that Congress is allowing illegal immigrants to enter the country and “rape and murder” Americans. This assertion makes Congress less than human because it implies that the American people’s community values include a moral duty to protect innocent lives. Trump says, “Tolerance for illegal immigration is not compassionate—it is cruel” (para. 45). Trump bases his dehumanization of Congress on three core values: cooperation, compromise, and the common good. Trump supports this argument by giving examples of the kinds of transgressions by which immigrants have opposed basic human rights. Trump says, “One in three women is sexually assaulted on the long journey north. Smugglers use migrant children as human pawns to exploit our laws and gain access to our country. Human traffickers and sex traffickers take advantage of the wide-open areas between our ports of entry to smuggle thousands of young girls and women into the United States and to sell them into prostitution and modern-day slavery. Tens of thousands of innocent Americans are killed by lethal drugs that cross our border and flood into our cities -- including meth, heroin, cocaine, and fentanyl!” (para. 51).

In contrast, Trumps puts himself in a position to care about the safety and wellbeing of the people, imbuing himself with the moral rightness Congress lacks. Trump says Congress should reject their inhuman values of revenge, resistance, and retribution and stop being careless and about the safety and wellbeing of the American people. Trump says, “My administration has sent to the Congress a commonsense proposal to end the crisis on our southern border. It

includes humanitarian assistance, more law enforcement, drug detection at our ports, closing loopholes that enable child smuggling, and plans for a new physical barrier, or wall, to secure the vast areas between our ports of entry” (para. 7). Trump presents himself as human so he can use rhetoric that takes the form of the voice of reason in the crisis.

Trump becomes the voice of reason to the American people because he states he does care about their safety and wellbeing unlike Congress. Trump’s rhetoric argues Congress has an inhuman essence that does not reflect the basic safety needs of the American people. Congress’ essence is that of a morally corrupt enemy who opens the borders for more rapists and murderers to enter the country. Trump says, “In the last 2 years, our brave ICE officers made 266,000 arrests of criminal aliens, including those charged or convicted of nearly 100,000 assaults, 30,000 sex crimes, and 4,000 killings” (para. 47). Congress is made the inhuman enemy by this logic because they are not valuing human lives in their position. Trump defines himself as having a human essence for acting as a protector of American’s safety against illegal immigrants. Trump argues that his plan for the border wall is a humanitarian effort. Trump says, “My Administration has sent to the Congress a commonsense proposal to end the crisis on our southern border” (para. 40). Trump argues he is the voice of reason acting against the irrational enemy of Congress. Trump says that the American people have advanced the human condition. Trump claims that since Congress is not acting on this humanitarian issue, they are not promoters of the improvement of the human condition. Trump directly addresses individuals who he used as examples of victims to Congress’ moral violations to set himself up to become the voice of reason in the issues which caused these people harm.

Barack Obama and the Morally Corrupt Congress

Obama (2013) follows suit with Trump and dehumanizes Congress by defining their essence as morally corrupt over healthcare. Obama follows this same dehumanizing pattern when he argues that Congress is not recognizing American needs in healthcare reform because their partisan cuts to government programs and spending burden Americans. Obama defines his essence as that of moral rightness by saying he cares about American wellbeing. Obama argues that the American people should not have to pay for overpriced healthcare. Identifying himself as an advocate for American wellbeing is what divides Obama, his policies, and the American people from Congress. His argument that the American people deserve more than they are receiving is the rational argument put in opposition to Congress' lack of position on affordable healthcare. Obama says it is government leaders' duty to give this people a thriving middle class. Obama says, "Now, some in Congress have proposed preventing only the defense cuts by making even bigger cuts to things like education and job training, Medicare and Social Security benefits, that idea is even worse" (para. 12). He argues that healthcare reform is intended to assist the less fortunate in times of great need. Obama says, "That's what health insurance reform is all about—the peace of mind that if misfortune strikes, you don't have to lose everything." He then goes on to detail different medical issues that his policy will resolve (para. 11). Like Trump, Obama argues his humanity so he become the voice of reason in the crisis.

