The Obama Model and Britain: A Doxological Inquiry into the Rhetoric and Reception of Strategic Identification in the 2008 American Presidential Election

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List of Non-Audience Response Technology Tables and Graphs

Abstract

This thesis measures the rhetoric and effect of political campaign discourse. It is a rhetorical analysis of three campaign speeches given by Senator Barack Obama during the 2008 presidential election, "A More Perfect Union" delivered in March 2008, "The American Promise" delivered at the Democratic National Convention in August 2008 and "A World that Stands as One" delivered in Berlin in July 2008. Reading the speech *teleologically* by drawing on Kenneth Burke's theory of rhetorical identification and consubstantiality, this thesis argues the Obama Model of persuasion constructs audience identity and uses specific strands of an audience's history to emphasise common ground, shared values and shared interests in provisional coalitions against common challenges. This is accomplished through the strategic use of "we," through the praise of an audience's dominant symbols and values and through scapegoating, Othering and antithesis. As a multidisciplinary study, this thesis seeks to understand how these messages and strategies are received by audiences using focus groups and audience response technology. It convenes twelve focus groups of previously unaddressed audiences in the United Kingdom to understand the doxological equipment audiences bring to the rhetorical transaction of American political campaign discourse. As such, it seeks to understand moments of convergence and divergence, identification and division between demographically diverse audiences and Obama's campaign speeches. This thesis is an original contribution to rhetorical theory, identity and identification, studies on Kenneth Burke and Barack Obama, cultural studies and Joseph Nye's theory of soft power in international relations.

I. Preface

This thesis began on a hot, rainy summer evening in Miami, Florida at the beginning of the 2008 American General Election. There were hundreds of us who had come to Florida from all over the country to organize volunteers and voters as part of the Obama Organizing Fellowship. Five other people and I, all under twenty-five, were charged as a team with organizing the strongly Republican and Cuban area of Miami known as Westchester. My fellow team members and I had just finished a grueling ten-hour training session on the fundamentals of community organizing. Most of it was a straightforward process of learning how to efficiently target sympathetic voters in different areas of the city, how to properly and legally register someone to vote and how to keep track of the stacks of canvassing data that were cumulating in make-shift offices across the nation. One exercise that took a large portion out of the day was breaking down into small groups and learning how to, in under two minutes, tell people our own story: who we were, why we left home to volunteer and what issues and policies motivated us. Then, we would critique each other and suggest how we could improve what we said and what we could say differently to make our stories more powerful. I then watched veteran community organizers with amazement as they role played canvassing situations with voters: the key, they said, wasn't to have an army of policy statistics ready to unleash on voters who might disagree with you, it was to find something in your life story to make a connection with the voter. This was something new for me. That night it rained and while our newly formed community organizing team sipped a few beers under hula huts down by the beach, I reflected on that day's training. "Why were we learning to tell our stories?" I asked. The process seemed to fly in the face of everything I had learned about rational politics. I was concerned. I had put my MA on hold and came to Miami because I thought the stakes were high, I wanted to make sure we got it right. Our team leader, a Brooklyn born veteran volunteer and Harvard graduate was now in his third state of the campaign, sipped his beer and smiled. "Bro," he said, "you can talk to a voter about the facts as you see them, and they'll come right back at you with the facts as they see them, and both of you can walk away unconvinced. But when you tell your story, no one can discount your truth. They can't tell you that you aren't passionate about the election, or that as a student you struggle with tuition. Americans are struggling. Tell them your story, and they might find out they have more in common with you than they thought."

Over the next six weeks, we organized Miami, telling people our stories and asking them to tell theirs. I was amazed at how it disarmed potentially hostile voters, and when we exchanged stories, we always seemed to find something in common. It didn't always work, and many Cuban-Americans were unreceptive, but the power of a personal narrative seemed to refresh people's attitude toward politics. It seemed to be different than the vitriol they watched every night on television. As Obama had said in one of his speeches, we could truly "see ourselves in each other."

It didn't stop there for Obama though. As we watched Obama cross the country on the stump with his message of hope and change, he was participating in the same exercise as us. He was telling his own story. His father from Kenya, his mother from Kansas, his grandparents' work during the war, his work as a community organizer on the south side of Chicago, in his speeches and core narrative his story seemed to play a pivotal role in his message. I watched him talk to black Americans and white Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans, middle class Americans and working class Americans. I watched him tell his story and lay out his vision of the nation, and I watched millions of voters respond with overwhelming enthusiasm. Speaking to such a fragmented nation, I wondered how these strategies might be grounded theoretically; I wondered just how far some of the reoccuring strategies Obama used could take a person, politican or institution. And, if its effectiveness could transcend deep divisions in American culture, could it transcend the nation-state all together? I continued to reflect through the summer, the general election, and the inauguration on this seemingly radical departure from everything I thought I knew about political communication. This thesis is a critical expansion of that initial reflection.

II. Scope and Layout

This thesis is a rhetorical analysis of three key speeches given by Barack Obama during the 2008 presidential election and an investigation into how those speeches are interpreted by communities in the United Kingdom using focus groups and moment-to-moment audience response technology. The scope of this thesis, which is in later chapters expanded upon and placed in a scholarly context, is as follows: it is argued that the purpose of political campaigns is to bring oneself as a candidate into favor with one's voters, often through ingratiation and identifying the campaign with the values, opinions and symbols of voter segments. This is demonstrated on three levels: through a study of American rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke's philosophy of language, through the study of the literature surrounding the genre of the political campaign and is grounded in discourse by studying the speeches given by Barack Obama during the 2008 election. Indeed, I argue that a close reading of Barack Obama's campaign speeches reveals a stable utilization of a rhetorical model, the Obama Model, of strategic identification. This complements the biographical, rhetorical and intellectual studies of Barack Obama that allude to Obama's "knack" or faculty for identity politics generally and, more specifically, finding common ground between himself and fragmented audiences as a means to address complex rhetorical exigencies. Methodologically, the rhetorical analysis draws on close textual analysis and is grounded in a *teleological* or purpose-driven reading using Kenneth Burke's theory of identification. A *teleological* reading best equips us with a philosophical and rhetorical vocabulary to explain the metaphors often heard peppered in campaign discourse: "coalitions"; "alliances"; a candidate "courting" or "love-bombing" particular voter segments and the need for a message to "resonate," "ring true" or "connect" with an audience. In short, Obama's speeches are read through the lens of a rhetorical philosophy of identification, a paradoxical-and-sometimes-dubious consubstantiation of encoder and decoder; it is a close reading of how "you" and "I" become "we" in rhetorical transactions. While these premises alone might be the starting point for a standard rhetorical thesis that would contribute to our understanding of Kenneth Burke and Barack Obama, this interdisciploanry thesis is also concerned with audiences, rhetorical effect and how Barack Obama's speeches affected non-American audiences who may or may not have identified with the values, beliefs and symbols Obama marshals in his speeches.

Here, it is argued that the presidential campaign is a source for how the United States, its people, institutions, values and policies are represented to the global community. In an interdependent information age, non-Americans have direct access and are exposed to the American democratic process through the spectacle of the American presidential campaign. As such, strategic identification generally and the Obama Model specifically have the potential to flow from the nation as a source of what Joseph Nye calls "soft power," the ability to attract and co-opt rather than coerce in foreign policy. Conversely, this thesis also illuminates the potential for certain discourses in American political rhetoric to be a profound source of how non-American audiences define themselves in *opposition to*, rather than *identified with*, the United States. Indeed, recognizing that rhetorical devices and strategic identification can be blunted and indeed wholly rejected by unreceptive active audiences necessitates a methodological design capable of reflecting the complex reactions of audiences towards political rhetoric. As such, this study investigates how fragmented audiences in one nation-state, the United Kingdom, receive the speeches under rhetorical investigation given by Barack Obama during the 2008 presidential election.

The layout of the thesis is as follows. First, the literature is surveyed surrounding the close textual analysis of rhetorical discourse in general and a *teleological* driven interpretation in particular. After selecting the purpose of identification for campaign discourse and acknowledging that rhetorical "instruments" can be used to achieve this purpose, the concept of identification is synthesized with theories surrounding political campaign communication. Third, theories of active audience decodings from the social sciences, which asserts negotiated and oppositional audience recodings to texts, are synthesized with the rhetorical discipline through a mutual interest in *doxa*. Fourth, the methodological literature on audiences, focus groups, and moment-to-moment audience response technology is analyzed and the research design and its variables are laid out. Fifth, I preface the rhetorical and audience-related findings with a contextualizing chapter that observes dominant political, economic and cultural discourses in relations between the United States and the United Kingdom. Sixth, an over-arching chapter detailing focus group participants' attitudes towards Obama is provided. Seventh, a rhetorical analysis for each speech is conducted and subsequently interleafed with moment-to-moment and focus group data that directly

relate to the intrinsic features of the text. Finally, I discuss the implications of this study and suggest further avenues of analysis.

III. Thesis Contributions

This thesis results in four unique contributions to two very important fields. The first and second involve American rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke and American President Barack Obama. By putting the rhetorical theories of Kenneth Burke in conversation with the campaign speeches of Barack Obama, we understand both better. We understand Burke by grounding his theories in discourse and by giving his concept of identification, articulated in 1950, contemporary relevance. We understand Barack Obama by connecting the strategies he marshaled during the key moments of his campaign to larger philosophical and theoretical vocabularies in what results in The Obama Model. We are able to further grasp what James T. Kloppenberg attempts to explain about Obama from the perspective of Obama's biographical and intellectual foundations: that Obama is an antifoundationalist, philosophical pragmatist who rejects absolutes and seeks to establish common ground in order to address common challenges. Obama's campaign orations become a series of paradigm cases through which to better understand Burkean identification; Burkean identification gave us a vocabulary to discuss the repetition of observed phenomena in Obama's speeches. There are implications of this research on a number of concepts and theories that radiate from studies of Obama and Burke: presidential image-making, rhetorical criticism's contribution to the "packaging of politics" (Franklin, 2004), the discursive construction of national identity and the constitution (or interpellation) of subject positions as it exists in critical theory.

The third and fourth contributions are both unique contributions that stand alone and are findings supportive of the first two contributions. Like the first and second contribution, by putting the rhetorical tradition in conversation with the active audience paradigm found within cultural studies, both are enriched though evaluation and synthesis. We understand audience studies better by importing the rhetorical tradition. We are able to make a more rounded statement about what it is when audiences identify with what they see and hear and the rhetorical implications of this process. We are able to offer a corollary to Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model by acknowledging the rhetorician's attempts to minimize negotiated or oppositional readings by identifying their message with audience decoding equipment. Without reviving the hypodermic needle model of message effects, we end with a theory of rhetorical instrumentalism, based on Burke's concept of identification, which

undermines the fundamental assumption of absolute resistance found within the active audience paradigm.

The study of audiences can likewise enrich the rhetorical tradition. The audience, its composition and *doxa* were seen in the ancient art as something of a given. Burke in *A Rhetoric of Motives* begins to update this view with a renewed emphasis on audiences but would move on to other matters before a full analysis could be made. Today, many rhetorical scholars note how polysemy, polyvalence and a lack of audience studies do in fact plague the tradition. Rhetorical criticism and interpretation often descends into audience conjecture. By coupling close textual analysis which seeks to understand how the interlocking parts of a text function on a rhetorical level with an understanding of how audiences respond to these appeals, exciting new opportunities for research in the rhetorical tradition open up to explore communicative transactions in their full complexity, from production to reception.

These two traditions are linked together by what we call *Doxology*. *Doxology* is defined as the study or faculty of observing an audience's attitudes, beliefs, opinions and values. While the full tenets of *Doxology* could not possibly be completely explored in this study and have been partially defined in rhetorical works from Aristotle, Cicero and Kenneth Burke, what can be said here is that it is a significant contribution to our understanding of Kenneth Burke and the rhetorical process. In the studying of Obama's campaign orations, we looked for evidence of doxological assumptions and appeals. By acknowledging global communication and studying British audiences in how they interpret these speeches, we sought new doxological revelations that might lead to an overlap or departure in how intercultural audiences, with a variety of decoding *doxa,* respond to and interpret texts. By engaging in the doxological process using focus groups and audience response technology, we highlight that Obama's speeches are nuanced and solicit a wide range of positive and negative sentiment from audiences outside the intentional design of the speech, and these are, in part, conditioned by the instrumentality of rhetoric.

III. Methodology: A Close Textual Analysis of the Text

In this chapter I explore the literature surrounding close textual analysis, its philosophical and theoretical origins, several notable approaches as well as several criticisms raised against this reading of the text and finally, its application to this research.

A. Theoretical Origins of Close Textual Analysis

Close textual analysis is a methodological practice, primarily utilized in the rhetorical discipline, that studies the rhetorical intricacies and inner-workings of texts. This method is largely a rejection of the neo-Aristotelian movement that had, since the early Twentieth Century, used the speech as a medium to study biographical, historical, and other contextual factors wholly extrinsic to the text. Lucas describes close reading as a slow motion camera, allowing the scholar to analyze how the speech unfolds and how "[each] word, each phrase, each sentence conditions the response of the audience to each succeeding word, phrase, and sentence" of the text (Lucas, 1988: 191). With close textual analysis, a premium is placed on the intrinsic context of the text, the intentional design and the immediate context to provide a nuanced account of how a human attempts to intervene in a particular situation and bring into contact with the auditor the world as they see it (Lucas, 1988; Leff and Mohrmann, 1974; Leff, 1986: 171-173; Leff, 1992).   According to Leff, the rhetorical critic in conducting a close reading of a text

> "occupies the position Cicero assigned to the orator, and equipped with general knowledge, including a practical command of the precepts of the art [of rhetoric], he or she studies paradigm texts. […] Within this project, the lore of classical rhetoric becomes something more than a guide to the naming of parts; it becomes available for doing interpretive work, since metaphors and *enthymeme*s, prose rhythms and topics, hyperboles and examples take on a life within the metabolism of discourse (Leff, 1992: 228)."

These interlocking parts are best explained in oratory as a temporal phenomenon: rhetorical discourse "is constrained by and refers to the order and relation of events in the world, it also constructs a certain order and relation of elements within its own pattern of utterance. The internal pattern, the timing of the text, determines appearance of the discourse as an intervention in historic time, but the discourse also stretches beyond its own margins to influence the appearance of the world in which it

is made (Leff, 1986: 171-173)." According to Leff, close textual analysis was conceived through "a desire to rescue the lore of traditional rhetoric from its then dominant use as a taxonomic instrument and to refurbish its equipment for understanding the internal dynamics of oratorical literature (Leff, 2001: 245)." To accomplish this, Leff and Mohrmann turned to Aristotle's concept of *teleological* genres in the *Rhetoric*, where Aristotle details the *telos* for the judicial, deliberative and epideictic genres of rhetoric. Leff and Mohrmann classified Lincon's speech at Cooper Union as a political campaign address and assigned the purpose of campaign oratory as ingratiation. With a purpose in mind, the interpretive process looks at the internal dynamics, structure and organization of the text with "special reference to matters of argument and style" as instruments to achieve the objective of the speech (1974: 174-175). "Attention to the purpose of the discourse," Leff maintains, "acts as shuttle to the threads unraveled in the analytical process (1986)." In short, the classical apparatus of rhetoric was "put at the service of an overarching goal or set of goals that could motivate and organize application to specific oratorical performances. Classical precepts were interpreted "as tools to help us understand how well Lincoln realized this goal (Leff, 2001: 245)." In this way, Leff maintains, "abstract, general principles may aid in guiding [the] judgment, but they do not represent the content of rhetorical theory (ibid, 1986: 170)." The approach taken by Leff and Mohrmann seemed at once persuasive and in need of revision: by their standard, any *teleological* reading of Barack Obama's speeches would necessitate a careful exploration of how Barack Obama constructs himself as a candidate, his background, beliefs and values in campaign discourse. As such, much of the literature surrounding rhetorical theory generally and presidential campaign communication specifically shared a strikingly consistent emphasis on *ethos*, personal image, character and personal values (Westen, 2007; Leff and Utley, 2004: 40; Sanders, 2009: 93-95, 225, 174; Burke, 1962: 547-550; 577-579; Alexander, 2009: 77; Franklin, 2004; Bimber and Davis, 2003; Hacker, 2004; Benoit & McHale, 2003: 51; Benoit, 1999; Benoit, 2001). Yet, a close reading that looks for expressions of *ethos* seemed to be incomplete. Bringing oneself into favor with one's audience, it is argued here, must also include statements about that very audience. This was found in its fullest expression in Vanessa Beasley's *You, the People* which sought to understand how, over time, American presidents have defined and constituted the American people (2009). A survey of the literature surround these sorts of appeals led us through Althusser's theory of interpellation, Edwin Black's

rhetorical theory of the "second persona" and Maurice Charland's concept of constitutive rhetoric along with a number of case studies (Oravec, 1989: 180; Lentricchia, 1983: 148-150; Jamieson, 1988: 91, 97; Black, 1970; Charland, 1987; McGee, 1975; Black, 1970; Burke, 1962: 588; Murphy, 2003: 620; Cos and Snee, 2001: 2017; Morus, 2007: 2-3; Spanos, 2007: 48; Wess, 1996: 200; Tate, 2005; Stuckey, 2004: 2, 7, 17; Anderson, 1990; Wodak, 2009; Billig, 1995; Schliesinger, 1991; Frosh and Wolfsfeld, 2007: 105; Bell, 2003; Ozkirimli, 2005; Hall, 1990; Jamieson, 1988: 94, 97). Each thematic reading in itself seemed incomplete.

B. Criticisms of Close Textual Analysis

There are, of course, criticisms to be raised. Indeed, any qualitative approach carries baggage and its own set of problems; a purpose-oriented rhetorical analysis is no different, and Leff recognized as much in "Lincoln at Cooper Union: Neo-classical criticism revisited." There, he acknowledges the criticisms leveled against his approach to close textual analysis and notes the progress made in the field of textual criticism. First, Jasinski criticizes Leff and Mohrmann's approach as inadequate and blind to parts of the text that did not work towards the "formal end of a campaign speech (2001: 234)." While Leff maintains that this does not undermine an instrumentalist take on textual criticism, Leff does see a need to expand "our conception of both situation and purpose (ibid)." Second, Leff acknowledges Ceceralli's valid and persuasive argument that audience reception studies "can and should be" a part of close readings (ibid; Cecaralli, 1998). This criticism is addressed in subsequent chapters with focus groups and moment-to-moment audience response technology. And, while scholars since the 1970's have attempted to move beyond Leff and Mohrmann's study, it is hoped that by returning to and expanding upon the concept of campaign communication as a *teleological* genre, and synthesizing Leff's work with Jasinski's outlined earlier, the first criticism leveled against close textual analysis can be roundly addressed in this thesis. In the search for a unifying concept that could synthesize Leff's work with theories of candidate image and constitutive rhetoric, Kenneth Burke's theory of identification was discovered and instantly the various theories of the first and second persona circulating around presidential campaign communication locked into place and provided a vocabulary, a philosophy of rhetoric to which the *teleological* reading of Barack Obama's 2008 campaign speeches could be harnessed. The three speeches under investigation are his "A More

Perfect Union" speech delivered on 18 March 2008, his "World that Stands as One" speech delivered on 24 July 2008, and his "The American Promise" speech delivered on 28 August 2008. The significance of each speech and the justification for selecting each speech is outlined in each respective findings chapter. If, however, a *teleological* reading is to be conducted, then a rounded statement about presidential campaign communication must be made.

IV. An Exploration of *Telos* in American Presidential Campaign Speeches

A. Overview

This review is designed to fully articulate and explore the argued purpose, identification, in American presidential campaign communication. First, the literature of knowledge and identity as socially constructed are surveyed. This is crucial for understanding how Obama constructs the first and second persona. Second, we move from identity to identification as it is conceived in cultural studies to its conception in the rhetorical discipline. Third, the literature surrounding political campaign communication is evaluated and synthesized with Kenneth Burke's theory of rhetorical identification. Finally, the common thread of identification is highlighted in a range of biographical, intellectual and rhetorical studies on Barack Obama.

B. Identity to Identification

There are very little, if any, fixed or essential properties to be assigned to identity; it is socially and symbolically constructed (Burke, 1962; Crotty, 1998; Hall, 1980; Anderson, 1991; Beasley, 2004; Bishop and Jaworski, 2003; Brookes, 1999; Bruner, 2000; Cruz, 2000; Frosh and Wolfsfeld, 2007; Gavrilos, 2002; Higgins, 2004; Levinger and Lytle, 2001; Poole, 1999; Schlesinger, 1991). Social construction, Crotty tells us, is the idea that "all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context (1998: 42)." In "Who Needs 'Identity'?" Stuart Hall looks at the theoretical agenda for identity and identification. There are a few basic premises he begins with: there has much been written on identity, most have criticized any notion of a "unified" or "integral" sense of identity, and that when we use the term it should be in its deconstructed form, operating "under erasure," that is, we cannot quite rid ourselves of the term itself, but it must be reconceptualized from what it was thought to be during most of modernity (1996: 1-2). From identity, Hall moves to the preferred term identification, which "is constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal" (ibid: 2). For purposes here, the word "construction" is the key operating word, as identification is

> "A process never completed—always 'in process'. […] Identification is in the end conditional, lodged in contingency. […] Identification is, then, a process of articulation, a suturing, an over determination not a subsumption […It] entails discursive work, the binding and making of symbolic boundaries" (ibid).

To claim that identity is closed, Hall says, is to engage in a fantasy of incorporation. This is often done as identity can only be constructed though difference, the Other, through "a constructed form of closure" (ibid: 2-5). Hall proceeds to look at identification through psychoanalytic, Althusserian and Foucauldian lenses; while these are very productive ways to view identity and the inequity of power, the process of identification that Hall describes can also be observed, perhaps even more completely, through Kenneth Burke's conception of identification as an equally situational process that precedes persuasion and rhetorical situations. First, Hall's own writing is indicative that a Burkean reading of identification is fully compatible with Hall' own conception. According to Hall, identity is not "essentialist, but *strategic and positional [emphasis added]*", and should be understood as produced "in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by *specific enunciative strategies"* (ibid, emphasis added). This conception of identification as an enunciative strategy in cultural studies is an excellent point of departure to Burkean identification in the rhetorical discipline.