Obama's argument becomes the voice of reason when he advocates for the needs of Americans to be met. Obama's rhetoric emphasizes that it's the government's job to take care of citizens and assist them when needed. This rhetoric is filled with empathy which promotes Obama to a savior status. But before Obama directly addresses healthcare, he uses the example of another policy victory of his as a parallel to healthcare reform. This sets up his argument for

its funding. Obama talks about all the progress made in the War on Terror to argue that if his policies won that war, then by that same rationale they can resolve issues in healthcare reform to the benefit of the American people. Obama (2013) says, “Tonight, thanks to the grit and determination of the American people, there is much progress to report. After a decade of grinding war, our brave men and women in uniform are coming home” para. (2). Obama then propels his argument off the success of the War on Terror to proclaim his vision for the future as a voice of reason. Obama (2013) says, “It is our unfinished task to make sure that this government works on behalf of the many, and not just the few; that it encourages free enterprise, rewards individual initiative, and opens the doors of opportunity to every child across this great nation” (para. 4). Through this dehumanization of Congress, Obama emerges as the voice of reason in the government shutdown crisis.

Bill Clinton and the Morally Corrupt Congress

Clinton (1996) follows Trump (2019) and Obama (2013) by defining Congress’ essence as harmful to the American people because of their cuts to government spending. Clinton says that cutting government assistance programs when poor people are depending on them just doesn’t make sense. Clinton (1996) says, “...we must go forward as one America, one nation working together to meet the challenges we face together. Self-reliance and teamwork are not opposing virtues; we must have both” (para. 26). He argues that when money is needed, money should be given because it is Congress’ moral duty to the people to do so. Clinton (1996) says, “Our goal must be to enable all our people to make the most of their own lives -- with stronger families, more educational opportunity, economic security, safer streets, a cleaner environment in a safer world (para. 29). Clinton asks three fundamental questions of Congress to dehumanize them.

In each of these questions, Clinton defines his essence as human for holding the values of self-reliance and teamwork. Clinton (1996) says, “I believe our new, smaller government must work in an old-fashioned American way, together with all of our citizens through state and local governments, in the workplace, in religious, charitable and civic associations” (para. 27). Clinton says Congress must ask themselves three fundamental questions of human empathy about Americans struggling to keep up through economic hardship as members of the middle and lower class. First, Clinton asks how the government can make the American Dream a reality for all Americans who are willing to work for it. Second, he asks can the government work to preserve the old and enduring values of the American people. Lastly, Clinton asks how the government might come together with the American people to meet these challenges together. Clinton (1996) says, “To improve the state of our Union, we must ask more of ourselves, we must expect more of each other, and we must face our challenges together. Here, in this place, our responsibility begins with balancing the budget in a way that is fair to all Americans” (para. 31).

Clinton’s argument is the voice of reason because he promotes the needs of impoverished Americans above all else. Clinton’s rhetoric reasons that the government should have the human capacity to aid the less fortunate. He argues that Congress does not hold the answer to any of these fundamental questions of human empathy he asked. He claims that the American people need leaders like himself who hold the answers to these questions. Clinton says Congress cannot be such a leader because they lack the moral standards and character that would humanize them enough to care about such things. Clinton (1996) says, “The budget bill I vetoed would have reversed this achievement and raised taxes on nearly 8 million of these people. We should not do

that” (para. 40). By dehumanizing Congress in this manner, Clinton becomes the voice of reason in the government shutdown crisis.

Trump, Obama, and Clinton all dehumanize the enemy to humanize themselves. Pointing out the lack of moral standards and character in the enemy allows for these presidents to elevate their status in comparison. If the enemy was never dehumanized it would never be seen as a viable threat in the next step of the enemy creation process. The enemy must be portrayed to be less than human in order to present a threat to the human community.

Threats and Urgency

The third step in enemy creation is the creation of a sense of urgency to justify the enemy’s destruction. In this step the rhetor addresses the probable disruption of order created by the enemy as a rationale for the enemy’s destruction. These presidents use framing to explain how Congress should be seen by the American community. Trump, Obama, and Clinton use thematic frames to define the breadth of the problem at hand and determine causal agency with the intention of eventually scapegoating Congress to their benefit. In this section, I will demonstrate this process. First, the presidents claim the enemy has disrupted the community’s order by committing moral violations against American values. The terms moral and violation all indicate a cognitive motivation to respond to a threat. The rhetor makes the enemy a threat to the community’s moral standards and character. According to the rhetor, these moral standards and character need protecting because the enemy will otherwise destroy them. Each of these presidents use their respective government shutdowns as the impending destruction the enemy is

responsible for. Second, these presidents create a sense of urgency for order to be restored. There are three options for how an enemy violates moral standards and character. Trump, Obama and Clinton assert the enemy has no standards or bad standards, and that their moral state somehow threaten ours. Third, these presidents claim they are the ones who can restore this order. The argument made in each of these State of the Union addresses is that there is a need for a restoration of order. All of these presidents make the same case by emphasizing instances where Congress has seemingly disrupted the nation's order with moral violations against the American people. By claiming that Congress has committed a moral violation, these presidents encourage a response to the threat a morally corrupt Congress presents. They conclude that the only way an enemy is led to enlightenment and order restored is through punishment. Trump, Obama, and Clinton punish Congress by outlining their violations in their addresses. They make Congress a threat to the community's moral standards and character.

Donald Trump and the Urgency of Immigration

Trump (2019) says Congress has disrupted order by forcing Americans to pay for the trouble illegal immigrants cause. This disruption of order is the prolonged government shutdown that is allowing more immigrants to enter the country without a compromise on legislation in sight. Trump frames illegal immigration as an immediate threat to the order of the nation. He does this thematically by linking the shutdown crisis to the larger issue of illegal immigration arguing that Congress' rebuttal on an illegal immigration policy solution has stalled the government. He uses this frame of Congress as the disruption of order to explain to the American community how they should view Congress as an enemy and their threat as viable. Trump argues that since Congress has shut down the government over immigration, Americans are suffering. Trump (2019) says, "Meanwhile, working class Americans are left to pay the price for mass

illegal migration -- reduced jobs, lower wages, overburdened schools and hospitals, increased crime, and a depleted social safety net” (para. 10). Trump calls for order to be restored with a sense of urgency to create the need for leadership in the restoration.

Trump cites a need for the restoration of order by saying that since Congress has refused to do anything about illegal immigration in terms of legislation, the government has shutdown. He says that shutdown has negatively impacted the sense of order the inoperable government sectors provide for the nation. Trump claims the American people are begging for their leaders to fulfill their duties and re-open the government. Trump (2019) says, “Millions of our fellow citizens are watching us now, gathered in this great chamber, hoping that we will govern not as two parties but as one Nation” (para. 14). He then argues that since Congress is determined not to pass legislation that would prevent illegal immigration, they are facilitating the dangers illegal immigrants possess. Because Congress’ complacency is endangering the lives of American citizens, they are the irrational enemies to Trump’s rationality. Trump says, “The Congress has 10 days left to pass a bill that will fund our Government, protect our homeland, and secure our southern border” (para. 27). According to Trump, Congress has the authority to uphold laws that protect American citizens from outsiders who threaten their safety. Trump (2019) claims since it is the duty of America’s leaders in Congress to defend the nation’s people, they are bound by their duty to confront this moral issue.

This assertion is what enables Trump to say he is the one who can restore order for the nation. He argues the threat to the safety of American citizens is immediate because immigrants are entering the country at such a rapid and unchecked rate that they will soon expand their harm to unprecedented levels. Trump can restore order because he already has a solution to the immigration shutdown crisis ready to be put into action: re-opening the government to restore

order via funding a border wall that would stop illegal immigration. This assertion allows Trump (2019) to make a call to action for the people to join him in the fight against Congress. He asks of the people to “step boldly and bravely into the next chapter of this great American adventure” (para. 24).