C. Kenneth Burke and His Theory of Identification

In A *Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke teases out the process of rhetorical identification: "You persuade a man [sic]," Burke tells us, "only insofar as you can talk his [sic] language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his [sic] (1962: 579)." Burke, always the Greenwhich Village intellectual, offers an apt poem that exemplifies the possibilities of identification as a term to incorporate the concepts of social construction, persuasion, and identity:

> He was a sincere but friendly Presbyterian—and so
> If he was talking to a Presbyterian,
> He was for Presbyterianism.
>
> If he was talking to a Lutheran,
> He was for Protestantism.
>
> If he was talking to a Catholic,

He was for Christianity.

If he was talking to a Jew,
He was for God.

If he was talking to a theosophist,
He was for religion.

If he was talking to an agnostic,
He was for scientific caution.

If he was talking to an atheist,
He was for mankind.

And if he was talking to a socialist, communist, labor leader, missiles expert, or businessman,

He was for
PROGRESS. (Hart, 1990: 361)

"To exist socially," in other words, as Wess tells us in *Rhetoric, Subjectivity, Postmodernism*, "is to be rhetorically aligned (1996: 197, 203)." Burke describes modern society as "Babel after the fall," where the human being surrounds itself with properties and symbols that "name his [sic] number or establish [sic] his identity...[But] in relation to other entities that are likewise forming their identity in terms of property can lead to turmoil and discord. Here is *par excellence* a topic to be considered in a rhetoric having "identification" as its key term (Wess, 1996: 188)." In a synthesis of the Burkean and psychoanalytic versions of identification, Diane Davis tells us that Freud deeply influenced Burke on the concept of identification and that

> Burke agreed with Freud that humans are motivated by desire at least as much as by reason, but he ditched the Oedipal narrative, arguing that the most fundamental human desire is social rather than sexual, and that identification is a response to that desire (2008).

Burke saw the human experience as a paradox of substance; one human is not identical to another, yet when their interests are joined, or are persuaded or believe as such, they are identified with each other, "yet at the same time he [sic] remains unique, an individual locus of motives. Thus he [sic] is both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with another (1962: 20-22)." It is this ambiguity of substance, according to Davis, where rhetoric lies: "rhetorical

identification, [is] a "mediatory ground" that establishes their [or our] consubstantiality without accomplishing their [or our] complete unity (Davis, 2008)." Holland, in an effort to synthesize Burke's writing, defines rhetoric as "the study or use of language symbols which persuade through the strategy of identification (1959: 38)." As Burke states:

> In pure identification there would be no strife. Likewise, there would be no strife in absolute separateness, […] but 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. […] Identification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division. Identification is compensatory to division. If men [sic] were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity. If men were wholly and truly of one substance, absolute communication would be of man's very essence (1962: 545-546).

Identification, then, is the process through which "you" and "I" discursively become "we." This consubstantiation, Burke tells us, is largely through the rhetorician yielding to the symbols, values and beliefs of an audience. Burke surveys the traditional principles of rhetoric in Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and Augustine and finds among them the common thread of identification bonding each conception and definition of rhetoric together (ibid: 586). "True," Burke states, "the rhetorician may have to change an audience's opinion in one respect; but he [sic] can succeed only insofar as he yields to that audience's opinions in other respects. […] The rhetorician, as such, need operate only on this principle. If, in the opinion of a given audience, a certain kind of conduct is admirable, then a speaker might persuade the audience by using ideas and images that identify his cause with that kind of conduct (1962: 579-580; Schlesinger, 1991: 141; McGee and Martin, 1983: 52; Allen, 1994: 4-7; Woodward, 2003: 6)." Wess, expanding on Burkean identification, tell us that the "speaker defers to his [sic] audience to persuade it to defer to him, each in effect taking turns stepping down and stepping up in a game of hierarchical chairs (1996: 212)." This came off the back of a Burkean passage on rhetoric and courtship: "the artist/entertainer is the servant of the very despot audience he seeks to fascinate (as the spellbinder can tyrannize over his audience only by letting the audience tyrannize over him, in rigidly circumscribing the range and nature of his remarks (1962: 286)." Crassus, a character in Cicero's *De Oratore*, sums it up well:

For you may bring me someone as learned, as sharp-witted and intelligent, and as ready in delivery as you like; if, for all that, he is a stranger to the customs of his community, its precedents and models, its traditions, and the character and inclinations of his fellow citizens, then those [persuasive] commonplaces, from which arguments are produced, will not be of much benefit to him (May Wisse, 2001).

D. Identification as Purpose, Political Campaign as Subject

In the essay "Photography and Electoral Appeal" in *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes tells us what is at stake in the candidate photograph that accompanies campaign leaflets:

It is obvious that what most of our candidates offer us through their likeness is a type of social setting, the spectacular comfort of family, legal and religious norms, the suggestion of innately owning such items of bourgeois property as Sunday Mass, xenophobia, steak and chips, cuckold jokes, in short, what we call an ideology. Needless to say the use of electoral photography presupposes a kind of complicity: a photograph is a mirror, what we are asked to read is the familiar, the known; it offers to the voter his own likeness, but clarified, exalted, superbly elevated into a type. This glorification is in fact the very definition of photogenic: the voter is at once expressed and heroized, he is invited to elect himself, to weigh the mandate which he is about to give with a veritable physical transference: he is delegating his 'race' (1972: 91-92)."

Here, Barthes observes *visually* of what Burke describes *verbally*: rhetorical identification through the suturing of identity that may come, in part from the rhetorician's yielding to the values and ideologies of an audience. A variant may also be found in many post-2004 prescriptive how-to manuals that implored American Democrats and Progressives to talk about values, *American* values, before talking about policy (Westen, 2007; Lakoff, 2005; Carville & Begala, 2006: xxxi, 5, 11-13; Sanders, 2009: 93, 150-151). While Westen focuses primarily on metanarratives and political storytelling, he finds the starting point of successful political identification in the brain's network of associations, which are "bundles of thoughts, feelings, images, and ideas that have been connected over time (ibid, 2007: 3; Carville and Begala, 2006: 12-13; Nye, 2004)." Political campaign success, he tells us, comes because of a candidate's ability to identify with those networks (ibid: 13; 146; 150; 165). With identification, division, and values in mind, it is not surprising, as Carville and Begala state, that "[one] of the most powerful indictments in American politics is "He's [sic] not one of us." If a candidate is seen as someone who does not live your life, does not share your values, and is not someone you'd like to have a beer with, chances are that

candidate is never going to be president (2006: 17)." Of course, the communal act of "sharing a beer" serves as an apt metaphor for the need of campaign communication to be concerned with making connections between constructions of the candidate and constructions of the audience. Rhetoricians since Cicero have written about the need "for the orator to be favorably regarded by the audience" and that winning "the goodwill of the audience must flow throughout the speech (May and Wisse, 2001: 170, 208)."

Craig Allen Smith in his book *Presidential Campaign Communication* tells us that the challenge of campaign communication is "to learn, or to adapt to, other peoples' languages, logics, beliefs and preferences" and that, as such, "the political persuader's task is to align or realign conceptions of Us, Them and [the] Silent Majority" and that

> The candidate speaks to [the audience] in a shared language to provide coordination of symbolic meaning, reasons with them in a shared logic to help make sense of their world, values and prefers with them in a shared ideology to help them coordinate and prioritize their beliefs, and negotiates and applies rules with them to guide the fulfillment of their every needs within a set of shared rules (2010: 10, 17).

In short, Smith tells us that the purpose of the political campaign is to solve the rhetorical challenges that arise during the campaign by "managing symbols, identities, relationships and audiences in an ongoing struggle to win the electors and the American presidency" and goes as far to explicitly tie Kenneth Burke's theory of identification to presidential campaign communication during what Smith calls the crucial surfacing and nomination stages of the American presidential campaign (2010: 226-228). While Hobsbawm and Ranger (1992) would no doubt categorize the quadrennial American presidential election as an invented tradition, Alexander, not explicitly influenced by Burke's theory of identification, pits national identification against the backdrop of a struggle for power in a fragmented society:

> To struggle for power in a democratic society one must become a collective representation -- a symbolic vessel filled with what citizens hold most dear. More than simply a smart, experienced, and competent politician, one needs to become a broad expression of the moods and meanings of the nation's democratic life. [...] Struggles for power project meanings and styles to citizen audiences that are layered from close by to far away, and which are fragmented in all the familiar demographic ways. Winning power depends on

creating performances that successfully breach some of these great divides (2010: 18).

Llewellyn indicates that the presidential stump speech is the lynchpin of the campaign, it is repetitious, it is 'message-centric,' it is energizing, and in his analysis of Bill Clinton's stump oratory, it is a powerful vehicle for national identification (1994: 52-58; Alexander, 2009: 68; Smith, 2010: 93). Indeed, Abramson, Aldrich and Rohde note that stump speeches are "modified from day to day…to reflect the concerns and interests of the particular audience (2007)." Similarly, Vanessa Beasley in her book *You, the People*, asks the question: in its diverse democracy, "How can America possibly attend *pluribus* and *unum*? (2004: 25; Miller, 1993: 80; Stuckey, 2004: 4-6, 14)." In surveying the literature, it is remarkable just how often identification between the national myths and powerful symbols of an audience and the political candidate, from Ronald Reagan to Hillary Clinton to Bill Clinton, is referenced (Hall-Jameson, 1988: 118, 137-143, 151; Parry-Giles, 2002: 66-69; Ritter, 1980: 165-166; Cos and Snee, 2001: 2015).

E. Barack Obama and Identification

While volumes of political commentary and editorial content have been written about Barack Obama, the scholarly literature is small but expanding rapidly (Frank, 2009; Plouffe, 2009; Peacock, 2009; Mazama, 2007; Clayton, 2007; Alexander, 2009; Alexander 2010; Utley and Heyse, 2009, Terril, 2009; Kloppenberg, 2010; Hammer, 2009; Jenkins and Cos, 2010; Hart and Lind, 2010; Jessee, 2010; Brown, 2010; Young, 2009; Kephart and Rafferty, 2010; Kenski and Jameson, 2010; Kenski, Hardy and Jameson, 2010; Sweet and McCue-Enser, 2010). While some literature surrounding Obama can be found in each speech analysis chapter, it is worth exploring literature which addresses Obama that contains direct implications for Burke's theory of identification. James T. Kloppenberg, for example, has recently written an exhaustive work detailing the intellectual foundations of Barack Obama by conducting interviews and analyses of the early writings of Obama. Kloppenberg finds Obama to exhibit antifoundationalist, particularist and philosophically pragmatic beliefs in his writings. "By antifoundationalism and particularism," Kloppenberg tells us,

"I mean the denial of universal principles. According to this way of thinking, human cultures are human constructions; different people exhibit different forms or behaviour because they cherish different values. By perspectivalism I mean the belief that everything we see is conditioned by where we stand. There is no privileged, objective vantage point free from perspective of particular cultural values (2010)."

As such, through the "interaction with others, and with the world, we can test our beliefs. Even if the results of those tests must remain provisional, open to further scrutiny and further testing, they provide sufficient stability to enable us to move forward, as members of communities located in history, aware of our traditions and self-consciously attempting to realize the ideals we choose to keep alive as our guides (ibid)." Kloppenberg's reading of Obama's 1987 article "Why Organize?" notes that Obama identified a major challenge in contemporary American society:

Americans were losing contact with each other and with the public sphere. Not only were they dropping out of community organizations such as parent-teacher associations, all major indices of civic engagement showed shrinking participation. Rather than joining leagues, Americans were "bowling alone." As Tocqueville and later progressive reformers understood, the success of American democracy had depended on citizens' involvement (ibid).

Perhaps this is why, according to Kloppenberg, Obama expressed a desire in "Why Organize" to "'knit together the diverse interests' of people's 'local institutions. This means bringing together churches, block clubs, parent groups and other institutions in a given community' (ibid)." This suturing "enables people to break out of their crippling isolation from each other, to reshape their mutual values and expectations and rediscover the possibilities of acting collaboratively – the successful prerequisites of any successful self-help initiative (ibid)." In Chicago, Kloppenberg argues, Obama "wanted to connect with the people he was trying to organize, and soon after he arrived [as a community organizer in Chicago] he began to show a knack for doing just that." He "showed the flair for understanding and connecting with different people—people with diverse backgrounds, values, and aspirations—that led [fellow organizers] Kruglik to admire him and Galuzzzo to call him gifted (ibid)." Kloppenberg further argues that when he "left Chicago for Cambridge, Obama had already demonstrated a penchant for drawing on different traditions, a talent for blending apparently incompatible ideas, and a strong preference for flexibility over dogmatism." As a law student and editor of the *Harvard Law Review*, Obama's

"adversaries as well as his allies respected his efforts to find common ground, whether they were discussing issues of law, issues of politics, or issues having to do with the journal they produced (ibid)." Alexander cites two separate *New York Times* articles indicating Obama's faculty of identification. The first was an interview with a former colleague of Obama's, which recollected Obama's "energizing capacity to connect with the people in these [Chicago] neighborhoods (Alexander, 2009: 69; emphasis added)." The second has heightened implications for the objective of identification we would assign Obama's stump speeches:

> "*Times* reporter Michael Powell explains [Obama's] effectiveness in terms of identification, a quality demanded for successful performance: Obama 'has the gift of making people see themselves in him.' Powell then supplies an empirical description of how this trick is turned. Obama produces psychological identification by virtue of his narrative's textual qualities (Alexander, 2009)."

In other words, his story becomes one by which we are asked to see the "American" features in his own story but goaded to reaffirm views of an admirable "American" life in participating with his story. There are a number of studies that have analyzed Barack Obama's campaign speeches that also note Obama's use of strategic identification. Stefanie Hammer, in her comparative rhetorical analysis of the speeches given by Barack Obama and Jesse Jackson, notes that Obama "presents his vision of an America united as a nation based on commonly held political principles referred to as the American Creed" and that this came partially through telling his own story, an effective choice because the Democratic Party "believed his story to be an authentic expression of his own biography, but also a reflection of their own experiences (2009: 270, 285)." Jenkins and Cos make a similar argument in their reading of Obama's speeches, noting that "Obama, through the tenor of his language, connected with his audience through his personal stories," he "was effective in connecting with audiences and building community by sharing his story" and this consisted in part of "[praising] Americans – great and small – for their courage of the past and emphasized their commonality in the present, reminding them, 'we cannot walk alone' (2010: 195-197, 205)." Rowland and Jones rhetorically analyze Obama's standout speech during the 2004 presidential election and remark at his ability to position the Democratic Party as a balancer of individual and societal American values. By speaking of progress, limitless opportunity, and ideational similarity

among the citizenry, Barack Obama laid the groundwork for greater identification between himself, committed Democrats, and undecided voters. Furthermore, Rowland and Jones illuminate the enactment of identification through the representations of the self: "Obama clearly viewed his personal story as a microcosm of a larger story, the American Dream (2007: 430-434)." Continuing the theme of making a connection between the candidate and voters and echoing Kenneth Burke's paper "Revolutionary Symbolism in America," Rowland would later write that "[although] the policy prescriptions he proposed largely represented standard liberal doxa, he cloaked them in the values, characters, and themes associated with the most important political myth, the American Dream (2010: 205)." David A. Frank notes that "[in] both political and theological matters, Obama articulates a universalism of consilience; namely, that different political and theological perspectives can "jump together" toward shared principles, while retaining their particular and specific values (2009: 176)." Walters cites a National Public Radio interview with Obama in which he stated that "there has always been some tension between speaking in universal terms and speaking in very race-specific terms about the plight of the African American community. By virtue of my background, I am more likely to speak in universal terms (2007: 13-14)."

Both Obama's *Dreams from My Father* and *The Audacity of Hope* are peppered with discourses of rhetorical consubstantiality. In the *Audacity of Hope*, Obama tells us that "[not] so far beneath the surface [...] we are becoming more, not less alike" and that "across America, a constant cross-pollination is occurring, a not entirely orderly but generally peaceful collision among people and cultures. Identities are scrambling, and then cohering in new ways (2006: 51)." In his experience traveling across a synecdochal Illinois, "in the faces of all the men and women I'd met, I had recognized pieces of myself. [...] All of it felt familiar (2006: 51; Dieter, 2010: 7)." Dieter cites an interview between Obama and George Stephanopoulos on *Meet the Press* in May 2007 who asked Obama what "special qualities" he possessed. Obama responded: "I think that I have the capacity to get people to recognize themselves in each other (Dieter, 2010: 1)." Certainly, not every attempt at identification, no matter how subtle, implicit, or even conscious is successful. Debra Hawhee saw this in Barack Obama's failed bowling outing during the 2008 primaries (2008). While the message may have been intended to be "I'm like you," the incident was widely perceived by the public as

disingenuous, as "I'm trying to be like you (ibid)." What emerges is that identification, as a rhetorical strategy, was very much a part of Obama's rhetorical faculty. Moreover, a careful reading of Obama's speeches can move away from the biographical studies of Obama that point towards his faculty of identification to understand how that faculty is grounded in concrete rhetorical transactions.

F. Methodology Revisited: Towards a Meta-language of *Teleological* Analysis

A *teleological* reading of Obama's speeches with identification as an organizing principle will ask the following kinds of questions: Who does "Barack Obama" say he is? What symbols and properties does he surround himself with? What symbols and properties does "Barack Obama" assign to his "audience," and what common ground does he find between his fragmented audiences? What is his "audience" *not*? What is the communicative relationship between the construction of "Barack Obama" as a candidate and his construction of his "audience"? In what ways does he identify "Barack Obama" and the "the audience" in question? How does Obama praise his audience and ingratiate himself with his audience? On the other hand, this surely cannot be the end of rhetorical theory; there will invariably be a richness of Obama's oratorical performances that these questions cannot capture. Keeping a degree of sensitivity to the text, the following questions (equally as important) are asked: how do these constructions interact with other features of the text as a series of interlocking parts unfolding in real time? What examples, *enthymemes*, maxims, tropes, terministic screens and stylistic devices do Obama and his campaign use to create identification between "Obama" and his "audience"? Finally, while each speech represents a unique rhetorical situation, each speech analysis chapter is here structurally addressed in similar terms by addressing: the immediate campaign context; public, academic and/or press reception of the speech; *teleological* features of the context; *teleological* features of the text and the text's internal structure are all included along side the previously mentioned questions of the text itself. As such, the rhetorical analysis this thesis carried out is not methodologically driven *per se*, but is, as Jasinski argues, abductively driven which is "a back and forth tacking movement between text and the concept or concepts that are being investigated simultaneously. [...] Conceptually oriented criticism proceeds through constant interaction of careful reading and rigorous conceptual reflection (2001: 257)." By creating a conversation

between Kenneth Burke's theory of identification and the internal dynamics Obama's speeches, we are able to establish a more profound understanding of both men.

G. Conclusion

This chapter offers a working vocabulary and demarcation for this thesis, and more specifically, a rounded statement for a *teleological* reading of Obama's campaign speeches. We first moved from identity to a more "liquid" state of identification: there we found no essential or fixed identity and, from there, we dove headfirst into Kenneth Burke's philosophy of identification and division as a theory of human relations. We then sought to make a more rounded statement of identification in American political campaign discourse. Here, we grounded Burke's philosophy of identification in the genre of American political campaign communication. Then, we moved several scholarly studies about Obama that pointed to a faculty of identification and consubstantiation. Finally, these theoretical and contextual considerations were marshaled towards the creation of a comprehensive meta-language to closely read the text.

Thus concludes an exploration of purpose in American presidential campaign discourse. Something, however, seems amiss. Burke, in analyzing Aristotle's treatise on rhetoric, states

> "It is not hard," says Aristotle, in his *Rhetoric*, quoting Socrates, "to praise Athenians among Athenians." He begins cataloguing those traits which an audience generally considers the components of virtue. […] Also, he says, we should consider the audience before whom we are thus passing judgment: for it's hard to praise Athenians when you are talking to Lacedaemonians (Burke, 1961).

In a globally mediated environment with unprecedented global access to the Internet and news, it is impossible for an American presidential candidate to identify themselves with their American audience in a vacuum. Neither can the global audience in American presidential elections, because of the implications of public diplomacy and international relations (or for that matter, communication scholarship), be relegated to an insignificant secondary question. When the American presidential candidate attempts to identify with the American people he or she will draw upon the commonly held, socially constructed beliefs and values, in this case the *doxa* of the

American people, to align her or himself with particular voter segments. By implication, the rhetorician offers a vision of who he or she thinks the American people are, all this in the context of a global conversation about American national identity. But the question must be asked: do issues of polysemy and polyvalence arise when the "we" (Americans) constructed through the "Other" (global audience) *becomes* the "Other" in the reception of campaign communication? A close reading and interpretation of Obama's speeches with identification as objective in mind can illuminate the intentional, intrinsic rhetorical features of the text. Nevertheless, there are significant polysemic, extensional, extrinsic features to be considered with regard not only to the American audience but with regard to the global audience at large. While a presidential candidate identifies with American voters during an election, larger global audiences, seemingly extra-rhetorical, in their exposure to this rich use of symbolic meaning, will interact with and respond to the use of these symbols and could identify, or divide from, the appeal. It is this that is the beginning premise of the next chapter.

V. Rhetoric, Reception, Effect: *Doxology*, Identification, Ideology

A. Overview

In this chapter, I explore the theoretical considerations surrounding the reception, interpretation, and decoding of messages by audiences. First, it should be said that Barack Obama's stump speeches should be placed among a myriad of messages while exploring doxic reception such as oppositional speeches, television ads and journalistic content. Even by analyzing stump speeches as one of many factors of messages encoded for public consumption, there remains a substantive body of literature found in cultural studies that emphasizes the active audience member. In the previous chapter, a close reading of Barack Obama's campaign stump speeches proposed to look for the ways Barack Obama identified with his audience. In this chapter, I conduct a detailed survey of active audience theory ranging from Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model, Morley's classic *Nationwide* study, paradigm cases originating from research done in the Glasgow Media Group as well as the call by those in the rhetorical discipline to buttress textual analysis with audience reception studies. Here, rhetoric and reception studies are synthesized through the term *Doxology*, the study of the attitudes, opinions, and beliefs of an audience. The outline of this chapter is as follows: first, the dependence of identification and rhetoric on an audience (and its corresponding *doxa*) is explored. Second, the active audience paradigm, as it exists in the rhetorical discipline and British cultural and media studies are laid out on a theoretical level. It is noted that just as we found rhetoric's treatment of audiences as crucial but largely unattended, so too is the function of Burkean identification found to be lurking in audience reception studies. Third, Stuart Hall's classic encoding/decoding model is evaluated and synthesized with the rhetorical discipline. Finally, *Doxology's* full implications are reviewed here.

B. Rhetoric and Identification: Audiences and *Doxa*

It has been argued in the previous chapter that rhetoric is instrumental and constitutive; the power of strategic communication has the power not only to affect exigencies but also can affect how we see ourselves, each other, and make sense of the world around us. Rhetoric depends on an understanding of audiences. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* contains several sections on how different audiences (young and old, for example) respond to different rhetorical appeals (1991: 172-176)." Kenneth Burke's reading of the *Rhetoric* points to Aristotle's treatment of audiences as a fundamental

concept, always seeking to uncover "the purposes, acts, things, conditions, states of mind, personal characteristics, and the like, which people consider promising or formidable, good or evil, useful or dangerous, admirable or loathsome, and so on (Burke, 1961: 580; Farrell, 1978)." How are we to call this host of swirling and circulating beliefs, opinions and values? How can "it" possibly be described?

These ideas about the functionally powerful cultural beliefs take root in the ancient Greek concept of *doxa*, a concept that is rooted both in the rhetorical tradition as well as cultural studies. According to Eggs, "the Greek word *doxa* covers the entire semantic field from *opinion* to *belief* to *expectation*" (2002: 396-397). And while Aristotle also distinguished between *episteme* and *doxa* when speaking of knowledge in general, he also began to catalogue "various beliefs with a high degree of probability--such as revenge being sweet, or rare objects as more valuable than those that exist in abundance—[and in doing so] he also identified specific cultural, social (or what we call ideological) assumptions based on which the premise of an argument can be seen as plausible and be agreed upon by the members of a particular community (Deciu Ritivoi, 2006)." While Aristotle, along with Isocrates, continued to be concerned with "cultural knowledge" as it is rhetorically constructed, the eventual "triumph of Cartesian philosophy, according to which Truth was to replace probability and verisimilitude" put an end to most inquiries into *doxa* until relatively recently (Amossy, 2002a: 373, Amossy, 2002b: 467-482; Poulakos, 2007: 21, Edwards, 2007: 41, Reinhardt, 2007: 368-369; Allen, 1994: 9; Woodward, 2003: 579; Westen, 2007: 150, 165; Burke, 1962). Indeed, Burke tells us "[the] kind of opinion with which rhetoric deals, in its role of inducement to action, is not opinion as contrasted with truth. There is the invitation to look at the matter thus antithetically, once we have put the two terms (opinion and truth) together as a dialectical pair. But actually, many of the "opinions" upon which persuasion relies fall outside the test of truth in the strictly scientific, T-F, yes-or-no sense. Thus, if a given audience has a strong opinion that a certain kind of conduct is admirable, the orator can commend a person by using signs that identify him with such conduct (1969: 54)." These symbolic and malleable "cultural truths" put us on a very Nietzschean path towards truth: a "movable host of metaphors" culminating in a "sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished."

Culturally constructed truths are "illusions which we have forgotten are illusions (Pearson, 2006)."

Today, *Doxology* is found in the dictionary as "a liturgical formula of praise to God," as the etymology of *doxa* is meant to be "appearance [or] glory" (Oxford American Dictionary, 2005). Might *Doxology* be re-appropriated? Covering all of our eternal bases, we need not take glory away from God while wresting *Doxology* away from the church and placing it towards productive ends in the humanities. In the rhetorical tradition, *Doxology* would be an action. It would be assigned to the service of the rhetorical faculty and would occupy the space of any formal or informal investigation into the various attitudes and beliefs of an audience as resources of identification and persuasion. Whatever *doxa* an audience holds in a rhetorical situations is there, socially constructed and constructing, to be drawn upon by the rhetorician to create common understanding and common enemies, and if successful, can indeed create new constitutive metaphorical "truths."   If not in name, *Doxology* has certainly existed in classical rhetoric such as the *Dissoi Logoi* and Cicero's *De Oratore* (Bizzell and Herzberg, 2001: 50; May and Wisse, 2001). Cicero said the ideal orator would "track down the thoughts, the feelings, the opinions, and the hopes of his fellow citizens and those people whom he wants to persuade with his oratory" and would "have his finger on the pulse of every class, every age group, every social rank, and get a taste of the feelings and thoughts of those before whom he is now, or in the future, going to plead some issue (May and Wisse, 2001: 112, 132, 144, 157, 165)." And while Aristotle discussed the development of a rhetorical faculty, the following passage could just as easily be applied to *Doxology*. In fact, it is a clear representation of the *doxological* faculty:

> It makes no difference whether the subject is the Athenians or the Spartans, a man or a god, about following this same course. If indeed one was advising Achilles, or praising or criticizing him, or prosecuting or defending him, we have to grasp his real or apparent properties, so that we can speak from them, praising or blaming if he has anything noble or shameful to his account. […] For the more properties that one grasps, the more easy it is to demonstrate, and the more relevant they are, the more particular and less general is their effect. By common aspects I mean praising Achilles because he is a man and because he is one of the demi-gods and because he went on the expedition to Troy. For these properties he also shared with many others so that such a speech would be no more a praise of Achilles than of Diomedes. (1991: 196-197).

We may question *how* the author came to such a conclusion, that is, we may judge the *quality* of this *doxological* act as, for example, statistically invalid. Though Aristotle gives no clear indication of the methods by which he reaches these conclusions, his treatise can be seen as an attempt to offer up prefabricated audience *doxologies*: how different citizens might react to different appeals just as today's advertising and public relations executives spend millions on market research, feedback and product testing. In the rhetorical tradition, then, *Doxology* would be the grasping and naming of the attitudes, cultures and beliefs of the audience he or she is to address; Burkean identification would occupy the space of the various conscious and subconscious strategies employed to align with or divide from the various signs as products of doxological enquiry, and finally rhetoric would be the various argumentative threads, verbal and non-verbal stylistic devices, terministic screens, tropes, examples and maxims that solve the immediate exigency.

For the researcher seeking to reverse engineer texts in order to capture the strategies behind this process, the challenge is that textual readings by the academic researcher of the rhetorician's attempt to draw upon this common knowledge may not fit with an audience's actual interpretations of the message. Strommer-Galley and Schiappa label assumptions made by textual critics about universal meanings or particular effects that radiate from texts as "audience conjectures." They maintain that even just one scenario of two people differing in their interpretation of a text negates any sort of "universal" meaning or effect hypothesis in textual criticism (1998: 30-31). This premise is echoed by Justin Lewis in his book *Ideological Octopus*: "The question that should be put to textual analysis that purports to tell us how a cultural product 'works' in contemporary culture is almost embarrassingly simple: Where's the evidence? Without evidence, everything is pure speculation (Lewis, 1991; Paul, Charney, and Kendall 2001)." For example, Condit applies this critique of conjectures towards Leff's close reading of Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address; the interpretation made by Leff was "accurate only for those socialized to the dominant culture (which was northern and White) (Condit, 1990: 336; Strommer-Galley and Shiappa, 1998: 54)." Just as *Doxology* serves as the faculty developed by the rhetorician to grasp at the apparent properties of an audience in order to identify with them, the academic researcher becomes doxologist by investigating the audiences addressed by the rhetorician, the sources and processes of interpretation of the

rhetorical transaction and the transaction's "effect" upon audiences. Thus *Doxology*, like rhetoric is both faculty and study.

Benoit has implored those within the rhetorical discipline to begin to study audiences and what they do with the rhetorical messages they receive (2003). The interpretation of a message, says Benoit, depends on the interest, attention, values, and motivation of the auditor to decode the message in question. McGee, in his article "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of American Culture," takes a Burkean position on every day life: we are all critics, says McGee, and we make "snap judgments" every day in response to discourse, we can dismiss it, resist it, or forget it. It can affect our attitudes, our beliefs both in terms of intensity and substance, all of which can culminate in discourse affecting our action. "At the most," McGee tells us "we intervene in the world, physically interposing ourselves upon a problematic condition in an attempt to make the world conform to our will (McGee, 1990)." Put another way, a rhetorical feature found within a text amounts to little without measuring the audience interpretation of that rhetorical feature within the context of the entire oratorical performance (Benoit, 2003). Andrews, Leff and Terrill, whose book is designed to sharpen the student's rhetorical faculty in the interpretation of oratorical performances, certainly leave open the possibility of a reception study within the field of rhetoric by noting the audience's important, indeed central, role to any rhetorical transaction but offer little insight into how or at what point in the critical process the researcher should systematically engage in the interpretation of symbols meant to induce cooperation in audiences, a problem James Arent Aune and John Luis Lucaites echo in Leff and Kauffeld's influential edited book on the close reading of oratorical performances (1989: 28, 43; Aurent, 1989: 47; Lucaites, 1989: 89; Gaonkar, 1989: 270-272; Leff, 2001). Condit too notes that, to rhetoric's detriment, Leff and McGee, two leading scholars in the field of rhetorical criticism, moved in opposite respective directions towards studying the intrinsic features of the text and extrinsic, contextual concerns in response to audience studies (Condit, 1989: 333-342). She tells us that "[the] costs of reading texts without adequate accounts of the auditors to which one is attending therefore includes both the ideological grounded silencing of non-dominant groups and incompleteness in interpretation (ibid)." As Lucaites notes:

> Rather than to work to develop our understanding of the range of effects which rhetoric can produce, our tendency has been either to ignore the question of rhetorical effect altogether, as if immediate and intentional effects were the only kinds worthy of being studied, or to treat the issue of effect with a tired nod as we turn our vision ever inward to the text itself and to increasingly formalistic analyses. And in the end, we seem only to distance ourselves from our disciplinary heritage, for rhetoric has always been the discourse of power and effect – it was its power and effect that led the likes of Aristotle and Isocrates to embrace it, and it was the same power and effect that led the likes of Plato to excoriate it (1989: 89).

C. Merging Identification, Rhetoric and the Active Audience Paradigm

In the previous section, *doxa* was seen as a socially constructed set of beliefs to be drawn upon for the rhetorician to *identify* with his or her audience. In this sense, *doxa* serves as the essential rhetorical resource and *Doxology* an integral part of the rhetorical process for the rhetorician and the research design for the academic studying rhetorical transactions. In this section, the "active audience paradigm," as it has come to be known in cultural studies, is synthesized with *doxa*. While the term *doxa* is rarely used within this paradigm, its *function* is clearly present. As Amossy persuasively argues, *doxa* falls under a variety of headings: "social discourse, intertextuality and interdiscourse, *topoi*, *endoxa* and commonplaces; clichés, stereotypes and *idées reçues*; verisimilitude and plausibility; common knowledge, encyclopedic competence and public opinion (Amossy, 2002: 372, 390)." Within the active audience paradigm, the function of *doxa* is treated in one of two ways: either dubiously, as "the mask of dominant ideology, that is, as the alibi of power (ibid: 375)" or as something a message must *pass through*, as with Hall's encoding/decoding model and the larger body of research concerned with how receivers negotiate or resist the intended meaning of messages. As will be shown, there is also overlap between these two. Just as *doxa* exists in form but not in name, the same can be said of the function of identification and rhetoric in cultural studies. By putting the rhetorical tradition and Burke's theory of identification in conversation with the active audience paradigm what emerges, *Doxology*, is argued to be larger than the sum of its parts.

The social sciences, and media studies in particular, have made great strides in quantitatively and qualitatively analyzing the responses of audiences to various stimuli from literature to advertisements to television programming (Morley, 1980;

Morley, 1985; Davis, 2006; Liebes and Katz, 1993; Hall, 1980; Kitzinger, 1999; Philo, 1999). While some have found that audiences can negotiate or resist the meanings of preferred messages and do put them to use in a variety of ways through extrinsic considerations to the text itself, others have made persuasive cases for message effects (Morley, 1985: 104-106). Davis offers a succinct history of audience reception studies in the tradition of UK media and cultural studies. In response to the stimuli/response model, sometimes known as the hypodermic needle model of the effects of communication, empirical studies emphasized the active consumption of texts:

> Audiences do not simply react to media, but reason about and choose to be stimulated by its contents. By the same token, audiences are not homogenous masses but, rather, collections of individuals. Individuals may choose between texts that are polysemic and emanate from many competing sources. Patterns of media consumptions are thus extremely varied, subjection to wide demographic variations and immersed in processes of social interaction (2006: 604-605).

David Morley *et al*. analyzed the text of the *Nationwide* program by synthesizing his nuanced reading of the *Nationwide* text with audience interpretations to observe whether or not audiences "showed levels of meaning" beyond their analysis (1980)." Moreover, they were concerned with whether audiences used the same vocabulary and salience that presenters used, whether they identified with the image presented of them in the program, or whether audiences resisted certain messages and why (ibid). While not specifically addressing rhetoric, Liebes and Katz have influenced this work in their study *The Export of Meaning*. They too acknowledge the complicated decoding process among different cultures, and call into question the imperialistic media thesis, that Western, and especially American, films and TV shows exported around the globe impress each culture they reach with a steady diet of hegemonic values. Liebes and Katz designed focus groups in Japan, the United States, Morocco and Israel to follow an airing of the popular American soap opera *Dallas* in an attempt to answer

> "How in the world is a program like *Dallas* so universally acceptable, or is it? Is it understood in the same way in different places? Does it evoke different kinds of involvement and response? It is equally plausible that a program so essentially American as *Dallas* might not be understood at all, especially after dubbing or subtitles (1993: 3)?"

Within each of their six test groups they found that the focus group's interpretation of the program differed in a variety of ways, each drawing upon their own culture and *doxa*. These differing values were not limited to one "essential" identity and sometimes were in conflict (ibid: 22; Aristotle, 1991)." As a term, identification can be spotted in many case studies of audience reception. While Sterilitz noted how members of different communities identified with different strands of American popular culture and helped them feel a part of a larger community, Jhally and Lewis' study of audience receptions of *The Cosby Show* also contains lengthy discussions about identification (Sterilitz, 2004: 633-635; Jhally and Lewis, 1992: 22-29; 39; 50-53). In interview after interview, audience members in the United Kingdom remark how they identify with the situations and characters of the show; many saw *The Cosby Show* as "realistic," and "typical," either placing their lives in the show or the show in their everyday lives and interactions. Some respondents saw themselves in the characters, but for different reasons, such as the qualities of the characters (such as loyalty), similarities in ethnicity or in class and lifestyle (1992: 22-29; 39; 50-53). Each time, certain viewers identified with the program for various reasons. Like a telephone, or a gas pump, or even the completely discredited hypodermic needle theory of the effects of communication, first there must be a mutual connection (identification) made before the content can be transmitted with "rhetorical" or "ideological" effect. The connection, then, is not the end, but the beginning of the transfer from encoder to decoder.

D. Encoding/Decoding, Audiences and Identification

Stuart Hall's profoundly influential encoding/decoding model, the root of much scholarship on the active audience paradigm, is able to highlight the need for identification to be included in a rounded statement on the production and reception of texts. In this classic model, there are factors that would affect the encoding and decoding process, namely the different frameworks of knowledge, relations of production, and technical infrastructure (Hall, 1980). The encoding process, Hall tells us, will also be affected by ideology, institutional knowledge, definitions and assumptions, and assumptions about the audience (ibid: 129). Hall tells that the message is dependent on a series of pivotal moments in the communication process and at one point, the auditor can decode a preferred, negotiated, or oppositional

reading to the encoded message (ibid). The complex process of human relations, of Burkean identification and division, and of persuasion in general would occupy a tiny space in Hall's model, in fact, it only occupies one word: "*established*." Hall tells us that decoding depends on "[the] degrees of symmetry/asymmetry (relations of equivalence) *established* [emphasis added] between the positions of the "personifications," encoder-producer and decoder-receiver. […] What are called "distortions" or "misunderstandings" arise precisely from the lack of equivalence between the two sides in the communicative exchanges (ibid)." It is this process of establishment whereby the rhetorician (encoder) attempts to identify with the audience (decoder) to establish "equivalency," "symmetry," "consubstantiation" or their opposites as acts of "division," "resistance," or "asymmetry" through doxological inquiry. When identification happens, the decoder's ability to resist the preferred meaning becomes weakened, but not impossible. What the encoding/decoding model glazes over is the very real possibility that politicians, corporations, or editorializing news outlets use their own resources of human, financial and intellectual capital to conduct doxological investigations, to "map out" the various cultural considerations that shape their potential decoders before crafting a message, or, alternatively, can "test" messages on target populations via dial testing, surveys, ethnographic research and focus groups before actually sending the message to a target audience. "The key to successful communication," Luntz tells us "is to take the imaginative leap of stuffing yourself right into your listener's shoes to know what they are thinking and feeling in the deepest recesses of their mind and heart (2007: xiii)." The right message is tested until it can "affirm and confirm an audience's context (ibid: 36)" which can then narrow "the gap between what you intend to convey and what your audiences interpret (ibid: xvi)." Through identification the decoding process becomes much more fluid and the auditor's ability to provide an oppositional reading to the text is weakened. David Morley in his *Nationwide* study recognized such a process with television presenters and their viewing audiences:

> It is precisely the aim of the [television] presenter to achieve this kind of audience-identification. The point is that it is through these identification mechanisms, I would suggest, in so far as they do gain the audience's 'complicity', that the preferred readings are 'suggested' to the audience. It is when these identificatory mechanisms are attenuated or broken that the message will be decided in a different framework of meaning from that in which it was encoded (1980: 10-11).

In terms of the instrumentality of rhetoric, in *Message Received* Philo notes that audience reception affects production insofar as messages are produced "in the expectation of a particular audience response" and in a similar vein, Condit persuasively argues that "it is not even clear how frequently audiences exercise their creative [decoding] capacities," indeed, while it may be posited that all human beings decode texts, "it is not the case that all human beings are equally skilled in responding to persuasive messages with counter messages. The masses may not be cultural dupes, but they are not necessarily skilled rhetors (Condit, 1989; Condit, 1990; Kitzinger, 1999: xii-7)." The corollary of identification can be added to Hall's model that would feature a diagonal line connecting the encoder to the various discursive factors that affect the audience decoding process.

E. Identification, *Doxology*, Ideology

To acknowledge the power of the rhetorician to imagine communities or shared beliefs with audiences may seem to participate in the fantasy of the Aristotelian subject, autonomously engaging in what we are now calling an act of *Doxology* in order to identify with or persuade an audience. It does not exclude the encoder from the locus of material, institutional, or historical power; we need not disagree with anything Hall or the poststructuralists say categorically about messages being constructed and interpreted through a prism of factors wholly external to the subject. Oravec specifically addresses Burkean identification: "[to] say that identities are formed by language, through both its effect and use, reaffirms the existence of identity but views it as a product as well as a producer of material culture (1989: 185)." Oravec explores and evaluates Burke's philosophy of identification in relation to the Marxist, postmodern, and poststructural "problem with identity" (1989: 175). In that article, Oravec tells us that

> Burkean rhetoric would occupy the space between the old rhetoric of pure will and modernist and postmodernist aesthetic of antiwill: between a subject apparently in full possession of itself, and in full intentional control of its expression, and a subject whose relation to "its" expression is very problematic…The rhetorician is the not-always-knowing carrier of historical and ideological forces, while at the same time he [sic] acts within and upon the present and thereby becomes an agent of change (ibid).

Pithily put by Burke, "the driver drives the car but the traffic drives the driver (Billig, 1991: 8; Burke, 1974: 311)." Besides ideological constraints, there is also the issue of the conscious and unconscious: an individual's act of identification is, in the Burkean rhetorical framework, "conscious, as when we identify ourselves with our occupations; it is also elusively unconscious, and necessarily so under advanced capitalist norms of dispersion that encourage us to think of what we do as autonomous activity (Lentricchia, 1983: 148-149; Oravec, 1989: 180)." As Amossy points out, many concerned with questions of ideology see *doxa* as "the mask of dominant ideology, that is, as the alibi of power (ibid: 375; Billig, 1991: 7)." This is certainly true in the case of Roland Barthes (Amossy, 2002: 493; Herschberg-Pierrot, 2002; Barthes, 1988 [1970]: 22, 92; Barthes, 1994a; Barthes, 1994b: 1183; Barthes, 1995 [1975]: 325; 1977 [1975]: 47; 122, 147, 153-154; 1975 [1973]: 29; 1974 [1970]: 100). For Amossy, Barthes takes the Socratic view of opinion (*doxa*) as a subordinate and degraded form of knowledge (2002: 493). For Herschberg-Pierrot, Barthes "associates *doxa* with the invasive power of mass discourse in modernity—with opinion in the statistical meaning of the term (2002: 428)." Barthes tells us *doxa* is

> the highly contingent foundations of the utterance [that becomes] Common Sense, Good Law, the Norm, Standard Opinions, in a word, *Endoxa* (originally a lay term) (Barthes, 1994b: 1183).

He describes *doxa* as "evident. Is it seen? Not even that: a gelatinous mass which sticks onto the retina," the "somewhat glutinous language of the *Doxa*, of the natural, of the obvious fact, of common sense, of the "goes without saying." (1995 [1975]: 325; 1977 [1975]: 122)." In *The Pleasure of the Text*, Barthes explicitly links the concept of *doxa* to questions of power and ideology, *doxa* being "spread with the blessing of Power," and "the "pressure of capitalist language" as "an implacable stickiness, […] a kind of unconscious: in short, the essence of ideology (Herschberg-Pierrot, 2002; 1975 [1973]: 29; 1977 [1975]: 153-154)." Barthes' concept of *doxa* as it operates in society, according to Herscberg-Pierrot, is "an enunciative force with an insidious power, insinuating itself into everyday speech, exerting the imperious strength of well-established accepted ideas, like a fantasy that one cannot shake off (2002)." John B. Thompson in *Ideology and Modern Culture* uses the term latent ideology, a term with striking similarities Barthes' concept of *doxa*, to describe "a system of representations which serve to sustain existing relations of class domination

by orientating individuals towards the past rather than the future, or towards the images and ideals which conceal class relations and detract from the collective pursuit of social change." It is a "persistence of traditional symbols and values, of that 'train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions' at the heart of modern bourgeois society. These traditional symbols and values are not swept away once and for all by the constant revolutionizing of production; they live on, they modify and transform themselves, indeed they reappear as a potent reactionary force on the very eve of revolution itself (1990: 41)." Unsurprisingly, Marx saw the proletariat's use of latent ideology as a "story of defeat and disappointment (ibid: 40)" and Thompson goes on to closely read *The Eighteenth Brumaire* to support this assertion. Enter Kenneth Burke. Burke tells us in "Revolutionary Symbolism in America" it is precisely this uncanny ability for propertied interests in modern society to perpetuate its power through the transformation and modification of the symbols and rituals that stakeholders hold dear that must be *emulated* by those seeking a genuine plan of social rectification. By focusing on the "sweet speaking" Latin root of persuasion, *suadere*, the rhetorician may more efficiently and effectively work within the parameters of *doxa,* no matter its status as dubious or benign in origin. With this in mind, Burke recommended the American socialist movement of the 1930's move from discussing "the worker" to "the people" due to its functional importance in American *doxa*. Returning to *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, is it so far fetched to imagine a slightly altered scenario in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* where, on the eve of revolution in France a leader emerged with a plan of economic populism and radical social change *but won support for his agenda only insofar as he too adorned the dress of Napoleon so long as it remained a functionally valuable symbol of those that would propel him to a position of power*?