Barack Obama and the Urgency of Healthcare Reform

Obama (2013) similarly accuses Congress of giving Americans the bill for problems they are not responsible for and causing a disruption of order. Obama’s argument is that Congress is being unfair to the American people and treating them with disrespect. Obama frames healthcare reform as an immediate threat to the order of the nation. He does this thematically by linking the shutdown crisis to the larger issue of healthcare reform arguing that Congress’ rebuttal on an illegal immigration policy solution has stalled the government. This frame of Congress as the disruption of order is used by Obama to convey to the American community how they should view Congress as an enemy possessing a viable threat. Obama claims that since Congress has shut down the government to bicker over the Affordable Care Act, Americans are suffering. Obama’s rhetoric calls for the irrational Congress to be stopped in their irrational attempts to stall the Affordable Care Act. Obama argues this should be done because, “We won’t grow the middle class will not prosper from shifting the cost of health care or college onto families that are already struggling, or by forcing communities to lay off workers” (para. 53). Obama cites the government shutdown as a reason for order to be restored. Obama (2013) accuses Congress of being the source of “the brinkmanship that stresses consumers and scares off investors. The greatest nation on Earth cannot keep conducting its business by drifting from one manufactured crisis to the next” (para. 42). Congress is threatening the wellbeing of the people by passing off healthcare reform as an issue not deserving of their support. Obama (2013) cites a need for order

to be restored urgently when he says, “Now is the time to do it. Now is the time to get it done. Now is the time to get it done” (para. 49). Obama’s (2013) perspective is that since Congress refuses to support the needs of the American people, the order they have disrupted must be restored. Examples of this can be seen throughout Obama’s speech when he says things such as, “some in Congress have proposed preventing only the defense cuts by making even bigger cuts to things like education and job training, Medicare and Social Security benefits. That idea is even worse.” Obama (2013) says... “I’m prepared to enact reforms that will achieve the same amount of health care savings...Already, the Affordable Care Act is helping to slow the growth of health care costs. And the reforms I’m proposing go even further.” Obama (2013) says that if Congress is stopped, only prosperity will follow. Obama advocates for a more balanced approach for broad growth instead of Congress growth stunting cuts. Obama calls for order to be restored with a sense of urgency to create the need for leadership in the restoration.

Obama sets himself up as the voice of reason for the American people, fighting for a better solution to healthcare reform, and ending the government shutdown to restore order. Obama (2013) says “Now is our best chance to solve this issue with immediate reform.” He reasons that such a reform will re-open the government and should do so because it is the morally right thing to do on behalf of the American people. Obama (2013) says, “Let’s agree right here, right now to keep the people’s government open, and pay our bills on time, and always uphold the full faith and credit of the United States of America. The American people have worked too hard, for too long, rebuilding from one crisis to see their elected officials cause another.” With these statements, Obama says he is the one to restore order and emerges as a savior who can easily scapegoat congress for the ills of the shutdown.

Bill Clinton and the Urgency of Economic Security

Clinton (1996) argues that Congress disrupted order by not giving the American people a balanced budget. Clinton claims Congress' violation was their failure to give the people a chance at economic security. Clinton frames illegal immigration as an immediate threat to the order of the nation. Clinton creates this frame thematically by linking the shutdown crisis to the larger issue of economic security. He argues that Congress' rebuttal on funding for programs to help the poor has left the government inoperable. He uses this frame of Congress as the disruption of order to explain to the American community how they should view Congress as a viable threat. Clinton argues that Congress' shut down of the government over economic security has cost Americans. Clinton lists out six challenges all directed at Congress. Though each of these challenges are different, they are all in some way tied to the issue of economic security and the government shutdown. Clinton claims Congress' Contract for America dispute is keeping the government closed, and asserts that if their burdensome contract can be removed, then all the other challenges facing America will be solved as a result. Clinton calls for a restoration of order when he says, "We ought to resolve our remaining differences. I am willing to work to resolve them. I am ready to meet tomorrow. But I ask you to consider that we should at least enact these savings that both plans have in common and give the American people their balanced budget, a tax cut, lower interest rates, and a brighter future. We should do that now, and make permanent deficits yesterday's legacy" (para. 39). Clinton's assertion clearly shows the contrast between his policy plans and Congress' Contract. This contrast paints Clinton as the voice of reason on the issue. Clinton (1996) created a sense of urgency calling for a response to the threat an unbalanced budget presented to American economic security. Clinton (1996) says, "We are gaining ground in restoring our fundamental values. Our changing technological world present

challenges. But our values must still be upheld” (para. 30). He argues that in the midst of such great progress, America can’t afford to fall behind. Clinton’s call to action to balance the budget is a direct challenge to Congress to respond to injustice they are responsible for.