This is the very moment where the rhetorical tradition, reception studies and ideological analysis merge, through acts of identification and their mutual dependence on *doxa*. On the one hand, many reception studies focus on the beliefs and attitudes (*doxa*) of an audience and tie them to larger ideological concerns that perform normatively, ethically and morally in discourse that are not altogether innocent nor a unique product of an entire society. On the other hand, the rhetorical discipline seeks to understand how these ideas function in persuasion, often with disregard to origin. *Doxology,* owing so much to Kenneth Burke, seeks a third way: we are not concerned

here with tracing the origin of ideas expressed in the focus group audience interpretation of speeches, rather, *Doxology* acknowledges these ideas could function in altogether dubious ways, but, and this is crucial, it equally recognizes the potential for social change in utilizing the very naturalized attitudes, ideas and beliefs under scrutiny insofar as they serve as crucial stepping-stones in the persuasive process. *Doxology* thus seeks to move from pessimistic "top down" theories of power to an optimistic "bottom up" theory of power that finds agency in the use of strategic communication that affects particular audiences in particular ways.

F. Conclusion

This synthesis can take into account the ways we identify, cajole and persuade one another. We began with an instrumentalist view of rhetoric and synthesized it, through identification as a key term, to include self-presentation and the constitution of subject positions in auditors. Identification is suavity, a courtship where a connection is made through the sharing of symbols, rhetorical alignment, consubstantiality and ingratiation of those addressed. We then moved toward the social sciences to acknowledge the heterogeneous audience and their use of decoding tactics in the reception of most rhetorical texts and the different meaning assigned to the very symbols the rhetorician would use to commune with the auditor. What we found were empirical studies and the powerful encoding/decoding model to emphasize polysemy and resistance, we even found identification as a key term expressed in the various ways the text "spoke" to different audiences. What was lacking in the social sciences and media studies, however, was an explicit exploration of the instrumentality of identification and rhetoric, its implications, and the encoder's ability to utilize this term, intentionally, subconsciously, maliciously or benignly, to weaken resistance and minimize the available decoding strategies by subsuming the very resources available to the decoder as "our" own. The two traditions of rhetoric and reception merge under the heading of *doxa* and *Doxology*, a label that can recognize the rhetorical function present in reception studies as well as the productive-but-limited textual interpretation of rhetorical transactions. What emerges, then, is the idea that just as identification precedes persuasion, so too does *Doxology* precede identification. That is, in order to identify *with* something, there must first be the identification *of* something, the naming of something. Social scientific scholars have made important headway in insisting that audiences are not, as Morley says, "an

atomized mass of individuals," but are "composed of a number of sub cultural formations of groupings whose members will share a cultural orientation towards decoding messages in particular ways (1985: 108)." While true, this tends to obscure the encoders ability to observe the cultural and historical factors shaping the decoding process and then attempt to transcend the sub cultural divide through identification using the ladder of hierarchal terms, as in Burke's poem of the Presbyterian. Moreover, as has been shown, constitutive rhetoric is sometimes able to "unite" these various sub cultural formations; to take Morley's assertion at face value is to damn men and women to perpetual separateness and is to name society as essentially sub cultural. While these sub cultural transformations do remain separate, the many "contradictory we's," as Burke calls them, still exist. The rhetorician can "pull to the top" the "we" that might activate the "logic," (in Althusser's words, "interpellate") or in Westen's terms, activate the cognitive network of associations with that particular identification. To acknowledge the ability to resist is to also acknowledge the ability to be coerced, manipulated, invited, or (self) persuaded into a preferred decoding (Burke, 1937; Westen, 2007; Morley, 1980: 24-25). If the ability to resist holds true, then so too does its opposite, the ability to capitulate and be persuaded.

VI. Methodology: Qualitative Audience Methodology: Audience Response Technology and Focus Groups

A. Overview

In the chapter on identification and audience reception studies, various theories and empirical studies of the active audience were assessed as a way of merging the instrumentalist view of rhetoric with audience effect, that eloquence and finely tuned rhetorical texts can affect audiences, but that also audiences bring with them to those texts a wide range of cultural resources to resist or negotiate the preferred meaning (Strommer-Galley and Schiappa, 1998: 30-31; Condit, 1989, 1990: 336; Lewis, 1991; Morley, 1980; Liebes and Katz, 1993: 3; Miller, 2000). It was argued that just as audiences can actively resist texts, so too can the producer of texts actively work to maximize the impact of a text by developing a doxological faculty to understand the same cultural resources diverse audiences bring to a text. This process, of the rhetorician consciously or unconsciously analyzing how audiences respond to a message so that they might identify their message with an audience's cultural attitudes, opinions and beliefs was theoretically grounded in *Doxology* both as a rhetorical means of persuasion and something an encoded message must pass through to establish meaning. While the *theoretical* reasons for studying audiences were outlined in the previous two chapters, *Doxology* can be *methodologically* grounded in a variety of audience-centered designs. Virginia Nightingale and Karen Ross offer a concise history of the various ways audiences have been approached over the course of the Twentieth and Twenty First Century. With the increasing use of radio through the 1940's, researchers were interested in the effect that propaganda and persuasion had on mass audiences, with marketing professionals, interested in maximizing corporate profits, close behind. With the surge in television use during the 1950's, academics began to grow concerned with the consequences of the amount of time people spent consuming media, and other "social consequences – for human health, psychological well-being and public safety of television viewing in general and heaving viewing in particular (2003: 4-5)." By the 1970's, the passivity of the audience was put into question as a range of ethnographic and qualitative methods emerged as ways to complement the quantitative methods that could statistically measure the composition of audiences with the interpretation and uses of content (ibid: 4-9). This chapter focuses on two strands of methodologies designed for audience research that have fallen in and out of use during the Twentieth and Twenty First Centuries: focus groups and moment-to-moment audience response technology.

The chapter is as follows: first, there is a survey of the history and advantages of audience response technology (ART) and focus groups; second, an outline is presented of previous uses of focus groups and ART; third, research specific variables are presented which include the number of focus groups and participants, group composition, sampling and recruitment as well as method of data analysis. Finally, there is a detailed account of how the design unfolded and any field adjustments that were made. What emerges is a triangulated attempt to analyze the rhetorical features of the text, to explore in qualitative detail points of identification and division between the text and selected audiences using audience response technology, and to investigate the attitudes, opinions, and beliefs that motivate these points of identification and division between Obama and British audiences.

B. History and Advantages of Audience Response Technology

The use of audience response technology is a relatively recent phenomenon. With the rise of mass media in the United States during the Twentieth Century, television and radio station executives along with marketing practitioners sought to understand how audiences in certain geographical areas, demographics, or income groups responded to content. One solution was the use of hand held audience response devices that are capable of measuring audience response to stimuli (Millard, 1992; Peterman, 1940; Levy, 1982). William J. Millard has described audience response technology as a "cognitive x-ray," mapping the process of stimulus, cognition, and response on an electronic graph with a user-controlled input device. Put differently, Tedesco describes such a device as a "feelings thermometer (2002)." Millard offers an illuminating history of these devices in the United States. Apparently, one of the earliest technological attempts to capture audience response using hand held devices was called the Program Analyzer, developed by Paul Lazarsfeld and Frank Stanton, and used by the Central Broadcasting Station beginning in 1940. The Program Analyzer was simple: users watched or listened to a commercial program and pushed a green button if they liked the stimulus and a red button if they disliked the stimulus. From this early attempt, Millard traces the sophistication of audience response systems through the next several decades. "Like" and "Dislike" transformed into a moment-to-moment five-point Likert scale such as "Very Much Like," "Somewhat Like," "Neutral," "Somewhat Dislike," and "Very Much Dislike." Dials and slides were fitted to devices to offer users more flexibility in their responses. Some

practitioners could individually remove those input devices that stopped responding, others fitted light bulbs to the device that turned on when dials and slides stopped moving (ibid). Today, there are a number of variants of audience response technology, but most include the use of handsets with either buttons, slides or dials that revolve around a Likert scale that participants manipulate according to their reaction to stimuli which is then wirelessly recorded into some kind of receiver plugged into a computer which transforms audience input into lines on a graph.

C. Audience Response Technology: Advantages, Limitations, Previous Academic and Professional Use

The use of audience response technology has proliferated and moved beyond its original use to test content in commercial broadcasting and has become notably present in the field of political communication. Frank Luntz is one of the most prolific and well-known pollsters that uses dial technology in the United States. "The key to dial technology," Luntz told PBS in 2004, "is that it's immediate, it's specific, and it's anonymous." Because dial shifts are between the respondent and the remote, audience response technology can be a way of decreasing groupthink and allows individual participants to express themselves more freely. Luntz maintains that dial technology is particularly effective because it, like politics, is about gut reactions and Luntz asserts that dial technology can measure the intensity of these gut reactions by observing peaks and troughs in graphic representations of user input (PBS, 2004: np). A number of political uses for audience response technology have been utilized in both the United States and in Europe (Democracy Corps, 2009; Reinemann and Maurer, 2006; Tedesco, 2002; Jarman, 2005).

Despite the advantages of ART, there are several limitations to hand-held audience response technology that must be taken into consideration when using it to ascertain how participants respond to content. For example, Fein, Goethais, and Kugler observed shifts in opinion based on the manipulation of whether respondents could hear applause in the original stimulus (2007: 181-183). In other words, peaks and troughs may be a reaction by respondents to how they think they should react. This leads into a much larger question about audience response technology: what is "it" that participants are reacting to? This question can be posed on the input side (each respondent has their own reasons for why they turned the dial), and on the side of

analysis. Laural Peacock raises this point in response to CNN's use of Perception Analyzers during the 2008 presidential debates: polysemy seeps into evaluation and "a reading on the chart at any given time could mean many different things and could be explained in many different ways (2009)." To probe deeper into audience attitudes and beliefs and to resolve the vague meaning of graphical representations of audience reactions to stimuli, audience response sessions can be coupled with focus groups as a way to gain further doxological insight.

D. Focus Groups: Purpose and History

Gunter tells us that focus groups were first used *extensively* by the American military during the Second World War to "determine the effectiveness of radio programmes designed to boost army morale (2000: 42)." According to Bloor et al, the focus group was born out of the same experiments conducted by Lazarsfeld with audience response technology (2001). After exposure to the stimuli and responding to it using red and green buttons, the group came together and discussed their reactions. This was because Merton, who came shortly after audience response technology came into use, became "[dissatisfied] with an approach which simply quantified positive and negative responses, [and] set about developing an *interviewing procedure* for the groups, which would help researchers to describe the subjective reactions of the group members to the programmes they heard (ibid: 2)." During the next few decades, focus groups were primarily run by market researchers, however, the method saw a dramatic rise in the frequency of its use in an academic setting in the 1980's, 1990's and into the Twenty First Century (Fern, 2001: 3; Kitzinger and Barbour, 1999: 1; Morrison, 1998). Focus groups have also seen an increase in the range of topics it is used for: propaganda films, HIV/AIDS campaign reception, public recall of industrial disputes, child abuse, the Royal Family, nuclear risk, interpretation of news programmes and political campaign content as well as market research (Billig, 1992; Kitzinger and Barbour, 1999; Green and Hart, 1999; Morley, 1980; Philo, 1990).

The focus group has also become a staple of the modern political campaign. Dick Morris in his memoirs as a political pollster recalls a meeting with then Arkansas Attorney General Bill Clinton and his fascination with Morris' idea that focus group techniques used in the film industry could be used in politics:

"And you just apply these techniques to politics?" Clinton asked. I explained how it could be done. "Why not do the same thing with political ads? Or speeches? Or arguments about the issues? And after each statement, ask them again whom they're going to vote for. Then you can see which arguments move how many voters and which voters they move (Gladwell, 2005: 64-65)."

Frank Luntz used dial-testing and focus groups for the Republican National Party to coin the "Contract with America," a Republican message partially credited with helping sweep Republicans into controlling Congress during the mid-term elections in 1994. As a user of dial testing and focus groups, Luntz is hired by corporations and candidates to find out what people are thinking and what messages they respond to, in other words, their values, attitudes, and opinions about issues, brands, and stimuli (Luntz, 2007; 2009). Focus groups played a major role in the 2008 election as well. Balz and Johnson cite several examples that are indicative of the Obama campaign's utilization of polling data and focus groups to craft effective messages and anticipate audience reactions (Balz and Johnson, 2008: 313, 321; Plouffe, 2009).

But why use focus groups? Lewis persuasively argues the usefulness of focus groups and audience reception studies because "the conversation is the most obvious route" into the conscious, linguistic world we construct around us (1991: 81). This construction of meaning is by no means solely an individual enterprise; the construction of meaning is a complex social process of negotiation (Schroder, Drotner, Kline, Murray, 2003: 124-125; Gunter, 2000: 42; Deacon et al, 1999: 55; Philo, 1990: 7; Stewart et al, 2006: 11). The recognition that focus groups can uncover cultural values, norms, and collectively constructed knowledge is made by some of the most prolific and influential academic researchers in the social sciences (Kitzinger, 1995; Gunter, 2000: 47; Liebes and Katz, 1993: 29; Bloor et al. 2001: 17; Lewis, 1991: 91; Philo, 1990: 7; Morley, 1980). Gunter tells us that "a focus group is used to simulate some of the processes of public opinion formation" while Bloor et al stress in the opening pages of their book on focus group theory that they are ideal for uncovering cultural commonplaces about particular issues:

> [Focus groups] can provide the occasion and the stimulus for collectivity members to articulate those normally unarticulated normative assumptions. The group is a socially legitimated occasion for participants to engage in 'retrospective introspection', to attempt collectively to tease out previously taken for granted assumptions. This teasing out may only be partial (with

many areas of ambiguity or opacity remaining) and it may be disputatious (as limits are encountered to shared meanings), but it may yield up as much rich data on group norms as long periods of ethnographic fieldwork (2001: 64-65).

Kitzinger and Barbour outline some similar advantages of the focus group:

> Focus groups are ideal for exploring people's experiences, opinions, wishes and concerns. […] Focus groups also enable researchers to examine people's different perspectives as they operate within a social network. […] [Focus] groups are invaluable for examining how knowledge, ideas, story-telling, self-presentation and linguistic exchanges operate within a given cultural context (1999: 5; Stewart et al, 2006: 11).

What Lewis calls the focus group's ability to uncover "cultural capital," but can as easily be called *doxa,* is a body of interpretations made by the audience through which the researcher can explore meaning assigned to stimuli:

> [At] the heart of this project is the desire to discover those resources of meaning a TV viewer draws from his or her cultural environment, in order to interpret what he or she sees or hears. How, in other words, do the television program and the viewer's ideological repertoire merge to create meaning? [...] A transcript from a probing interview is not a straightforward articulation of the cultural and ideological resources used by respondents to inform their interpretations of television. It is, nonetheless, littered with evidence thereof (Lewis, 1991: 117, Moriarty, 1997; Bourdieu, 1995: 164-169).

A focus group, then, is a purpose driven discussion. The focus group, in Burke's terminology, is an observation of the Parliamentary Wrangle that exists in the give and take of opinions, story-telling and linguistic exchanges. What focus group members like or dislike about a politician, and why; or what qualities participants consider as admirable, or what messages participants generally consider persuasive and why is the stuff identification is made of. The focus group offers then an opportunity for the researcher to observe, albeit in a clinical setting, values, norms, knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes socially and rhetorically constructed as the stories, anecdotes, jokes, aspirations and scapegoats all come from cultural, gendered, racial, ethnic and national identifications. In short, the focus group is a tool of the doxologist.

E. Research Variables: Sampling and Recruitment Method

Purposive sampling, as opposed to a statistically representative sample, is used here as a means of finding and recruiting focus group participants. This is justified for several reasons. First, using any group of people in the United Kingdom is in itself

inescapably purposive; "Britain" being a purposively selected population subset of the total "global" audience exposed to Obama's speeches and key campaign messages. Second, there are no claims being made here for focus group data being statistically representative of the United Kingdom in its demographic entirety, and no need when the goal is to demonstrate a variety of decoding positions and a range of preferred and oppositional textual interpretations, a point echoed by many academics using focus groups (Frey et al, 1991: 135; Schroder, Drotner, Kline, and Murray, 2003: page; Deacon et al, 1999: 56; Lewis, 1991: 108, 113; Liebes and Katz, 1993: 23; Philo, 1990: 23; Kitzinger and Barbour, 1999: 7). Even with a statistically representative sample of those living in the United Kingdom, a researcher could not procure a "real" or definitive interpretation of Obama's speeches, articulation of national identity, or a final doxological reading. Like Liebes and Katz' study of *Dallas*, this research is "less interested in random selections of a sample of each community than we were in clusters of community members who are in close contact" (Liebes and Katz, 1993: 23)." While the nature of the sample as purposive is primarily a theoretical concern, the logistics of recruiting the sample would fall under the term of a "snowball" sample, that is, members of a particular community of interest are asked to nominate fellow members of their community that fit the research criteria of being a legal citizen of the United Kingdom or having lived in the United Kingdom for an extended period of time or someone with the intent of living in the United Kingdom for an extended period of time.

F. Overview of the Normative Focus Group and Dial Session

Ideally, each focus group lasts approximately two hours. The following is a breakdown of each session:

> 12:00-Participants arrive, small talk and introductions
> 12:15-Last participants arrive, broad overview of research topic, focus group
> 12:25-Instructions on use of audience response technology, Q&A on use of audience response technology
> 12:30-Pre-test questionnaire using dials, introductory questions: What comes to mind when you think about the election in 2008? What did you think about Barack Obama then versus now? Could Obama be elected in the UK? If so, what party would he belong to?
> 12: 40-Stimuli presented, audience response data recorded
> 13:20-Group discussion of speech, collective interpretation of significant points of audience response data

14:00-Wind down discussion, discuss unaddressed issues, disperse financial incentive.

G. A Methodological Retrospective: Group Numbers, Composition, Location and Field Adjustments

In total, twelve groups focus groups were convened between September and December 2010 and were randomly and equally divided by each of the three Obama campaign speeches, resulting in four focus groups responding to each speech. Groups were recruited from a variety of sources, but each of the twelve groups except one (Americans studying at Cardiff University) had pre-existing relations or belonged to the same group or society through which they were contacted, usually by a group administrator or society chairperson. In total, sixty-nine participants were recruited; two groups tied for the largest number of participants at eight; the smallest group had three participants. The average was between five and six participants. The location of the convened group also varied; often it was convened in seminar rooms at Cardiff University but focus groups were also conducted in the greater Cardiff area, Aberystwyth, Portsmouth and London. Participants were offered a flat participation fee of £5 and, if the participants were asked to travel to the focus group location, an additional £5 was offered to cover any travel expenses incurred. Two focus groups of practicing journalists studying in the United Kingdom were organized as a "research in action" block during a research away day on the MA International Journalism course, so no reimbursement was required.

Participants were asked to attend a focus group session for approximately two hours. Three factors complicated the duration: inclement weather, the nature of the group as one with pre-existing social relations and the dial-testing software. First, several focus groups were scheduled during a period of severe snow and ice at night in Cardiff which not only suppressed turnout but delayed those that did attend. Second, many participants arrived together, and for the focus group this meant that often at the scheduled start time of the focus group there were insufficient numbers to begin a focus group. One focus group, for example, consisted of one participant waiting by herself for nearly half an hour before two other participants arrived and the focus group could commence. Third, if participants arrived late, the moderator would have to create a dial-testing software profile for the participant to use before the focus group would commence. These delays often meant that focus groups were anywhere

55

from one and a half to over two hours in duration, resulting in a necessarily modified and curtailed focus group question route. Besides the total length of each focus group, the length of the speech stimulus affected the moderator's question route. Obama's Democratic National Convention speech, for example, is over twenty minutes longer than Obama's speech in Berlin. In fact, throughout the focus group process there was a constant balance between maintaining a consistent question route between groups and maintaining sensitivity to group composition and group interpretation of Obama and his speeches. Generally, the moderator began the focus group with small talk and an offering of refreshments as participants arrived. As the focus group began, participants were asked fourteen pre-test demographic questions on a large screen using the dial-testers as their input device. The moderator then asked participants to think back to 2008 and to recall their memories of the 2008 election, often in just one word to open up the dialogue. Each group was also asked to describe their attitudes, beliefs and opinions towards Barack Obama during the campaign and how (and if) that had changed to today. The purpose here was to record a verbal account of the group's decoding equipment that might inform the soon-to-come audience interpretation of Obama's speeches. From here, a range of tailored questions were asked based on group characteristics that came up during the discussion or in the pre-test questionnaire. Examples include what factors led to the selection of one national identity over another, what qualities led participants to become active in a particular political party and to describe their definition of the "frequent" amount of media coverage Obama received in the UK. Finally, participants were asked whether Obama could be elected as Prime Minister in the UK and which political party they thought he might belong to. This question resulted in particularly contradictory answers but did indeed force many participants to reveal their perceptions concerning Obama's ideology and how that fits with perceptions of a "British" ideology. Next, participants were given instructions on how to use the dial-testers for the duration of the speech. The number "100" represented the most positive they could feel towards the speech and "0" represented the most negative. Participants were asked to turn their dial as their feelings towards the speech changed. Participants were asked not to change the dial frivolously, but to change the dial reading as their feelings changed for the duration of the speech. Even with instruction, however, participants chose to interact with the dial-testers in different ways. Some participants only occasionally moved their dial, a few seldom if at all. Others turned their dials in volatile shifts between

feeling very positive and very negative. Participants also varied in how they approached the stimulus: a few pretended they were hearing the speech for the first time and responded as to whether they felt positive or negative "in principle," while most seemed to respond as they currently felt towards Barack Obama in the current political climate.