Clinton becomes the voice of reason by reminding the nation’s people that America was built on challenges. He says the key to overcoming the current challenges are restoring order, re-opening the government, and balancing the budget. He says these challenges are significant but that history has shown us they can be overcome. He says Congress presents the ultimate challenge. If Congress’ contract for America is stopped, then Clinton says he can restore order, re-open the government, and balance the budget. Clinton (1996) says, “Now it is time to finish the job and balance the budget” (para. 14). These presidents state that the time is now to respond to the threat Congress presents. Clinton says he is the one to restore order and emerges as a savior who can easily scapegoat congress for the ills of the shutdown.

In their State of the Unions, these presidents use their addresses to create a sense of urgency about restoring the order disrupted in the wake of their respective shutdowns. When order is said to have been disrupted, a sense of urgency is what beckons for order to be restored and calls for a leader who can do such. Thus, these presidents step into the role of savior as the leader who can restore order. The rhetor must claim that order has been disrupted in order to scapegoat the enemy for that disruption in the final step of the enemization process.

Scapegoating for Self-Promotion

In the final step, the rhetor scapegoats the enemy. There is a burden placed on the advocates for destruction to establish the enemy's culpability. This is accomplished by casting blame for the guilt, tension, anxiety, embarrassment, shame, or disgust the community feels. The need to protect the political, social, and moral order from these tensions allows rhetors to justify aggression against an enemy who threatens these things. All three presidents scapegoat Congress for the nation's ills. This final step of the enemy creation process is illustrated using the statements from Trump, Obama, and Clinton. First, these presidents make a call to action for the people to follow them against Congress. Second, the presidents claim that their policy plans will end the government shutdown if they are put in a position to enact them. Third, the president argues how his leadership has helped Americans in other areas of policy to boost their credibility as a savior.

Donald Trump and the Scapegoated Congress

Trump (2019) scapegoats the Congress in a way which sets himself up to be a savior. When Trump first says Congress is the reason the government has shutdown, he simultaneously makes a call to action for the people to support him over Congress. Trump implies that he holds the key to re-opening the government. He is a savior, but he needs followers to enact his plan. Trump (2019) says, "Simply put, walls work and walls save lives. So let's work together, compromise, and reach a deal that will truly make America safe" (para. 50). Second, he calls on the American people to join him against Congress. Trump effectively makes himself and the American people or the "us" and makes Congress the "them." Trump (2019) aligns himself with

the people to set up his assent to savior by using “us” by using language such as, “This is our future -- our fate -- and our choice to make. I am asking you to choose greatness” (para. 56). Finally, Trump boasts his credibility as a savior citing the policies he’s passed to aid the American people, “Over the last 2 years, my Administration has moved with urgency and historic speed to confront problems neglected by leaders of both parties over many decades. In just over 2 years since the election, we have launched an unprecedented economic boom—a boom that has rarely been seen before. We have created 5.3 million new jobs and importantly added 600,000 new manufacturing jobs -- something which almost everyone said was impossible to do, but the fact is, we are just getting started” (para. 15). Trump (2019) asserts that his plan is one of “greatness” and thus he is a more capable savior than the enemy is a capable enemy at standing in the way of “progress” with their “resistance.” Trump’s (2019) statement, “No issue better illustrates the divide between America's working class and America's political class than illegal immigration. Wealthy politicians and donors push for open borders while living their lives behind walls and gates and guards,” shows the moral corruption of Congress and elevates Trump (para. 35). Trump comes out as the savior of the American people who can end illegal immigration with his border wall plan.

Barack Obama and the Scapegoated Congress

Obama (2013) shifts blame for the government shutdown onto Congress by arguing that their unwillingness to negotiate a deficit deal has left Americans vulnerable. First, Obama (2013) promotes himself and his policies as the solution to ending the government shutdown and beckons for a superior role to Congress as savior. Obama (2013) says, “So, together, we have cleared away the rubble of crisis, and we can say with renewed confidence that the State of our Union is stronger” (para. 48). Second, Obama calls on the American people to join him in

making an enemy of Congress and scapegoat them for the shutdown by saying, “In 2011, Congress passed a law saying that if both parties couldn’t agree on a plan to reach our deficit goal, about a trillion dollars’ worth of budget cuts would automatically go into effect this year. These sudden, harsh, arbitrary cuts would jeopardize our military readiness. They’d devastate priorities like education, and energy, and medical research. They would certainly slow our recovery and cost us hundreds of thousands of jobs” (para. 20). Obama (2013) says “Let’s agree right here, right now to keep the people’s government open, and pay our bills on time, and always uphold the full faith and credit of the United States of America.... A year and a half ago, I put forward an American Jobs Act that independent economists said would create more than 1 million new jobs. And I thank the last Congress for passing some of that agenda. I urge this Congress to pass the rest.” Obama says he will fight for affordable healthcare regardless of Congress’ rebuttal. Finally, Obama (2013) promotes his credibility and embodies the savior status when he discusses the ways in which his healthcare reforms have already helped Americans. Obama says, “Already, the Affordable Care Act is helping to slow the growth of health care costs. And the reforms I’m proposing go even further,” and goes on to detail the specific ways his plan will help the country (para. 30).

Bill Clinton and the Scapegoated Congress

Clinton follows a similar pattern. First, Clinton advocates for himself and his pro-government funding policies to be the solution to ending the government shutdown if Congress’ opposition is stopped. Clinton (1996) says, “I also challenge the Congress...to honor the obligations of this great nation as we have for 220 years....I know that this evening I have asked a lot of Congress... But I am confident: When Americans work together in their homes, their schools, their churches, their synagogues, their civic groups, their workplace, they can meet any

challenge (para. 59). Second, Clinton (1996) scapegoated Congress by repeatedly challenging them to “reverse their policies” on the six key issues he outlined as essential to American prosperity (para. 49). These challenges imply that Congress is in the wrong and are hence “challenged” to accept Clinton’s policy solutions. Clinton (1996) says, “But I ask you to consider that we should at least enact these savings that both plans have in common and give the American people their balanced budget, a tax cut, lower interest rates, and a brighter future. We should do that now, and make permanent deficits yesterday's legacy” (para. 10). Third, Clinton (1996) boasts his achievements as a savior when he says, “We are helping America's communities, not with more bureaucracy, but with more opportunities,” and like Obama explains how his policies will restore the particular type of order that Congress threatened (para. 42).

These presidents emerge from their respective crises as saviors of the American people. Trump, Obama, and Clinton each argue that Congress is an enemy who is essentialized by their lack of moral standards and character. Each of these presidents divide Congress away from the American people by identifying them as morally corrupt enemies, dehumanize Congress by saying they lack basic values of human empathy, create a sense of urgency to respond to the viable threat Congress presents, and scapegoat Congress for the nation’s ills. By making Congress an enemy, Trump, Obama, and Clinton concomitantly advocate that they and their policies are morally sound. The enemy is created as a classic scapegoat who allows for the president to promote themselves into a savior role embodying the characteristics of a savior including the leadership position within the community, the soundness of the leader’s moral standards and character, and the savior’s credibility as a problem solver within the community. Evidence of this elevation in status can be seen in each of the presidents’ State of the Union

addresses. In each of these examples, Trump, Obama and Clinton use the form of scapegoating to achieve the function of emerging as a savior from their respective shutdown crises.

Chapter 4: CONCLUSION

This project argues that rhetors may create enemies to assume the position of savior. Rhetors assume this position by redefining themselves as a savior in a four-step process. First, rhetors differentiate an individual, group, or entity from the community in order to classify them as not a part of the community's value system. Second, the enemy is dehumanized to justify their removal or destruction from the community. Third, the rhetor presents the enemy as a threat to the values of the community to create a sense of urgency. Lastly, instead of following a traditional pattern of scapegoating for the enemy's destruction, I illustrate how rhetors may use the process to elevate their status in the community, assuming the role of savior for the community's problems.