After the speech, participants typically took a refreshment break. Participants were then asked their general impressions of the speech. This was typically the area of greatest sensitivity for the moderator to be attuned to the decoding equipment and interpretations the participants brought to the text. Next, participants were asked to describe the factors that led them to turn the dial up or down. Alternatively, the moderator followed up answers given by participants with questions regarding their answer in relation to the dial-tester: did they turn it up at that point of the speech, or down, or the same? During the speech, the moderator could observe the graphical moment-to-moment data as it was recorded in real time. As it did, the moderator recorded peaks, troughs, rapid fluctuations as well as acute and divergent positive and negative responses to the speech. After giving general impressions, participants were asked about several of these key moments in the speech to explain whether they turned their dial up or down and what factors led to this decision. As the focus group came to a close, the moderator offered participants an opportunity to bring up any issues that neither the moderator nor other participants had addressed, allowing them to speak on their own terms. Following this, the moderator ended the focus group and disbursed reimbursement forms. One last challenge during the focus group process was the dial-testing software. Due to technical faults at the time of executing the research design, only sixty-four of the sixty-nine participants were recorded using the dial-testing technology. In total, over ten hours of talk were recorded resulting in over 83,000 words of qualitative focus group data. No note was taken of voice inflection or nonverbal communication, but the partial transcription included the recorded content of the moderator and each participant providing the transcriber could understand what the participant said from the recording. If it was unclear, an "[inaudible]" symbol was placed in place of the unclear text. Focus group conversations and statements were divided into pre-test data, which largely addressed contextual and general discussions about Obama, and post-test conversations which included contextual data as well as stimulus-specific data. While not every utterance made during the focus group

sessions could be analyzed in depth, the pre-test data were incorporated into the following contextual chapter surrounding Obama, the United States and the United Kingdom, while the stimulus-specific data were carefully interwoven with the rhetorical analysis of the text and triangulated with the moment-to-moment audience response data. The moment-to-moment data resulted in a total of 137,181 points of measurement from the 65 participants over three speeches. Appendix 1 offers a key to reading the PNAR charts as they are presented throughout the rest of the thesis. The pre-test questionnaire built into the dial testing software resulted in the possibility of cross-tabulating the dial testing results with gender, favorability towards Obama, religious activity, education level and income range. While certainly the source of future scholarship, here the Positive/Negative Aggregate Score (PNAR) is the object of analysis due to the length constraints of the thesis. Before the findings of this qualitative study are outlined, first a contextualizing chapter is provided that details the political, economic and cultural background in which these focus groups too place.

VII. America and the UK: Contextual Convergence and Divergence
A. Overview

In the previous chapter, the method by which audiences were studied in the United Kingdom were outlined as well as a retrospective of how the research unfolded. But, before detailing the content of the findings of how British audiences responded to Obama's speeches, it is useful to provide a context of the dominant political, economic and cultural themes that exist in relations between the United States and the United Kingdom as well as prevailing attitudes towards Barack Obama. The purpose of this chapter is to accomplish three objectives. First, this chapter places Kenneth Burke's theory of identification at a global level between the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union through the construction of convergent and divergent political, cultural and economic interests. Second, this chapter seeks to justify why the United Kingdom provides an illuminating case study of Obama's transnational appeal. Several justifying factors are expanded upon to achieve this, including: *unprecedented coverage* of the 2008 American Presidential Election in the United Kingdom; a *fascination* with Barack Obama and the 2008 US election in the United Kingdom; an *overwhelming exposure* to American culture in the United Kingdom; a *dramatic shift* in pre and post-election polling data of views of the United States in the United Kingdom; and *unique national, historical, and economic factors* that have the potential for multiple identifications *within* the United Kingdom and *between* the United Kingdom, the European Union, and the United States. Third, this chapter seeks to contextualize these justifying factors in the run up to the 2008 American election.

B. Obama and the United Kingdom: *Doxology* and Identification

In terms of *Doxology*, this chapter provides a range of *political, economic, cultural* and *institutional* sources of beliefs and attitudes towards the United States. Britain provides an excellent example of the myriad of national, sub national, economic, linguistic, cultural, sub cultural, and historical identifications within the nation-state and between the United States and the European Union. Just as Burke and Aristotle spoke of the difficulty of "praising Athenians among Athenians," especially when you're "among Lacedemonians," those living in the United Kingdom were exposed to Obama's attempts to ground himself in the values and beliefs of his American audience. This chapter justifies why this exposure to an at once national and global

rhetorical discourse, and the tension that arises between identification and division, is worthy of study. But why study Great Britain? These concepts, "Britain" and "Britishness," are what make a nation-state under pressure such an interesting unit of analysis. For "Britain" is primarily a political invention and has become acutely under pressure, internally and externally, over the course of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Century (Nairn, 1981: 13-14).

C. Internal Pressures on "Britishness": The Breakup of Britain

Internally, "Englishness," the dominant and hegemonic mode of "Britishness" has been contested by a number of competing identifications (Morley and Robins, 2001: 4). Paxman wrote an entire book on the traditional mode of "Britishness," that is, "Englishness" by asking: "[with] the end of empire, the cracks opening in the so-called United Kingdom, the pressures for England to plunge into Europe, and the uncontrollability of international business – set me wondering. What did it mean to be English (Paxman, 2000: vii-ix; Morley and Robinson, 2001)?" As early as 1977, Tom Nairn was writing about this "Twilight of the British State," and notes the 1970's "progressive nationalisms" found in Wales and Scotland as well as the supra-national considerations of the European Community have been factors threatening the established, dominant narrative of "Britishness" (Nairn, 1981: 13-14). Within the process of devolution and beyond it, there are also, according to Morley and Robinson, issues of "rural, (sub)urban, the traditional and the modern, the public and the private, nationality, regionality, statehood, race, ethnicity, religion, and external relations with the former Empire and Commonwealth, Europe, and the United States" that are at once creating new forms of multicultural modes of being "British" while contesting former narratives of "Britishness" (2001: 5-7).

D. Stuck in the Middle: External Pressures on Britain

Externally, the United Kingdom has over the past half-century been drawn into the gravitational pull of the so-called post-national constellation of the European Union. While the European project was supported to varying degrees under varying administrations by the United States during the Twentieth Century as a bulwark against the Soviet Union, many European elites also saw the project as a unique opportunity to create a distinct European identity in contrast to increasing American output of capital and culture on the continent after the Second World War (Stephan,

2006: 2-4; Gifford, 2008: 26; Peterson and Pollack, 2003: 3). With the fall of the Soviet Union and its withdrawal from Eastern Europe, the reunification of Germany, the creation of the euro zone and the subsequent enlargement of the European Union, the process of integration and increasing international self-confidence have created what McCormick calls a European superpower (2007)." This is especially persuasive when surveying political and economic relations between the European Union and the United States, especially with the United Kingdom as a nation-state with shared political, economic and cultural values and interests with both governmental structures.

E. Sources of Political Identification: America, United Kingdom, European Union

Politically, the presence of the Soviet Union enabled Western Europe and the United States to transcend historical rivalries, at least provisionally, through shared interests against a perceived enemy. The end of the Cold War, however, has left "the West" open to reinterpretation from the binary context under which it was given value, and this has most clearly been demonstrated in the US-led invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. The military action against Afghanistan and Iraq has been documented in a variety of ways, but what is important here is the considerable amount of literature that points to the death of the so-called "Transatlantic Alliance" (Cronin and Habermas, 2006: 37-48, 67-82; Kagan, 2003; McCormick, 2007; Peterson and Pollack, 2003: 2, 7, 10: 285; Gnesotto, 2002: 27; Howorth, 2003: 14, 22-23). There is also a considerable amount of literature noting the "bridge" Tony Blair and his government attempted to serve between the United States and Europe, evidently as a matter of long-standing Whitehall policy (Kagan, 2003: 75; Peterson and Pollack, 2003: 7; Howorth, 2003: 15, 19, 20). Habermas persuasively argues that 15 February 2003, the orchestrated day of mass-protest in parts of Europe to the US-led invasion of Iraq would be a day of infamy that "binds Europeans together" in a shared identity through opposition to the United States, not as an enemy, but as an alternative philosophy of international governance and diplomacy. For Habermas, "the constellation which allowed the lucky Western Europeans to develop such a mentality [of a desire for a secular, multi-lateral, and legally regulated international order based on a reformed United Nations] has collapsed since the events of 1989 and 1990. However, February 15 shows that the mentality itself has outlived the context which

gave rise to it (2006: 45)." Habermas captures the complexity of attitudes in the United Kingdom as it seems to be caught somewhere between the competing projects of the European Union and the United States: as the events of Iraq unfolded Blair touted his unswerving support for Bush, but this was by no means universally supported. Moreover, those in the UK who identify with "Europe" through their opposition to the policies of the United States may not necessarily have the same ideas for what the EU should be when compared to their French or Belgian counterparts (ibid: 53).

F. European Hegemon, British Euroscepticism?

The metaphor of Britain being "caught between" competing international projects is especially apt when considering the economic feuds and interdependence of the United States, European Union, and the United Kingdom. For Peterson, the weight the EU has in global trade earns it the title of "economic hegemon." Indeed, "[outside] of the military domain," Khanna tells us, "Europe's power potential is greater than that of America, for it is the world's largest market and the de facto standard setter for technology and regulation (2007: xvii)." Kagan argues that

> "Europe is turning away from power, or to put it a little differently, it is moving beyond power into a self-contained world of laws and rules and transnational negotiation and cooperation. It is entering a post-historical paradise of peace and relative prosperity, the realization of Immanuel Kant's "perpetual peace (Kagan, 2003)."

McCormick posits that the post-modern global order based on trade and interdependency we currently live in makes a nurturing environment for an emerging European superpower. This is a world where "the means of production is more important than the means of destruction (2007: 14)." "Nothing generates so many searching questions about the old model of power," McCormick writes, "as the remarkable failures of the US foreign policy since September 2001, a state of affairs which has led to a worldwide surge of anti-Americanism, has undermined America's claims to global leadership, and has enlarged the ranks of those standing behind non-military responses to international problems (ibid: 5)." For McCormick, the changing nature of the international system, the declining value of military power in the post-modern system, Europe's economic dominance as the world's biggest trading power, and Europe's increasing cultural hegemonic competition with the United States all have emerged as reasons to support the thesis of a European superpower to

counterbalance the United States (ibid: 7-9).

The gravitational pull of the EU has had profound implications for the United Kingdom on issues of trade, law, and immigration. Ten months after Obama's inauguration, Gordon Brown, the then Prime Minister delivered a speech to CBI outlining Britain's intertwined economic interests with Europe: sixty per cent of British trade relied on European countries, seven hundred thousand British companies have European ties, and over three million British jobs depended on Europe (CBI, 2009). When the UK formally joined the European Community, over 43 new volumes of European legislation, including 2,900 regulations and 410 directives, became binding for British citizens (Pilkington, 2001: 79). According to Pilkington, Britain's signing of the Single European Act and the Maastricht and Amsterdam treaties means that the once sovereign British parliament cannot enact laws that conflict with Community laws nor can British courts not enforce decisions made by the European Court of Justice (ibid: 85, 147). Pilkington persuasively argues that, as a result of more progressive European law, British citizens have gained a great deal in terms of gender equality, environmental, immigration, civic, and consumer rights (ibid: 147, 195-206). With an overwhelming share of European citizens living in former industrial centers, Britain has been a net-beneficiary for European regeneration projects, including billions for business support, infrastructure, training, community development, agriculture and fisheries that have been pumped into areas like Wales, Merseyside, and Cornwall (ibid: 140-141). Given what seems to be a great deal of benefits from membership in the EU, Britain lags behind other countries in terms of European enthusiasm, voter turnout for electing Members of European Parliament hovers between twenty and thirty per cent (ibid: 174-187). This long and well established tradition of Euroscepticism has found its most recent manifestation in the aftermath of the Second World War as Britain vacillated between Europe, its empire, and the United States. For Gifford, the transformation from imperial state to EU member from 1961 under the Macmillan government "has created and ignited crises of collective identity within British political institutions and civil society that finds express in the rise of contemporary Euroscepticism (2008: 1; Forster, 2002)." At various periods of time, both the Conservative and Labour parties have mobilized against European integration, and according to Gifford, that mobilization has historically been against "pragmatic party elites who maintained the centrality of

British membership of the EC to post-imperial and geo-political survival (Gifford, 2008: 10)." In late 2009 a question was posed in a BBC article as to whether the UK should remain in the EU, to which Sir Stephen Wall responded with a bleak expectation of reduced global influence should Britain withdraw from the EU:

> "There is no alternative way of advancing the British national interest," he says. In trade negotiations for example "the Americans play hard ball… you have to have the strength to hit them hard where it hurts in response. On our own, it's quite difficult for us to do that (Bowlby, 2009)."

Still, Eurosceptics (not being *necessarily* aligned with "American" interests) have constituted "the people" of Britain through a common European "other" as a "threat to Britain's exceptional social and political development," a constitutive process that has shaped policies of "British exceptionalism" towards Europe since at least the 1950's during and in between waves of European integration (ibid: 6-10, 68).

G. The United States and United Kingdom: Shared Economic, Political, and Cultural Substance

In the post-war history of the Twentieth Century a seemingly stable narrative of interdependence and the mutual exertion of political, economic and cultural influence from the United Kingdom and the United States with occasional and sometimes profound disagreements. Economically, Gifford argues that

> This interdependence of American and British economic interests both necessitated and problematised Britain's role as an intermediary between America and the continent. Evidently, the formal breakdown of Bretton Woods in 1973 and the end of the sterling area lessened the importance of the pound as an international currency, so that it was no longer a significant barrier to British membership. However, it did not necessarily alter the underlying structural financial capital. Nowhere was this more evident than in Britain's position as a chronic international debtor nation particular dependent for credit directly from the US, as well as the US dominated IMF (Gifford, 2008).

After the War, as "American capital penetrated Britain's imperial backyard," the British over-dependence on American credit was leveraged by the United States as a way of demanding economic reform within the British Commonwealth from imperial nepotism to free trade (ibid: 23). If the EU and the US represent the largest bilateral trading bloc, the United Kingdom takes the lion share of European trade with the US.

In 1997, "[the] UK and US are the largest single investors in each other's countries. UK/US trade is worth over 42 billion a year (up 12 per cent in 1996), and much more if you include invisibles (Priestly, 1997: 82)." This is an indicative example of the explosion of mutual investment and conglomeration in the "special relationship" at the end of the Cold War: British firms investment in the US rose from forty-three billion in 1988 to one hundred and twenty-two billion in 1998, while the larger European Union rose from twenty-three billion in 1988 to ninety-nine billion in 1998 (Gifford, 2008: 87). In 2008, the United States exported a total of $53.59 billion worth of goods and services to the United Kingdom, while the United Kingdom exported $58.58 billion to the United States. According to the British-American Business Council, $400 billion in direct investment flows from the United States to the United Kingdom, while is $410 billion flows from the United Kingdom to the United States per annum (BABC, 2009).

Politically, Dumbrell notes that Britain and the United States were identified in shared interests *through* their common opposition to (division from) the Soviet Union that included between the US and UK at a governmental level, "cultural sharing, personal friendships, [an] institutionalized exchange of information and [a] complex and sturdy networks of military and diplomatic cooperation (2006: 4)." Indeed, a survey of the political history of Anglo-American relations reveals rhetorical constructions of convergent interests as well as conciliatory rhetoric and reaffirmations to the "enduring" and "special" relationship of cooperation. Perhaps because of the "muted relationship" of the 1970s, as Bartlett calls it, diplomatic relations were seen to have been revived in the 1980's, personified by the personal relationship between Thatcher and Reagan. Gifford argues that "the defining elements of Thatcherism as an Anglo-American political project were fundamentally in contradiction to deeper processes of European integration. [...] The Thatcher governments signed up to this worldview and enthusiastically imported American policies on a range on issues including labor market deregulation, health reforms and taxations (2008: 81-86)." At times, Thatcher's selective view of history was particularly rose-tinted:

> The North Atlantic Alliance, the IMF, the World Bank, splitting the atom, victory in two world wars and in Korea and the Gulf, the defeat of fascism and of communism and the triumph of freedom-these are the fruits of the Anglo-American alliance through this century. This is the story of that remarkable

achievement of the enduring relationship between two great peoples (ibid).

While this particular view is one narrative among many, other areas of interest have been articulated over the course of the Twentieth Century: the Atlantic Charter of 1941 and Nazi Germany as a common enemy, cooperation in nuclear research, intelligence sharing, the mutually perceived "Soviet threat," similar policies to combat Soviet activities in Azerbaijan, policy designed to protect oil interests in the Middle East, the formation of NATO, America's assistance in rebuilding Britain's economy through the Marshall Plan as a way of geopolitically fighting the Soviets, the "Soviet buffer" created by the Baghdad Pact of 1955, cooperative conflict in Jordan and Lebanon, the Polaris missile system, the Trident missile system, the United States' supply of sidewinder air-to-air missiles, Shrike anti-radar missiles, mortar, and intelligence of Argentine military movements during the Falklands conflict, and British airspace and runways for American bombers to strike at perceived terrorist targets in Libya. More recently conflict in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iranian sanctions have brought varying levels of public dissent along side varying degrees of elite, government, and military cooperation. Finally, there is the Americanization of British politics from Thatcher and Reagan to Neil Kinnock's infamous 1992 Sheffield rally to Norman Fairclough's argument in *New Labour, New Language?* that the evolution of New Labour's rhetoric emanated partially from Bill Clinton and the "New Democrat's" election in 1992 (2000: 68-72).

Still, these scholarly works also reveal profound disagreements between the two nation states on issues such as war debts, naval parity, multilateral trade versus imperial preference, nuclear research, lend-lease agreements, decolonialization, the United States' bomber bases in East Anglia and their nuclear submarines stationed near Glasgow, the Suez Canal, America's disappointment with Britain not joining the European Community in 1957, British refusal to commit forces to Vietnam, the UK's post-Batista trade relations with Cuba, Israel and Palestine, Britain's attendance of the 1980 Moscow Olympics despite America's objections, and Thatcher's disappointment in America's invasion of Grenada without the consultation of her government. More recently, Bill Clinton's invitation of Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams to the White House was a source of tension, Bosnia, Kosovo, the War on Terror, and the Iraqi conflict have seen public dissent, political disagreement, and vocal wonder at the

durability and the need for recalibration of the "special relationship." Neither nostalgia nor invective are adequate frameworks for understanding the political history of the United States and the United Kingdom. The United States has historically encouraged the United Kingdom to participate in the European project yet the two nation-states have had a separate, on-going bi-lateral relationship that has seen moments of both convergence and divergence.

H. The US and the UK: Cultural Consubstantiality?

According to Wilford, while "the UK has tended to be the U.S.'s most supportive ally in the realm of foreign policy, so the British have been relatively unresistant to American cultural influences, both highbrow and popular (2006). This process of "Americanization" represents the larger European and indeed global presence of American capital, culture and corporations ranging from, for example, "television, movie houses and music clubs, fast food, matters of lifestyle, popular literature and musicals, education, and the style of political campaigning (Stephan, 2006: 1)."

There is an extended history of American cultural artifacts to be found in the United Kingdom: Hollywood, rock and roll, jazz, blues, Disney, McDonalds, ASDA, Vauxhall, American television and film, Starbucks, Ford, Coca-Cola, Microsoft, Apple, Facebook, Twitter, and IBM are just a few of the corporations and cultural artifacts often found under the heading "globalization" but can just as easily be seen as modes of "Americanization," ingrained so extensively in the global, and particularly British psyche that they have become a part of the dominant, and naturalized, cultural landscape (Gifford, 2008: 12). In their chapter on American influence on British culture, Storry and Childs indicate that "US television shows have brought their worlds into British living rooms to the extent that they are no longer thought of as 'American' and even sometimes as a part of something essentially 'British': this is illustrated in the ritualistic showing of Hollywood musicals such as *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Sound of Music* every Christmas in Britain. If identity is defined by cultural activities, we in Britain are at least part-American (1997: 317)." Indeed, Dumbrell cites a figure that by "1990, around 90 per cent of all British cinema box office receipts were for American films. John Lennon once remarked that he had been 'half American' ever since he heard his first Elvis Presley record," and the homogeneity of dominant British and American music genres

led some to speak of "Anglo-America" as a single form of musical culture (Wilford, 2006: 33). Tens of thousands of students, including British elites, participate in official academic exchanges between the two countries, a tool the United States Department of State has found particularly effective in creating "mutual understanding" between two peoples (Wilford, 2006: 24-25; Scott-Smith, 2008; Snow, 2008). Given the ubiquity of American culture in the UK, it should be noted that, like economic and political considerations, cultural influence is two ways and manifests itself in the United States with, for example, British news consumption and British celebrity (*Times,* 2010; *Telegraph*, 2010; Hansen, 2007; Montgomerie, 2007; Kiss, 2008). Moreover, whether they come from the United States or Britain, these cultural phenomena are not indicative of any kind of causal positive influence and can take the form of negotiated and oppositional readings (Wilford, 2006: 34). Readings stem not from a homogenous "Britain," but a vast range of demographic and doxological identifications. This is also precisely why the United Kingdom provides an excellent case study for identification: externally, the United Kingdom straddles shared interests with the United States and the European Union; identifying with one is sometimes, but not necessarily, to divide from the other. While these shared interests may indeed be hegemonic; they are certainly not homogenous, for within British culture are Eurosceptics, anti-Americans, diasporic communities, devolved identifications, and a range of age, class, gendered, ethnic, occupational, geographical, cultural and sub-cultural interests, and, to boot, these groups are by no means mutually exclusive. Britishness is complicated and contested as Britain remains "a multi-national post-imperial disorder that lacks any deep or unifying conceptions of ethnic or civic nationhood (Gifford, 2008: 9; McCrone and Kiely, 2000; Storry and Childs, 1997: 3)." This is an essential caveat for what is to follow.