Each step of the process previously described paves the way for rhetor to assume the role of savior. For example, in the first step, the rhetor positions herself or himself against an enemy lacking moral standards and character. This identification and division enable the rhetor to then champion those moral standards and the community's character. In the second step, rhetors position themselves as the voices of reason against the corrupt character of the enemy. In the third step, the rhetor asserts that she or he has the ability to end the threat imposed by the enemy, in this case a government shutdown. Rhetors argue they know best in terms of how to deal with the threat presented. In the final step, the rhetor scapegoats the enemy to resolve the conflict, and in the process assumes the role of savior. This has illustrated this concept by analyzing three texts: Trump's 2019 State of the Union, Clinton's 1996 State of the Union, and Obama's 2013 State of the Union. The analysis of these texts has demonstrated how rhetors can use the rhetorical construction enemies to assume the posture of a savior.

In the first step in enemy creation process, Trump, Obama, and Clinton identified the enemy as a different from the rhetor and their community. Rhetors built the community by creating a sense of identification or by dividing the people from another. In both cases, differentiation is important as it is how the enemy is explained to not possess the same values as the rhetor's community. This is the rhetor's means of generating unity within the community while at the same time justifying action against the enemy. These presidents did this by isolating Congress for their moral failures. These presidents argue that the enemy lacks moral standards and character to identify them as different. Trump does this with the issue of immigration, Obama with healthcare reform, and Clinton with economic security. Next, these presidents put themselves and their policies in opposition to Congress. These presidents emphasized a moral divide between Congress and the American value system. In their State of the Union addresses, the presidents present their policy solutions, particularly those related to the government shutdown, as moral issues, and position Congress in opposition to those issues. The presidents were able to champion moral standards and the community's character because they set themselves apart from the morally corrupt Congress. These presidents make themselves saviors championing the moral standards and community values of the American people. These presidents identify Congress as morally corrupt to divide Congress from the community. When they charge Congress for a lack of moral standards and character, they are differentiating them for not sharing the community's values. This identification is what justifies Congress' alienation from the American community as an enemy. Identification and division serve the purpose of moving the enemy out of the rhetor's community and allows the president to champion the community's morals standards and character.

The second step in enemy creation the presidents made a call to dehumanize Congress by framing them as less than human. By making this claim, the presidents humanized themselves in contrast. The presidents examined here dehumanize Congress by asserting that Congress lacks the basic human values and empathy to help the American people. First, the presidents define the essence of the enemy as not possessing moral standards and character. Trump, Obama, and Clinton claim Congress' plans lack empathy for the American people's needs. These presidents essentialized the enemy so that their substance was framed as non-human and all of their actions may be interpreted through that lens. Second, the presidents then positioned themselves and their policies as having the essence of moral rightness against a less-than-human Congress. Finally, president becomes a voice of reason against an enemy whose essence is corrupt, contributing to the elevation of their savior status. Trump, Obama, and Clinton all dehumanize the enemy to humanize themselves. Pointing out the lack of moral standards and character in the enemy allows for these presidents to elevate their status in comparison. Dehumanizing the enemy is what makes them a viable threat in the next step of the enemy creation process. The enemy is framed to be less than human in order to present a viable threat to the American community.

The third step in enemy creation is the creation of a sense of urgency to justify the enemy's destruction. In this step the rhetor addresses the probable disruption of order created by the enemy as a rationale for the enemy's destruction. I demonstrated this process with these president's comments. First, the presidents claimed Congress had disrupted the American community's order by committing moral violations against the American community's values. The rhetor makes the enemy a threat to the community's moral standards and character. Trump, Obama, and Clinton argued moral standards and character needed protecting because Congress would otherwise destroy them. All three presidents claimed their respective government

shutdowns were the looming destruction the Congress was responsible for. Second, these presidents created a sense of urgency calling for order to be restored. Trump, Obama and Clinton said Congress had no standards or bad standards, and that their moral state was a threat to the American community. Third, these presidents claim they are the ones who can restore this order. The argument made in each of these State of the Union addresses is that there is a need for a restoration of order. All of these presidents make the same case by emphasizing instances in which Congress has disrupted the nation's order with moral violations against the American people. By claiming that Congress had committed a moral violation, these presidents encouraged a response to the threat presented by Congress. From this, we can conclude that the only way an enemy is led to enlightenment and order restored is through punishment. Trump, Obama, and Clinton accomplished this by outlining Congress' violations in their addresses. They made Congress a threat to the community's moral standards and character.

In the final step, the rhetor scapegoats the enemy. Trump, Obama, and Clinton placed blame for the government shutdown on Congress. They advocated for Congress' destruction to establish Congress' responsibility for the crisis. The presidents accomplished this by casting blame for the guilt, tension, anxiety, embarrassment, shame, and disgust felt by the American people over the shutdown onto Congress. The need to protect the political, social, and moral order from these tensions enabled these presidents to justify aggression against Congress. All three presidents scapegoated Congress for the nation's ills. In this final step of the enemy creation process, Trump, Obama, and Clinton scapegoated Congress in three steps. First, these presidents made a call to action for the American people to rally behind them against Congress. Second, the presidents claimed that their policy plans would end the government shutdown if they were put in a position to carry those plans out free of Congress' interference. Third, the

presidents argued how their leadership had already helped Americans in other areas of policy. This boosted their credibility as a savior. When these presidents cast blame onto Congress for the government shutdown, they assumed the role of savior to the American people.

Becoming a savior to the American people was the goal of these presidents because it allowed them to overcome the issue of debate which prompted the shutdown, overcome the debate itself with Congress by making them an enemy, and overcome the shutdown by scapegoating Congress for it. These presidents overcame the issue of debate in each of their respective shutdown crises by creating an enemy of Congress in regard to the issue and scapegoating them for the resulting shutdown. They each identified and divided Congress as lacking moral standards and character on the issue of debate. They then dehumanized Congress for their stance on the issue and called for the power of Congress to be destroyed before they disrupted order any further. They claimed Congress presented an immediate threat to American values. The presidents overcame the debate itself with Congress by making an enemy of Congress. These presidents ultimately overcame their shutdown crises and emerged from the crisis as saviors by scapegoating Congress for their respective shutdowns.

Other researchers can expand this discussion because since the political discourse examined in this study is situational, there is room for questioning how and why presidents might scapegoat enemies in contexts beyond government shutdowns. This study explained the process of how and why presidents scapegoat enemies in government shutdowns but the study is limited by that particular case. Presidents create enemies to shift blame for shutdowns through the enemy creation process described in this research by identifying and dividing the enemy, dehumanizing the enemy, creating a sense of urgency in response to the threat created by the enemy, and finally scapegoating the enemy for the community's ills. Researchers might ask for

what other reasons besides government shutdowns might a president decide to create an enemy out of Congress to shift blame and how might presidents create an enemy out of Congress in those situations. Future studies should examine how Congress might be enemized as an analog for the opposing party rather than as a distinct institution. These studies would examine partisan motives and values as the means of creating an enemy out of Congress rather than the American moral standards of protection from outsiders or illegal immigrants, affordable healthcare, and economic security. A study of the partisan motives of Congress would examine how Congress upholds the moral standards of their respective party, not the American community. The process of enemy creation and the rhetor's goal may be different in other situations. This is because the form of the rhetoric will change with its intended function.

Because of the situational limitations of this particular study of presidential rhetoric in government shutdowns, there is room to research the other possible reflexive functions of scapegoating. Researchers can overcome the limitations of this study by asking the question of what influences the rhetor's decision about what the reflexive function of their rhetoric should be. If a study could determine what factors influence a rhetor's choice for a reflexive function then the situational limitations of this study could be resolved. Broader themes of enemy creation would examine the rhetor's form and function of their argument. These themes would examine if rhetor's goal is not for their argument to function as a means of self-promotion to a savior status what other reflexive functions might there be. Such a study of these broader themes would analyze the rhetor's discourse for themes in how and why the rhetor creates enemies in each step of the enemy creation process. Broader themes studying the nature of form and function of discourse in enemy creation include looking at the influences of identification and division, dehumanization, urgency, and scapegoating. These studies would identify common themes in

how and why an enemy is identified and divided, dehumanized, made a viable threat with urgency, and scapegoated.

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