I. British Attitudes Towards the United States

Although highly complex and often contested, there seems to have been a statistical trend captured by polling companies with regard to attitudes in the United Kingdom towards the United States during the first decade of the Twenty First Century. Using predominantly quantitative methods, the Pew Global Attitudes project found a net drop of favorability of thirty points, from 83% favorability in 2000 to just 53% in 2008 (Pew, 2009; Dumbrell, 2006: 3). The reasons for this significant drop in positive sentiment towards the US are easily placed: the conventional narrative places an

overwhelming sympathy with the United States after 9/11 and an erosion of that same sentiment before, during, and after the invasion of Iraq, Abu Ghraib, and negative perceptions of the Bush doctrine of preemptive military strike. A *Sunday Times* poll commissioned on 16 February 2003 found "roughly equal numbers of respondents citing Bush and Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein as the 'greatest threat to world peace (Dumbrell, 2006: 1)." A *Guardian poll* indicated that 51% of respondents agreed, "American culture threatens our own culture." This interview of over 1,000 British citizens also yielded a 75% agreement with the statement "the US wields excessive influence on international affairs (Travis, 2004)." In 2007, a BBC International Opinion Poll found that a majority (57%) of British respondents found the United State's influence in the world as "mainly negative (BBC, 2007)." In that same year Pew found only 24% of the British public had confidence in George W. Bush's global leadership.

The implications of these attitudinal shifts in the UK are clear. In his book *The Second World*, Khanna noted in 2007 that the "seismic shift towards a non-American world" would be difficult to reverse:

> Neither democratic idealism nor hegemonic messianism holds much promise for restoring trust in America, which has gone from the invisible hand incarnate to merely one of several competing vendors or brands on the catwalk of credibility (2007: 323).

For Khanna, "geopolitics doesn't play favorites (ibid)." Like Burkean identification, the current geopolitical climate is a world of alignments, not alliances (Khanna, 2007: 323-324). Nothing is fixed, interests change, and there can be new sources of identification and division between people and nations.

J. Obamamania: Barack, the 2008 Presidential Election and British Reception
A survey of six of the larger national newspaper yields some interesting results of the extensive coverage the 2008 US election received. Below are the circulation and demographic figures closest to the election for the *Guardian, Times, Independent, Sun, Daily Mail* and *Daily Telegraph*:

Newspaper	Circulation (Millions)	ABC1	C2DE	15-44	45+	Men	Women
The Sun	7.870	3.002	4.867	4.545	3.325	4.382	3.488
Daily Mail	4.949	3.286	1.663	1.312	3.637	2.367	2.582
Daily Telegraph	1.887	1.674	2.13	430	1.457	993	893
The Times	1.770	1.558	212	745	1.025	1.028	742
The Guardian	1.206	1.080	126	621	585	696	510
The Independent	649	541	107	364	284	375	274
TOTAL	**18.331**	**11.141**	**7.188**	**8.017**	**10.313**	**9.841**	**8.490**

Table 7.1: National Broadsheet Circulation, Source: NRS; Date: April 2008-March 20

A Nexis search of election coverage in UK national newspapers, while not scientifically sampled or representative of any measure of journalistic *prominence*, shows just how extensive the coverage was from Obama's announcement on 10 February 2007 through November 2008 in sheer frequency:

Count of UK National Broadsheet News Items of Obama and the 2008 US Presidential Election
(Guardian, Times, Sun, Independent, Telegraph, Daily Mail)
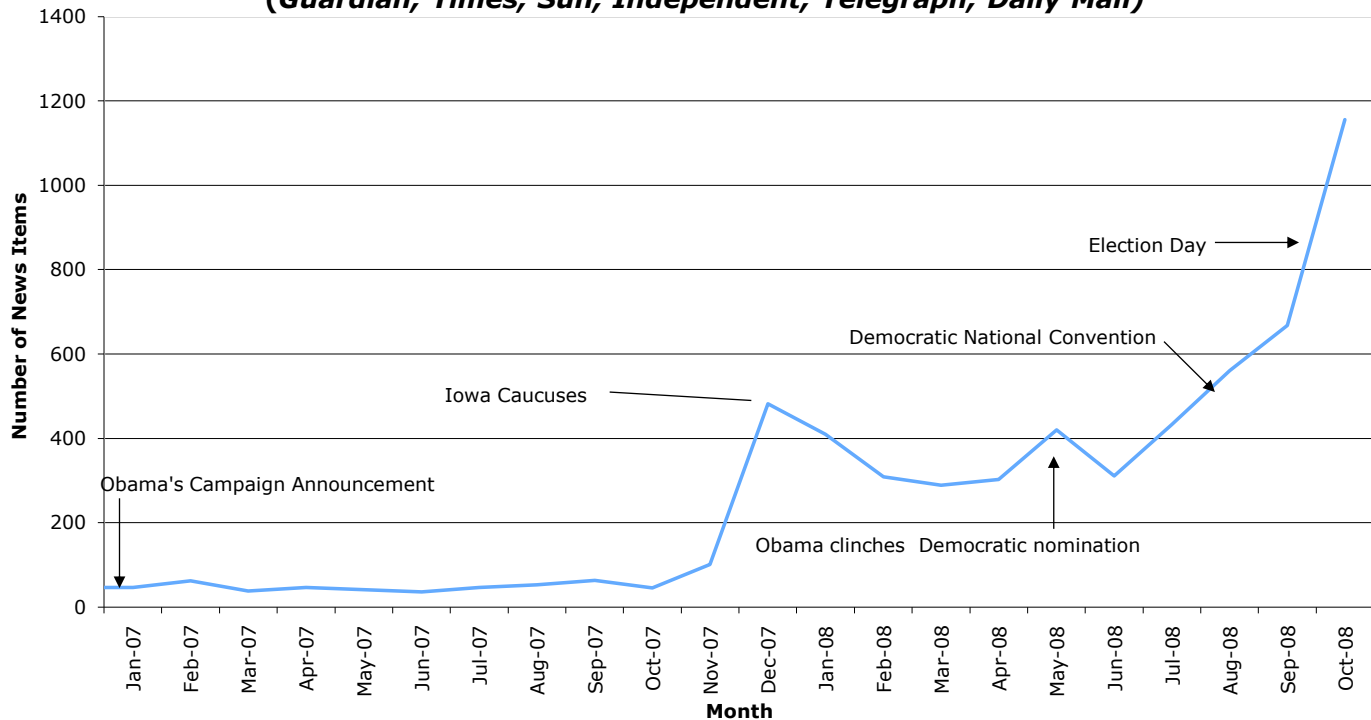
Figure 7.1: UK Election Coverage of Barack Obama (Source: Nexis)

This paints a partial picture of British national press coverage of the American presidential campaign cycle in 2007/2008. Using the terms "Obama" and "election," the primary season that began in January 2008 was the start of an enormous amount of coverage of both Barack Obama and the 2008 presidential election. When the frequency of coverage given to Obama is compared to other significant journalistic news stories in Britain during 2008, the results are astounding:

Total Number of News Items by Search Term

Number of News Items (Thousands)

- Angela Merkel: 1751
- Nicolas Zarcozy: 4629
- Gordon Brown: 39415
- Afghanistan: 12660
- David Cameron: 10867
- Darfur: 1776
- Obama: 8922
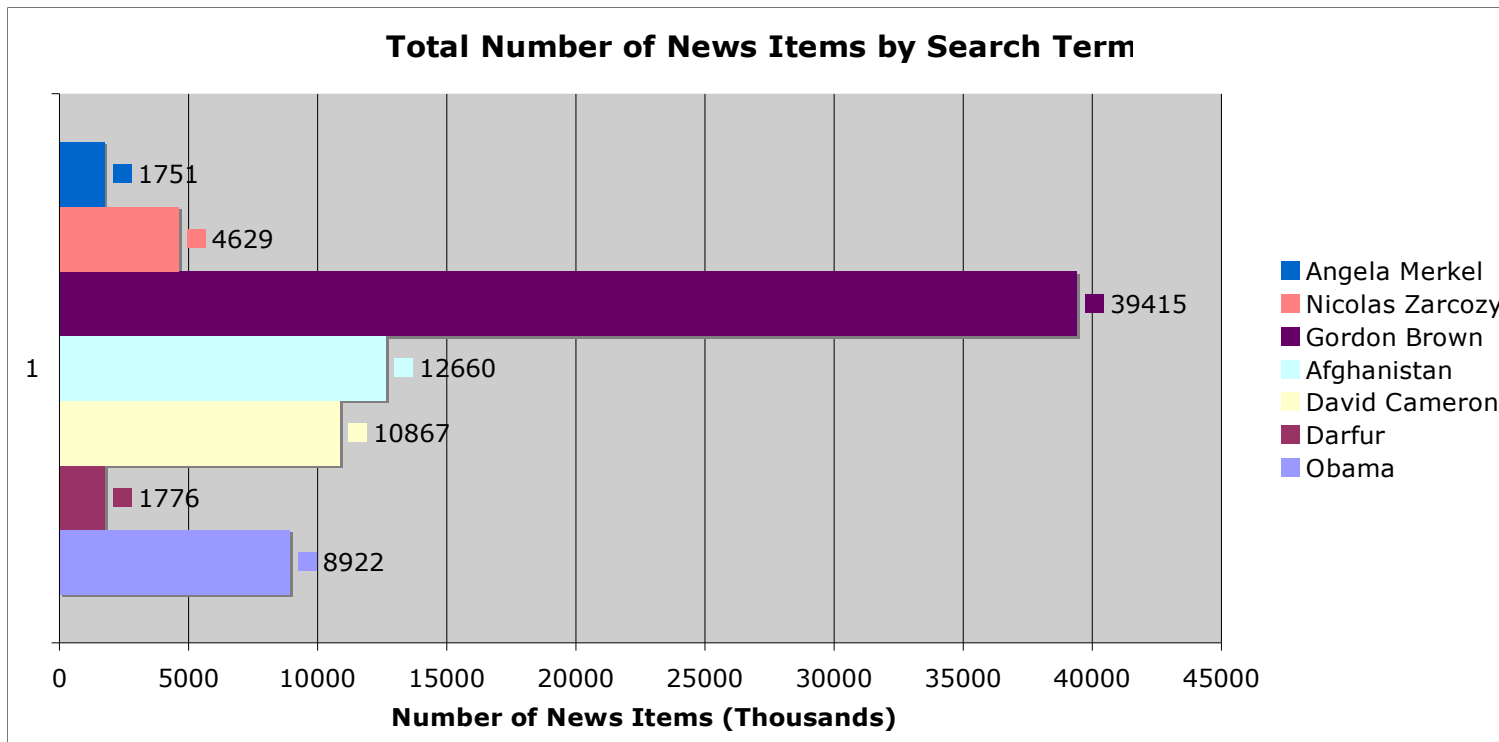
Figure 7.2: Comparative Coverage of Barack Obama During 2008 Election, **(Source: Nexis)**

As Figure 7.2 indicates, the ascendancy of Gordon Brown to the position of Prime Minister dominates the news agenda during 2007-2008 in these broadsheets. The search term "Afghanistan" comes in second with 12,660 total news items. While David Cameron, then leader of the Opposition comes in third with over 10,000 news items, Barack Obama is not far behind with nearly 9,000 news items. In their annual "Zeitgeist" report, Google confirms Obama's prominence in UK Google searches as the seventh fastest rising Google search term and, among politicians in the United Kingdom, was even more prominent: 1) Gordon Brown; 2) David Cameron; 3) Barack Obama; 4) Tony Blair; 5) Sarah Palin; 6) John McCain; 7) George Osborne; 8) Alistair Darling; 9) Boris Johnson; 10) Nicholas Sarcozy (Google, 2008). And, at the risk of arguing some sort of causation, it is nonetheless important to return to the polls that measure British attitudes towards America *before* and *after* Obama's election. In 2007, 51% of the British public had a favorable view of the United States; in 2009, seven months after Barack Obama's inauguration, that percentage rose to 69%, almost at the same level prior to the invasion of Iraq (Pew, 2009). Approximately 16% of respondents in 2008 thought that "Bush will do the right thing in world affairs," in 2009 86% respondents thought Obama would do the right thing in world affairs. For Freedland, this represents nothing less than "Obamamania" (Freedland, 2008).

Throughout the campaign, The BBC program *Panorama* aired three episodes dedicated exclusively to Barack Obama: on 15 October 2007 they aired "Is America Ready for a Black President?"; on 10 October 2008 they aired "Obama and the Pit Bull: An American Tale"; finally, Panorama aired "What now, Mr. President?" several days before Obama's inauguration. BBC Online News alone contained nearly two thousand unique news items using the search term "Obama" from his announcement through the month of November 2008. Indeed, Steve Herrmann, editor of the BBC News website notes on his blog that the highest ever level of traffic for the BBC News website was on 7 May 2010, peaking at over 10 million unique users for the 2010 British General Election. The previous record, however, was 5 November 2008, one day after the Obama election at 9.2 million unique visits, a 65 per cent increase on the average number of visits and a roughly 32 per cent increase on unique visits coming from the United Kingdom, the other half mainly coming from the US (Herrmann, 2009; ibid, 2010). More than seven million viewers visited the website on the day of Obama's inauguration, with two million unique page views for the Obama inauguration story. Of those, 1.5 million users accessed video or audio. Online streaming of the inauguration peaked at about 230,000 simultaneous views, which led to the video exceeding "100 gigabytes a second for the first time" that caused the video provider to temporarily crash due to the large volume of traffic (ibid, 2010). BBC1's live television coverage of the Obama inauguration received roughly five million viewers with a 33% share in total television viewership between 4pm and 6pm (*Guardian*, 2009). Obama's *Dreams from My Father* was number six on Amazon.co.uk's 2008 best seller list while *The Audacity of Hope* ranked 31, just below *Parky: My Autobiography* (Amazon, 2008). Overall, the *Guardian* reported that these two books were number 53 and 68 on the UK's bestseller list respectively, and were two of only a handful of non-fiction titles to make the cut, leading the *Guardian* to report it as one of Christmas 2008's "most wanted" gifts (*Guardian*, 2008a; Flood, 2008).

J. Conclusion
Far from any hypodermic model of persuasion, the person living in Britain, upon hearing Barack Obama's speech, will draw upon a range of decoding resources of what is known about Obama, the election, American culture and the American people

before identifying with him, the American people, both, or neither. In this chapter, the potential links of identification and divisional factors existing between America, the American, Obama, and the person living in Britain were described. This includes geopolitical factors, cultural influences, multinational corporate presence, language, political values, ideological positioning and various preferences for presidential candidates based on these and other factors. Yet all these factors were also complicated: there is no binary "us," "them," "America," "Britain," "Obama," or "uniform audience." There are sources of identification and division that are used by auditors to decode the rhetorical message in question. Statistical polls took us from speculating what sources of identification and division exist to people in Britain being moved from one opinion or attitude to another. The various polls certainly have their methodological limitations to be authoritative representations of British audiences' views and attitudes towards America and Barack Obama. They do, however present enough interest and statistical thickness for the starting point of a rich, qualitative study of Obama's speeches, his views of the American experience, and a doxological investigation into the British audience's interpretation of those speeches.

VIII. Focus Group Findings: Obama, his Candidacy and his Presidency

A. Overview

This chapter attempts to represent the views expressed by focus group participants about America, Obama and the 2008 General Election in the United States. This chapter begins this attempt with a survey of extrinsic concerns, that is, the views of focus group participants as they pertain to Barack Obama, America and the 2008 election. It is largely indicative of the first portion of the focus group before the speech stimulus was shown to participants. This portion of the question route included questions such as "What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of the 2008 presidential election in America?"; "How did you feel about Barack Obama then? Has that changed to how you feel today? If so, how?"; and "Do you think, all things being equal, if Obama was running to be elected as Prime Minister in the UK he could be elected? To which political party would he belong?"

B. Remembering the Election

The dominant themes among participants were first *a familiarity with the 2008 election spectacle and its principle actors.* It was apparently well understood that Barack Obama was a Democrat running against John McCain. There also seemed to be a basic understanding among many participants of the foundations of each of the major American political parties and the differences between Republicans and Democrats. Many cited specific American public policies and some even cited American public opinion poll data. There was also an understanding that whoever won would be replacing George W. Bush, another name frequently mentioned. Bush, George W. Bush or "the Bush years" were mentioned by no less than nine participants, again often along with a negative connotation. As one worker with the Welsh Liberal Democrats stated, "and the relationship between the British government and George Bush was one of the defining features of British policy, from our side of it, since the lead up to the war in Iraq, probably since 2001 and I think George Bush being in office had an impact on British politics, so we all presumably disagreeing with a course of action, would see the removal of George Bush and his replacement as having an impact on British politics more so than if France or Germany or Ireland or anyone else who is a significant trading partner or culturally [inaudible] nation (Welsh Lib Dems, 2010)." While Joe Biden was seldom mentioned throughout the focus group sessions, Sarah Palin was mentioned, often in derogatory

terms and often solicited laughter just by the mention of her name. No less than twelve participants in seven different focus groups mentioned Sarah Palin when asked to recall the election. One exchange within the group that belonged to the Portsmouth Labour Party sums up those mentions of Sarah Palin well:

> *Moderator*: Yeah, so that's what you remember?
> *Participant* 4: Well, the leaders I'd say. Oh and um, what's the woman's name?
> *Participant* 5: Sarah Palin.
> *Participant* 4: Sarah Palin, yeah [laughter]
> *Participant* 2: Sarah Palin! Oh, yes!
> *Participant* 4: [inaudible] very prominently.
> *Participant* 6: Well, I mean...She had, you know, I thought that Bush made Reagan look like an intellectual. And then when we heard Sarah Palin speak when she said she learnt about foreign policy by looking across Alaska from Russia, you know, it made my mind boggle (Portsmouth Labour, 2010).

Another participant in the Humanist Group asserted that Sarah Palin stuck in his mind "like a tick" and represented the "celebration of stupidity in American politics" while a male participant in the International Politics Society at Aberystwyth University thought that Sarah Palin was "horrible. She represents everything that is wrong with the US. You don't shoot deer from a helicopter without being slightly unhinged (Aberystwyth Conservative Future, 2010)."

The emphasis on Obama manifested itself in four different ways: *a recall of Obama's campaign slogan; an initial excitement and pleasure surrounding Obama's candidacy and election*; *quantity and quality of media coverage surrounding Barack Obama and the 2008 election* and *an emphasis on Obama's ethnicity*. In terms of the first point of emphasis, one participant recalled: "Yeah I think of those t-shirts with the picture of 'Hope' that everyone was wearing around...that's the first thing I thought of." One journalist from Italy who had come to the UK to study stated that he was "able to easily see Italians wearing T-shirts with Barack Obama "Yes We Can", uh, we don't even have those for Italian candidates, so..." Besides "Yes We Can," "Change" and "Hope" were the other slogans referenced by participants. The emphasis on these forward thinking, empowering slogans tie in with the second common theme among focus group members: *an initial excitement and pleasure surrounding Obama's candidacy and election*. One journalist spoke of the "high expectations" for Obama and another "hope in the future" for "possible foreign policy changes" and an asylum

seeker noted Obama's election as "a transformation." One Portsmouth Labour participant recalled being "ever so pleased" at Obama's election and, as one Sudanese participant stated:

> *Participant* 2: To win this election it was a challenge for Obama. And the result was like a surprise and it gave happiness to all of us and hope that there might be a kind of change (Portsmouth Labour, 2010).

Another Welsh LibDem employee said it was "a good election in that it was an exciting election [...], the excitement, the sort of rock star-esque image of Obama and then I mean, I can't remember an election in Britain that's been, possibly Blair in '97 and Clegg-mania or a part of the election in 2010 where there's been sort of an excitement about a politician (Welsh Lib Dems, 2010)." This is not to say that every participant felt this way. As we shall see, while many participant's views of Obama dissipated in their enthusiasm over the course of 2009-2010, some participants weren't enthusiastic to begin with, particularly the Aberystwyth University Conservative Future society. As one student there commented, "I just didn't fall under his spell (Aberystwyth Conservative Future, 2010)."

The third common theme in the focus group data concerning the election was the *quantity and quality of media coverage surrounding Barack Obama and the 2008 election*. This was often offered voluntarily by participants and then followed up by the moderator as a probing question to start a conversation about the discourses that existed in the UK at the time of the election. Discussions surrounding media coverage occurred in no less than six focus groups in the pre-stimulus discussion of Obama and the election. In a discussion with Cardiff Council employees, one female participant summed up the general sentiment well:

> *Participant* 3: the media presence was huge, it was phenomenal over here, certainly the most heavily media campaign that has been presented over here that I've certainly seen in my lifetime (Cardiff Council, 2010).

Other participants informed the moderator they either watched other speeches given by Obama, stayed up all night to watch the election returns or watched the inauguration. Consider also a conversation between the Welsh Liberal Democrats:

> *Participant* 2: It's true to say that we were all exposed to a lot of coverage
> *Participant* 3: Mmm-hmm.

Participant 2: It was day-in, day-out. Not quite to the level of the UK general election but it was in the papers and in the news everyday.

Participant 4: Yeah, the BBC covered it live from polls opening to the declaration as they would do here, but they would never do that anywhere else in the world. And I think the States more so than anywhere else in the world we felt that sense of "we want that change too"

Participant 6: Yeah...

Participant 4: And that will affect us. You know the change of the President in France, no one really cares, it's just a change in name, but for us it was like "we really want George Bush gone and this guy looks like he's got a really good (Welsh Lib Dems, 2010)."

Care should be taken not to read too much into any sorts of effects between coverage and audience sentiment. Indeed, with one asylum seeker the sheer quantity of coverage grated on him:

Moderator: So [*Participant* 2], you said the coverage was just....everywhere. I mean I wasn't here during the election so maybe you could tell me a little more about how intense it was.

Participant 2: It was everywhere [laughter]. Really. No but everybody can tell you, in the newspapers, pages and pages and pages.

Participant 1: And of course on the TV, every channel...

Participant 2: Every channel, it was just obsessive.

Moderator: Did you get tired of it after awhile?

Participant 1: Oh, yeah

Participant 2: Well you do, at such a rate.

In terms of the content of media coverage, members of the International Politics Society at Aberystwyth University agreed coverage was generally very favorable:

Moderator: OK...And do you remember him being covered in a particular way or was it just all Obama or...

Participant 2: It was mostly Obama and then McCain was kind of a side note, really. "And that's what the other candidate has done" two seconds, "let's focus on Obama again."

Participant 3: Generally very favorable coverage

Moderator: Favorable coverage, you thought...

Participant 1: Barely any criticisms of Obama...

Moderator: Yeah...

Participant 1: Always his good points...

Moderator: OK...

Participant 2: Most of the stuff based around McCain was basically berating his choice of Sarah Palin as a running mate [laughter] (Interpol, 2010).

Two participants, one in the Asylum Seekers Group and another in the Humanist Group noted the emphasis on strategy and speculation: "the BBC covered it a lot, so it'd be, you know where they were on the campaign trail, how many weeks were left, you know it wasn't so much about policies but personalities came through, 'cause

everyone, it just, it's just kind of what it boiled down to sometimes (Humanists, 2010)." One female participant in the American Group saw it differently, however:

> *Participant* 2: Of the recent years. But still I mean if you look at, there were some in the primaries, there were much more liberal people than he was. Um, I remember I read...I read the *Guardian* pretty much every day or every other day and reading the sort of political explanation articles that would sort of explain different issues in the American election for the British...Like there was this really interesting one about affirmative action and how that played out in terms of race in America, and just sort of how they chose to explain stuff. And this was always sort of this "and this is how the weird Americans do it" uh thing.
> *Participant* 4: Yeah...
> *Participant* 2: But it was also a very interesting sort of objective perspective on certain policies that you sort of grow up hearing talked about but you never have seen them explained in a very just objective way, like "this is how the US does it" um, so I found that in a way very educating, to sort of see a lot of the American political system either contrasted with how it works here...
> *Participant* 4: Yeah...
> *Participant* 2: Or just explained in sort of black and white terms (Americans, 2010).

By far, however, the most dominant theme that emerged from this first portion of the focus group was *an emphasis on Obama's ethnicity*. Ironically, there are very few illustrative examples that can be used without becoming quickly redundant; treatment of Obama's race was superficial, perhaps necessarily due to time constraints. No less than ten focus groups contained at least one participant who brought up race within the first ten minutes. Responses include "the first black man in the White House" or "that he was young, he was black, first black candidate, first black president". Additionally, several participants noted the historical nature of Obama, a black man, running against Hillary Clinton, a female candidate.

C. Feelings towards Obama

The second question sought to understand how participants felt specifically about Obama, both past and present. This was primarily to understand how participants would be approaching the upcoming speech stimulus. In these focus group sessions, any amount of excitement or positive sentiment that was felt initially for Obama during his candidacy was utterly overshadowed by disappointment towards Obama and the first two years of his presidential performance described by many participants. As a word, however, "disappointment" is merely convenient shorthand for expressing a wide range of beliefs and feelings towards Obama for a variety of different reasons

held by focus group participants. The views of most participants are best seen on a sliding continuum with one side having a dislike for Obama during his presidency which has continued to the present and the other those that felt positive towards Obama during his candidacy and maintained this sentiment throughout his presidency. Most participants fell somewhere in between, such as participants who described Obama as "overly ambitious" or thought he failed to live up to the promises he made during the campaign. This is where the phrase "high expectations" became prominent among participant responses, some describing the public's dubious view of Obama as "messianic" or that of a "miracle worker."

Fourth, a few participants either recognized and admired the legislative accomplishments Obama and the Democratic Congress had made over the past two years, or were willing to shift the blame on institutional or oppositional factors such as the nature of the Constitution or the Republican Party. One or two participants continued to feel positive about Obama throughout. These responses should also be tempered with the pre-test dial data, specifically the question that asked participants to rate their current view of Barack Obama. The results were overwhelmingly positive. This tension either complicates the sort of quantitative questionnaires that posit these types of questions with qualitative complications, or the qualitative findings must take into account the pragmatic approach that participants take to reading Obama: a list of disappointments and grievances there may be, but when asked to make a blunt and final judgment on Obama, participants responded in the positive. Either possibility unfortunately falls outside of this research. What can be said is that there has been a marked decline, for a variety of reasons, in positive sentiment towards Barack Obama over the past two years.

D. Barack Obama, British Prime Minister?

The third question posed to focus group participants concerned the hypothetical political viability of Barack Obama should he have run as an MP and Prime Minister of the UK in the last election. Participants predictably fell somewhere on a continuum between yes and no. That said, the overwhelming majority of participants who responded were doubtful as to whether he could be elected in the UK. Some participants reinforced their position with supporting arguments and others did not. While the majority of reasons might be loosely categorized under the heading

"cultural differences between the US and the UK," a large number of responses can be further subdivided into racial, ideological and structural differences between the two nations that would prevent Obama's election.

The follow up question to whether Obama could in fact be elected was which political party participants thought he might belong to. Fourteen participants responded that Obama would be Labour, with some specifically stating he would be "Old Labour," or as some employees of the Welsh Liberal Democrats argued:

> *Participant* 4: I could see him as New Labour
> *Participant* 6: Yeah...
> Participant 5: Yeah.
> *Participant* 4: If I had to say anything, I'd say he's probably Labour, yeah.
> *Participant* 6: Yeah...
> *Participant* 4: Labour of the late-90's, not Labour...
> *Participant* 2: Not the "Labour Party" because the Labour Party is made up of so many strands of people, I mean Blair's New Labour
> *Participant* 3: Yeah, he's center-left which either makes him New Labour...
> Participant 2: Yeah (Welsh Lib Dems, 2010).

Only three participants said Obama would have been a Liberal Democrat with five more stating that Obama would be somewhere between Liberal Democrat and/or the Labour Party and Conservative Party. Finally, while one male participant said Obama would be conservative because "there's no 'left' in American politics" another male participant in the Welsh Liberal Democrats seemed convinced that Obama was "definitely not a Tory." The liveliest debate on this question occurred with the Aberystwyth Conservative Future society:

> *Moderator*: OK. With...Based on the speech you just watched, based on his version of race-relations in America. If you could press a button, and all things being equal, Barack Obama was the new British Prime Minister, would you press that button yes or no. Let's go around the room...
> Participant 2: No.
> *Participant* 1: based on that?
> *Moderator*: Based on that, based on everything...
> *Participant* 1: Oh, no.
> Participant 4: No.
> *Participant* 3: Maybe yes, in a way. You know, he has got a lot of progressive ideas that maybe might be accepted more in this country than in America...
> *Participant* 1: But then again...Obama's spending' money like Weimar Germany and we're trying' to cut [laughter]...You're a conservative, don't forget [Participant 3]. [Laughter].
> *Participant* 4: Some of his progressive ideas are already, well have been

British for...

Participant 1: He'd probably have a heart attack if he came over here he'd be like "bloody hell this is socialist, isn't it?! I thought I was socialist!"

Participant 4: Yeah a lot of Obama's progressive ideas...you know, health care being the main one have been in Britain for years.

Participant 1: Yeah...

Participant 4: Well, decades...you know, so I don't ...I think he'd be good in Britain in nineteen forty-something

Participant 5: Yeah...

Participant 4: But, now he's not, he wouldn't be right at all.

Participant 2: No...he'd be irrelevant, sort of...

Participant 4: I think you could tie that to American politics a certain amount...

Participant 1: Well you could imagine him being a Labour MP, couldn't you?

Participant 2: No...

Participant 4: No...

Participant 1: No?

Participant 4: No...he's far too...I couldn't even imagine him being a Conservative   MP

Participant 1: Aww no

Participant 5: [inaudible]

Participant 4: Even though he's a left-wing American, he's still far-right of most British...

Participant 1: Noooo, no, no, no....He's very left.

Participant 3: I dunno...

Participant 4: He wouldn't fit, I would, I..

Participant 2: I couldn't see him fittin' into any of our...

Participant 1: No?

Participant 4: I could see him...

Participant 2: Yeah...

Participant 1: You should see some of the lefties in the Labour Party...

Participant 5: [inaudible]

Participant 4: But that's a different left, that's, no that's...

Participant 2: Yeah...

Participant 4: The left of the Labour Party is...

Participant 1: Danny Skinner. You know Danny Skinner? [inaudible]

Participant 4: No, [inaudible] socialism, and if you called Barack Obama a socialist you'd get punched...

Participant 1: Oh yeah, oh yeah he's a socialist...

Participant 5: But...

Participant 4: He's not socialist in the way that the Labour Party is socialist...

Participant 5: You could argue he was a socialist-democratic, so he could fit in Labour or...

Participant 4: Yeah but a Democrat or a Republican in America, you know the left-wing in America would be considered the right-wing in the UK...

Participant 5: Yeah but the sister...the Labour Party is their sister party so naturally

Participant 1: Yeah, yeah, yeah...

Participant 5: He would be with the Labour Party or the Liberal Democrats on the left...

Participant 4: He'd probably be closer to Lib-Dem if anything but...
Participant 2: I still cant see him fittin' in...
Participant 4: I couldn't see him fittin' anywhere in Britain at all...
Participant 5: He would not fit in, in the Conservative Party...I think, I think...
Participant 3: I dunno...
Participant 1: A lot of Conservatives wanted him to be president...
Participant 5: Yeah but now they're getting' to see who he really is...
Participant 1: Yeah, exactly, yeah (Aberystwyth Conservative Future, 2010).

E. Conclusion

What does this data tell us? First, it tells us that the overwhelming number of participants felt positive, hopeful and had high expectations for change during and immediately after Obama's 2008 presidential campaign. This trend is only overshadowed by an equal, if not larger, number of participants who became disappointed and disillusioned with specific actions or perceived inaction during the Obama presidency. It comes to no surprise that participants who are from or who have been living in the same country read Barack Obama in a variety and often contradictory ways. What is more striking is that many who belong to the same professional group or political party will have very divergent views. This manifested itself in views about Obama's race, ideology and his overall fit in British politics; it isn't simply a matter of squaring the circle. For Obama and Britain, it's squaring the triangle, circle, hexagon and many other oddly shaped polygons. Second, it tells us that when participants are asked to make a blunt assessment about their feelings towards Obama the results may be positive, Obama's favorability as measured in the pre-test questionnaire must be tempered with a seemingly infinite number of qualifiers: "very positive, but..."; "somewhat negative, but might I also add..." and the like. With so many divergent and complicated views, how could any trend emerge of participants and the speech stimulus? There are, of course, numerous other examples to support these themes throughout the focus group data, however, the rest of the focus group data is to be interleafed with each individual rhetorical analysis.

IX. Speech Analysis: "A More Perfect Union": Obama's Speech on Race
A. Introduction

In this chapter the intrinsic textual and extrinsic contextual features of Barack Obama's "A More Perfect Union" speech delivered on 18 March 2008 are outlined. It begins with a general survey of the significance of the Reverend Jeremiah Wright and the statements he made. Second, an account of the Obama for America's responses to the controversy are detailed which outlines the various exegencies that gave rise to "A More Perfect Union." Third, key focus group numbers from this research are detailed. Fourth, utilizing a *teleological* reading of Obama's speech with identification as an organizing theme is justified before conducting a close reading of the inner-workings of the speech. This *teleological* reading is interleafed with focus group data.

B. Contextual Concerns: Reverend Jeremiah Wright

As early as Barack Obama's announcement address in Springfield, Illinois on 10 February 2007, Obama's campaign manager David Plouffe knew the Reverend Jeremiah Wright, Obama's long-term pastor and mentor, could be a liability for Obama's bid for the presidency (Plouffe, 2009). Wright's "views [about the American government] had been bubbling just below the surface for months [prior to March 2008]," Robert Terrill points out that the Wright controversy that broke in mid-March 2008 was significantly larger than any other controversy to face the Obama campaign "by several orders of magnitude (Terrill, 2009; Plouffe, 2009: 206)." The story broke on 13 March 2008. Brian Ross on ABC's *Good Morning America* reported over a video clip of Reverend Wright. The clips of the sermons by Reverend Jeremiah Wright came principally from two sources: Wright's *The Day of Jersusalem's Fall* given 16 September 2001 and *Confusing God and Government* given on 13 April 2003. Wright's soundbites included emphatic condemnations of the United States in the area of human rights, race relations, military interventions, state supported terrorism and the American war on drugs, calling the US the "US of KKK" and telling his congregation "Not God Bless America, no, no, no, God damn America (ABC, 2008)" When the campaign was over, Obama would recall that "what you were seeing in Reverend Wright and those statements were not only offensive to everybody in many ways, but it also showed an anger and bitterness that may be more acceptable in some circles in the African-American community but is never acceptable in mainstream America. And so you had that sudden, really volatile

potential clash of visions (Ballz and Johnson, 2009)." David Plouffe, Obama's Campaign Manager, wrote that "[within] hours, these tapes were running on all the other cables and the networks and flooding the Internet. They were inescapable. It felt like being in a mad house (2009)."

C. Public Reaction to Wright

On Monday, 17 March 2008 the polling firm Rasmussen released the results of a national telephone survey that indicated only 8% of respondents held a favorable view of Wright with 57% holding an unfavorable view. Approximately 73% of respondents felt Wright's views were "racially divisive," a view held by 77% of white voters and 58% of African-American voters. Perhaps more importantly, 56% of respondents indicated they were less likely to vote for Obama because of the Wright controversy, with only 11% indicating they were more likely to vote for Obama because of Wright. Nationally, Obama's favorability rating dropped five percentage points from 52% to 47% during the Wright controversy (Rasmussen, 2008). Finally, this survey indicated that 66% of voters had "read, seen, or heard news stories about Wright's comments (ibid)." CBS asked a similar question and found that, when asked how much they had heard about Wright's comments, 25% responded "A Lot," 33% responded "Some," and 42% responded "Note much/none" (CBS, 2008). Each survey indicates that a large portion of voters heard at least something about Wright's comments and in each survey a significant number of voters held a less, albeit to varying degrees, favorable view of Obama because of Wright. With anywhere from a third to half of voters indicating a less favorable view of Obama on top of recent primary losses in Ohio and Texas ten days earlier in a highly contested battle with Hillary Clinton a fitting response was needed. Obama would admit to Ballz and Johnson after the campaign that "[if] we had not handled the Reverend Wright episode properly,' he said, 'I think we could have lost' (2009: 200-201)."

D. Initial Responses

The day after the story broke on most media outlets, a response to the controversy was posted on *The Huffington Post* along with a corresponding YouTube video:

> I vehemently disagree and strongly condemn the statements that have been the subject of this controversy. I categorically denounce any statement that disparages our great country or serves to divide us from our allies. I also

believe that words that degrade individuals have no place in our public dialogue, whether it's on the campaign stump or in the pulpit. In sum, I reject outright the statements by Rev. Wright that are at issue (Terrill, 2009: 366).

Plouffe remembers this statement and the "pro-forma responses" that were "formulaic and consistent with what we had said when asked about Wright previously" were "woefully inadequate (2009: 208)." He went on: "And of course rumors were flying that tapes would emerge any minute showing Obama nodding, applauding, and generally whooping it up to Wright's inflammatory statements. [...] We decided Obama had to take questions about this head-on on Friday, in a series of lengthy national cable interviews (ibid: 209)." "People are looking at Reverend Wright," Ballz and Johnson report Obama as saying, "[they] need to see me too (2009)." Plouffe recalled that "[After the newspaper interviews] Obama went on to do a terrific job in the Wright interviews on CNN, Fox, and MSNBC. But as we watched from the office, [David Axelrod] and I knew that while Obama's assurances might staunch the flow, we would continue to bleed (ibid: 210)." That night, Plouffe and Obama mulled over how the day went:

> "I thought the interviews went well," he said. "What do you think?" I concurred. We both let out a breath. "So we survived," he went on. "But it feels really unsatisfying—to me and I'm sure to voters. Wright will consume our campaign if I can't put it into broader context. This is a moment where conventional politics needs to take a backseat. I think I need to give a speech on race and how Wright fits into that. Whether people will accept it or not, I don't know. But I don't think we can move forward until I try (Plouffe, 2009: 211)."

David Plouffe recalled that the controversy "threatened to undermine the profile we had spent fifteen months building: Obama was someone who sought to and would bridge divides (2009: 208)." Obama gained national prominence at the Democratic National Convention in 2004 with a speech that included the memorable soundbite that "[there] is not a black America and a white America. There's the United States of America," and this theme of transcendence would continue in Obama's campaign rhetoric. Michael Cohen of the *New York Times* reported months after the controversy that "[even] when launching his campaign for the White House in the proverbial shadow of Lincoln in Springfield, Ill., he chose an unusual quote from America's sixteenth president: "[of] strange, discordant, and even hostile elements, we gathered

from the four winds, and formed and fought to battle through." These words suggest a politician who is most focused on organizing disparate groups toward a larger goal (2008)." Ballz and Johnson in their account of the run up to the speech insist that:

> Race, the topic Obama had sought to transcend, now dominated the discussion about him. [...Obama's] most urgent goal was to explain his relationship to a minister whose words were so at odds with the tone and message of his own campaign. But he also wanted to speak frankly about the grievances and resentments that continued to divide black and white America. (2009, 200-201).

Indeed, Clayton recognized that Obama's early successes were because of his ability to "[appeal] to voters across racial and party lines. The heart of his campaign is a message of hope that transcends race and attempts to bring a divided country together (2007: 51-54)." Mazama admits that "Obama's appeal among White Americans, it seems, rests on his perceived ability to transcend race—that is, not to be a Black candidate but simply an American one. Certainly, Obama's rhetoric about national unity based on shared interests and values, as well as his own interracial background and law degree from Harvard University (2007: 3)." The first and foremost exigency was to directly respond to the increasingly toxic discourse surrounding Wright. Second, Obama needed to bring himself as a candidate running for President of the United States back into favor with those who had shifted away from him as a result of this controversy. These exigencies continued to exist through Obama's key figure interviews and written letters of condemnation and the Obama campaign decided something more powerful was needed to solve the controversy.

E. Something More: "A More Perfect Union"

Michael S. Boyd notes in his study that "[the] non-partisan Pew Research think tank labeled the speech as "arguably the biggest event of the campaign" estimating that some 85% of Americans had heard "at least something about the speech," and that "[the] influence of [the internet] is confirmed by the 10% of Americans who viewed the speech online (2009: 78; Plouffe, 2009: 214)." Obama had wanted to give a speech on race during the campaign for some time but the moment had not yet presented itself. When asked what the speech would consist of in the days after the Wright story broke, Obama responded: "I already know what I want to say in this speech. I've been thinking about it for almost thirty years (Plouffe, 2009: 212)." The

speech was set for Philadelphia, a fitting location, as Pennsylvania was the next big primary contest. The immediate audience was small and carefully selected. Plouffe suggested the Constitution Center, especially if Obama would be putting Wright in an historical context (Plouffe, 2009). At 2am the morning of the speech, Obama "e-mailed [the speech] to his advisers at" (ibid).

F. Focus Group and Audience Response: Key Numbers and Scores

A total of 20 participants were involved in three focus groups in Portsmouth, Aberystwyth and Cardiff in the United Kingdom. The groups that were convened were the Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group, the Portsmouth Labour Party Group, a group of Sudanese immigrants to the United Kingdom and a group of Cardiff Council employees. Due to hardware failure, the dial-testing technology recorded a total of 16 participants during the speech stimulus portion of the focus group. There was a range of age groups present in each focus group. Participants comprised of 13 males and 3 females. Most participants indicated they were not particularly religious, with a sizeable minority showing some degree of religious practice. The groups were overwhelmingly white and born in the United Kingdom, with the exception of the Sudanese and Cardiff Council Group. Most participants had achieved some level of postgraduate education, while all participants in the Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group were pursuing their BA degrees. Most participants felt mostly favorable towards Barack Obama and frequently heard about him during the election. Figures 12.1, 12.2, 12.3 and 12.4 show the overall PNAR of each focus group for this speech:

Figure 9.1: Cardiff Council Group
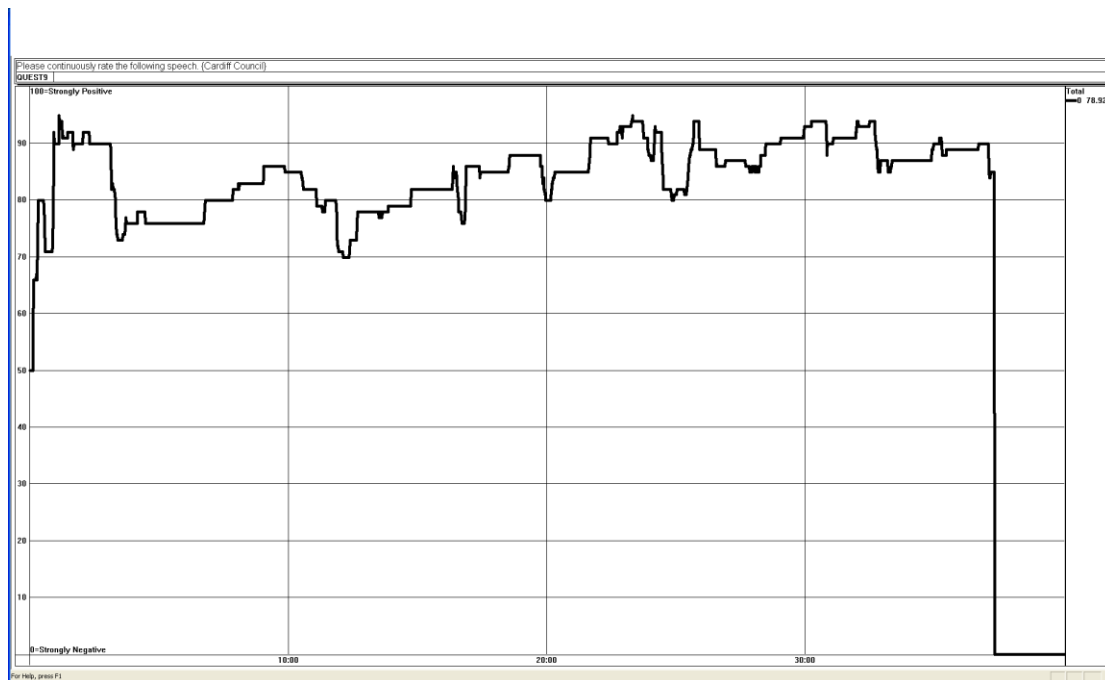
Figure 9.2: Portsmouth Labour Group
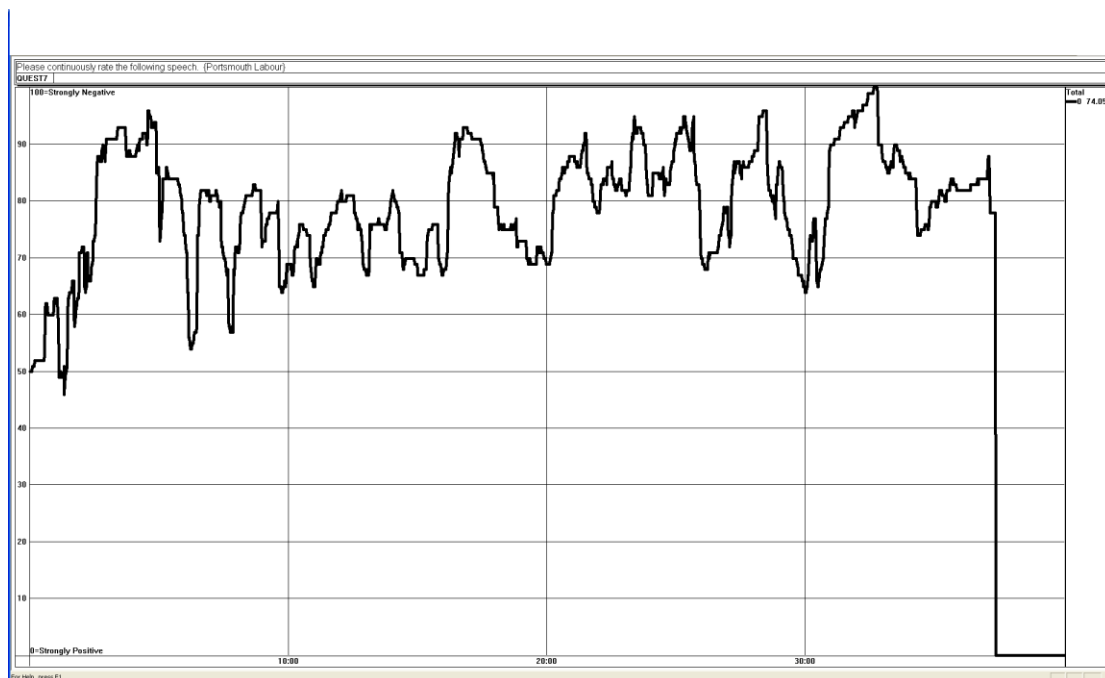
Figure 9.3: Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group
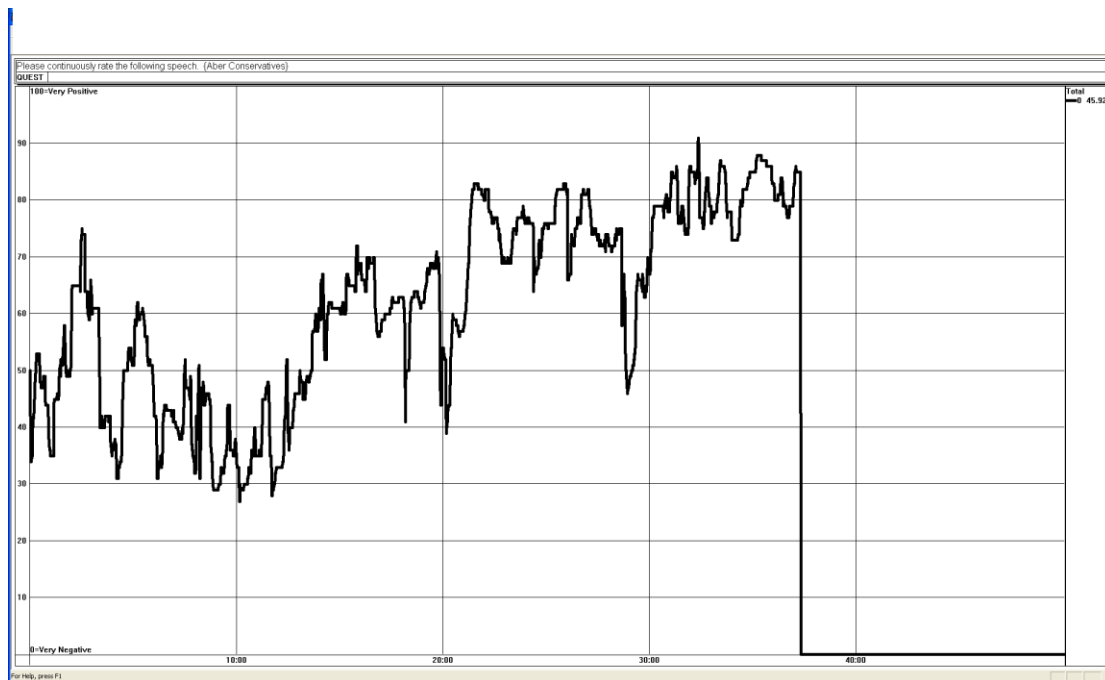
Figure 9.4: Sudanese Group
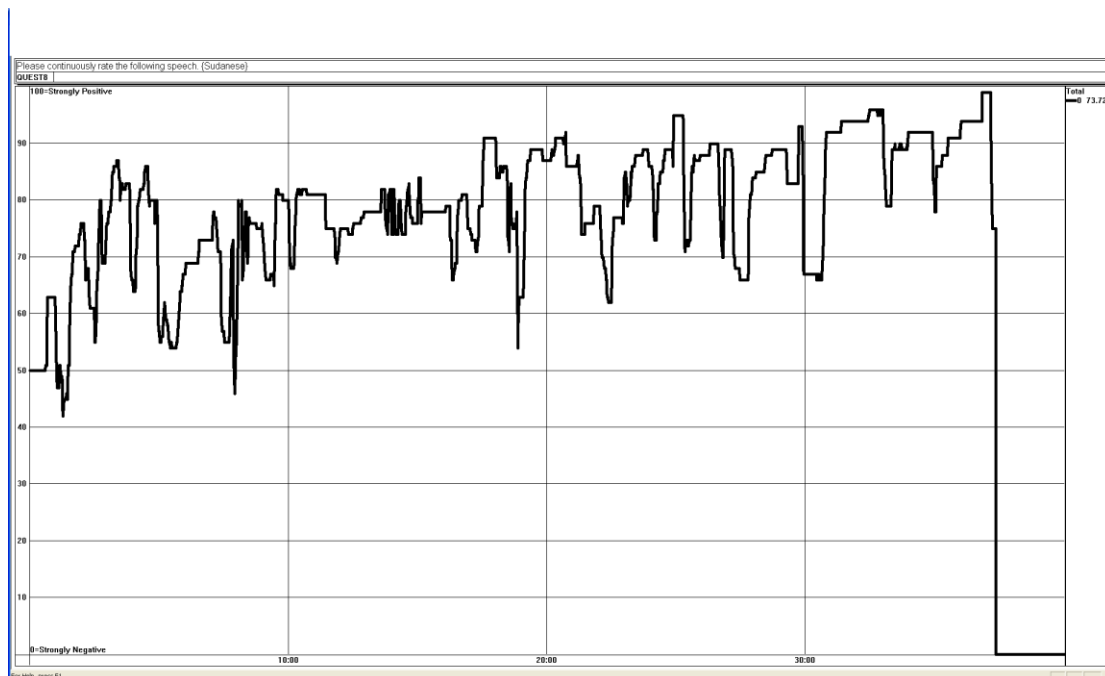
As these figures demonstrate, focus group participants felt a wide array of positive and negative feelings towards Obama's speech. The rest of this chapter is dedicated to

unpacking some of the graph movements shown above as they relate to specific moments in Obama's speech.

G. A *Teleological* Reading: Textual Justifications

In "A More Perfect Union," Obama constructs and identifies his campaign with the values of the Founder's ideals and the purpose of the Constitution; he creates a fluid, consubstantial relationship between the first and second persona by establishing his *ethos* in direct correlation with a constituted "American" people. He finds complexity in Wright's identity, and in doing so, is able to find him identified to the ambiguity and paradoxical substance of the "American" vocabulary. In so doing, he would neutralize many of the perceived negative qualities heaped onto Wright, and through association, himself. Formally, he uses a parallel structure when addressing both the black and white community which strengthens the stylistic similes that lead back to the consubstantiality Obama sees in each community. Ultimately, Obama shifts from the differences of "racial" substance towards each community being identified through the "directional" substance of needing to address the nation's challenges under a new "ultimate" vocabulary of "American-ness," one that, with Obama, transcends racial differences towards a shared socioeconomic struggle for equality.

A brief survey of the speech text reveals twenty-three separate metaphors, making identification and division a stable and consistent concept throughout "A More Perfect Union." For example, Obama constitutes his American auditor as one that "wants unity," he tells us "out of many, we are truly one." He sees American challenges as race neutral and declares his belief that "we may not look the same and we may not have come from the same place, but we all want to move in the same direction." He chose to run for office because he believes "deeply" that "we cannot solve the challenges of our time unless we solve them together – unless we perfect our union by understanding that we may have different stories, but we hold common hopes." He constructs his own identity as "black" and "more than black," and invites his auditor to see their struggles as both "unique" and "universal," to "find that common stake we have in one another."

On the other side, Obama invokes various metaphors that signify division. He notes that as early as the founding of the country the Founders were "divided" on the issue

of race, stuck in a "stalemate," a "stalemate" that we are in to this day. He speaks of the "chasm of misunderstanding that exists between the races." Anger within the African-American community, Obama tells us, "prevents the African-American community from forging the alliances it needs to bring about real change." Obama condemns Wright's statements as "divisive, divisive at a time when we need unity." The surprise at Wright's sermons "simply reminds us of the old truism that the most segregated hour in American life occurs on Sunday morning." Towards the end of the speech, Obama offers his auditors a choice, his brand of political unity or "a politics that breeds division, and conflict, and cynicism." Obama warns against this choice of "retreating into our separate corners" and notes that this starts by viewing his candidacy through a "purely racial lens." A single election can't get "beyond our racial divisions" but is certainly a good place to start. Clearly, what emerges from scholarly and journalistic texts, from the extrapolation of Obama's most immediate exigencies, from polling data, key-figure interviews and a survey of the intrinsic features of the text show signs that a close Burkean reading can illuminate and merge the text with these various factors. Starting at the beginning of the speech, a *teleological* reading can reveal how the metaphors, examples, *enthymeme*s, tropes, sources of argument and stylistic devices work towards creating consubstantiality between the first and second persona, towards ingratiation, towards overcoming division through identification and transcendence.

H. The Text: Internal Movement of "A More Perfect Union"
i. Connecting the "Campaign" to "America"
Obama begins his speech with the first proposition of the preamble of the Constitution: "We the people." Obama guides the rest of his speech as it unfolds by building on the connections he makes between his campaign and the Founders. Such an opening is an immediate constitution of his "American" audience and the content to come gains traction for those that believe in the importance of the Constitution or adhere to the principles and values contained within the document (Charland, 1987). Above all, it is a common reference point; in the United States the dominant narrative of the American Revolution and the signing of the Constitution are the nation's mystical beginnings; these stories are taught early and well known. One participant from the Aberystwyth Conservative Future focus group noted that, while he opposed

the specific policy proposals offered by Obama later in the speech, he enjoyed the beginning moments:

> *Participant 1*: Well at the beginning when he was talking about, you know, the union, you know, the Founding Fathers who gathered you know here in Philadelphia, I sort of like that, like I say "tradition," you know, that's just how we started off, we started off together, but then when he starts talkin' about um, health care and reform and change that's when I start to turn it down...
> *Moderator*: So that's when you start to crank it down...
> *Participant 1*: Yeah..but then I go back up again when he says good stuff and come back down again (Aberystwyth Conservative Future, 2010).

As the first two arrows show in Figure 9.5, Obama's historical account of America's founding enjoyed an increase in PNAR of 19 points, from 34 to 53:

Figure 9.5: Aberystwyth Conservative Future
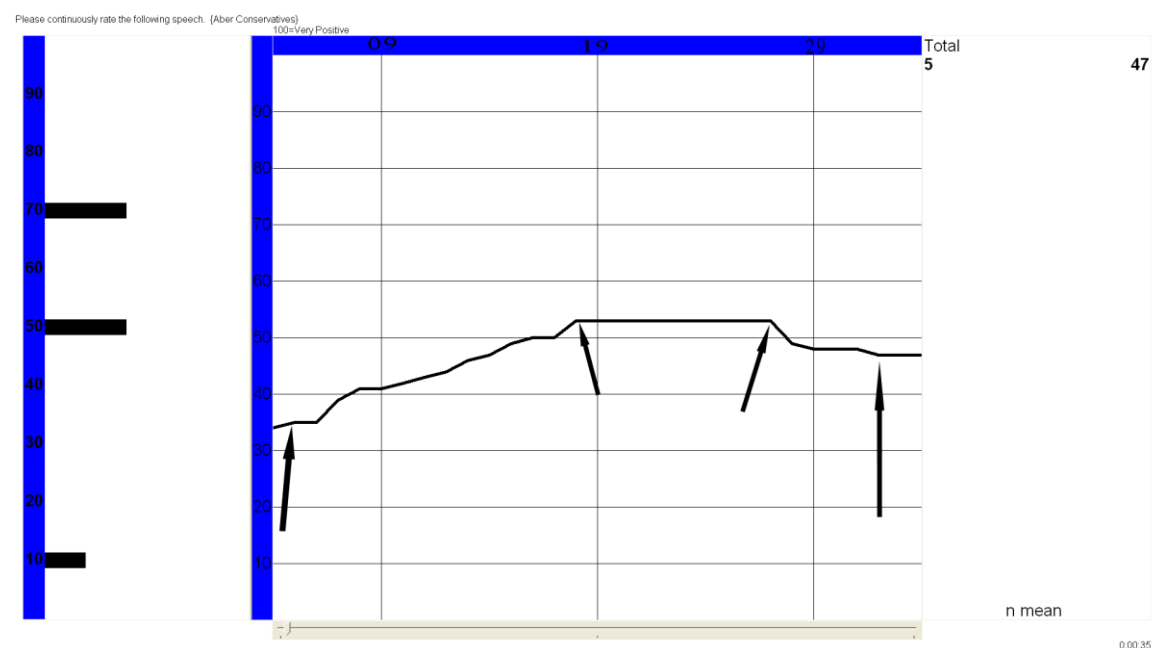
Another participant from the Portsmouth Labour group summarized the opening sequence as follows:

> *Participant 1*: Well I was pretty positive about him all the way through as well. I think in general he was my man, definitely. Briefly I think that uh he was, I got the feeling he was saying "look, we started out with a really good start when the Declaration of Independence was spelled out where we should be going which was great, it was good, followed on from that to the civil war, a step forward again with the slavery problem, uh, not quite resolved, step

forward, and I think he'll carry that forward even more, and that, hopefully, he will have enough um power and um persuasion to bring America even more towards that, that dream of where it all started from in '76, I think it'll happen (Portsmouth Labour, 2010).

At least one focus group participant, a civil servant at the Cardiff Council, expressed an oppositional reading to Obama's opening sequence:

Participant 3: What I find interesting is that in this country we had a woman before we had a black leader and over there they've had a black leader before they've had a woman. Now that's really interesting because it was actually more likely that a black person was going to win than a woman which, you know, women have been around as long as men, I think, yet it was a black person who would get that title before a woman could. And you look at the American Constitution and it talks about the Founding Fathers, well, where were the Founding Mothers? You know? Um so there are slight imbalances there (Cardiff Council, 2010).

Despite this objection, like Aberystwyth Conservative Future the Cardiff Council Group PNAR saw an increase of 30 points from 50 to 80, as demonstrated in Figure 9.6:

Figure 9.6 Cardiff Council Group
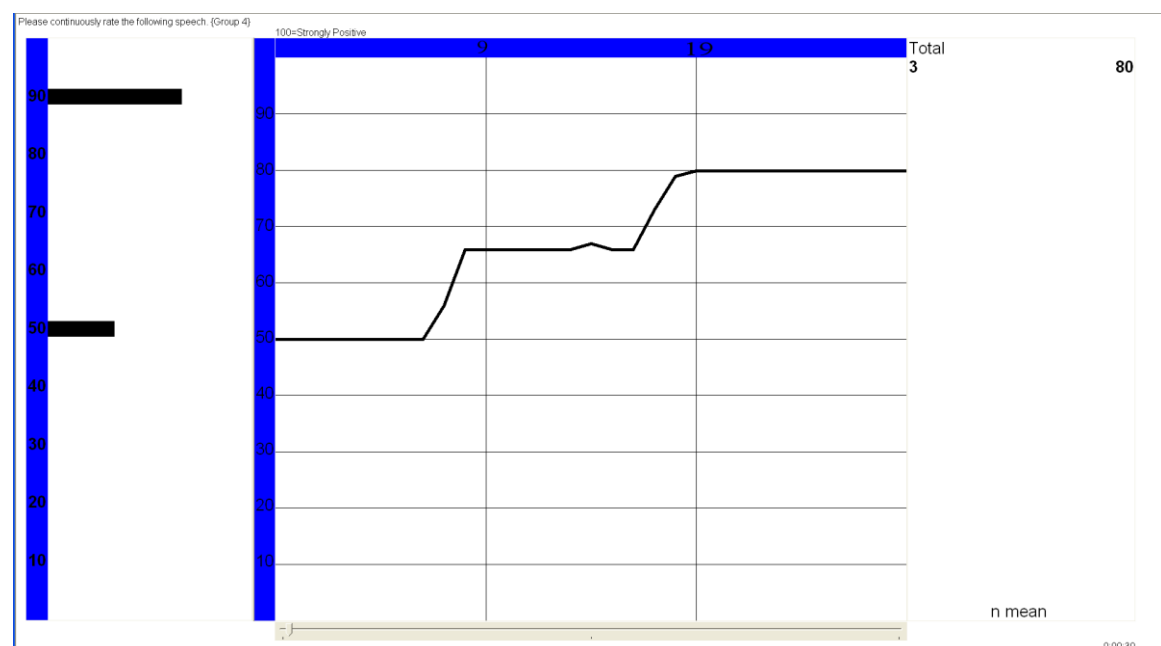
Rhetorically, Obama's recollection of the signing of the Constitution is no history lesson; he is laying the groundwork to identify his interests and his campaign with the

values and interests of the Founders. First, Obama recalls the different backgrounds, "Farmers and scholars; statesmen and patriots," who overcame differences to achieve something monumental. The Founders, Obama tells us, "came together" in response to tyranny and persecution to sign the Declaration of Independence, a point that saw the Portsmouth Labour group increase their PNAR by 10 points from 52 to 62 in Figure 9.7:

Figure 9.7: Portsmouth Labour Group
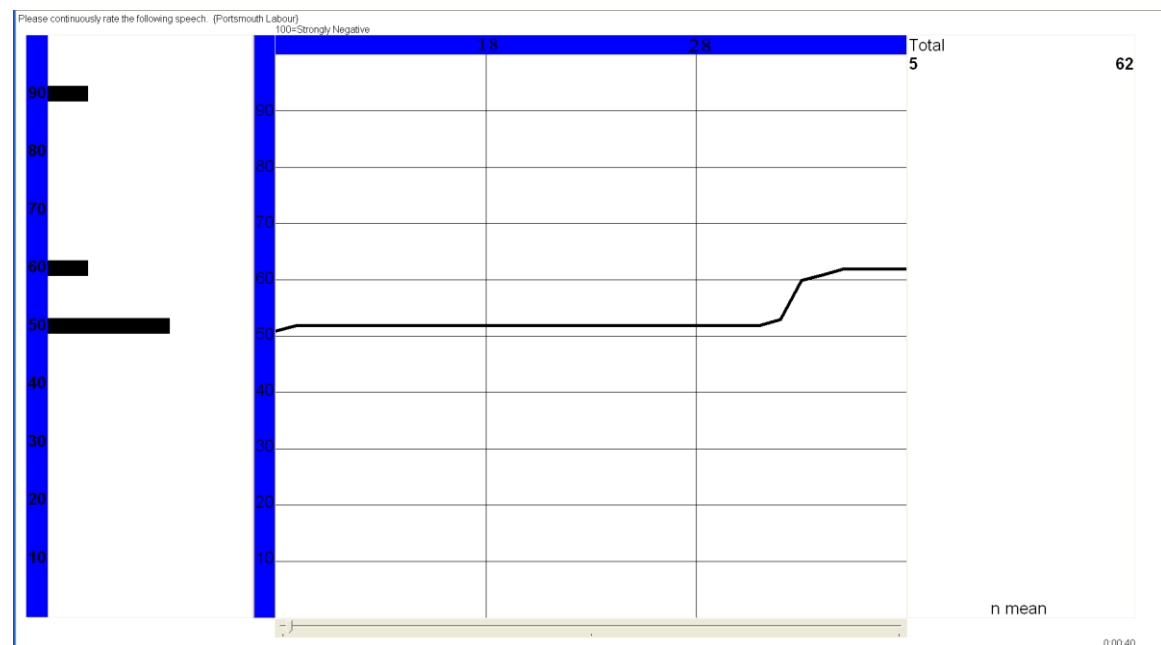
Rhetorically, this "coming together" marked America's "improbable experiment with Democracy," the word "experiment" signifying an ongoing and perhaps imperfect process; it provides rhetorical room later in the speech for Obama to hinge his campaign to the purpose of the mythical founding. Overcoming difference to address challenges is the crucial link between the founding of the country and Obama's bid for the presidency. Even in terms of location, the campaign was busy creating geographic parallels between the campaign and the Founders before the speech even began. The founding along with this landmark speech both occurred in the same city and, indeed, on the very same street at the Constitution Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

"The document they produced was eventually signed but ultimately unfinished," Obama tells us, as he moves from a description of events to his analysis of the

document. The Constitution was "stained by this nation's original sin of slavery, a question that divided the colonies and brought the convention to a stalemate," any resolution would be left "up to future generations." One participant turned the dial down when Obama discussed slavery, not because of how Obama addressed the issue throughout the speech, but because they were "very negative subjects (Portsmouth Labour, 2010)." The Abserystwyth Conservative Future group PNAR decreased slightly from 49 to 35 during Obama's initial discussion of slavery's role in American history, as shown in Figure 9.8:

Figure 9.8 Aberystwyth Conservative Future

The Portsmouth Labour group too saw a decrease in PNAR as Obama recollects that the slave trade "was allowed to continue for twenty more years" as shown in Figure 9.9, while the moment Obama utters "resolution left to future generations" saw a momentary increase from the Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group, illustrated in Figure 9.10:

Figure 9.9: Portsmouth Labour Group
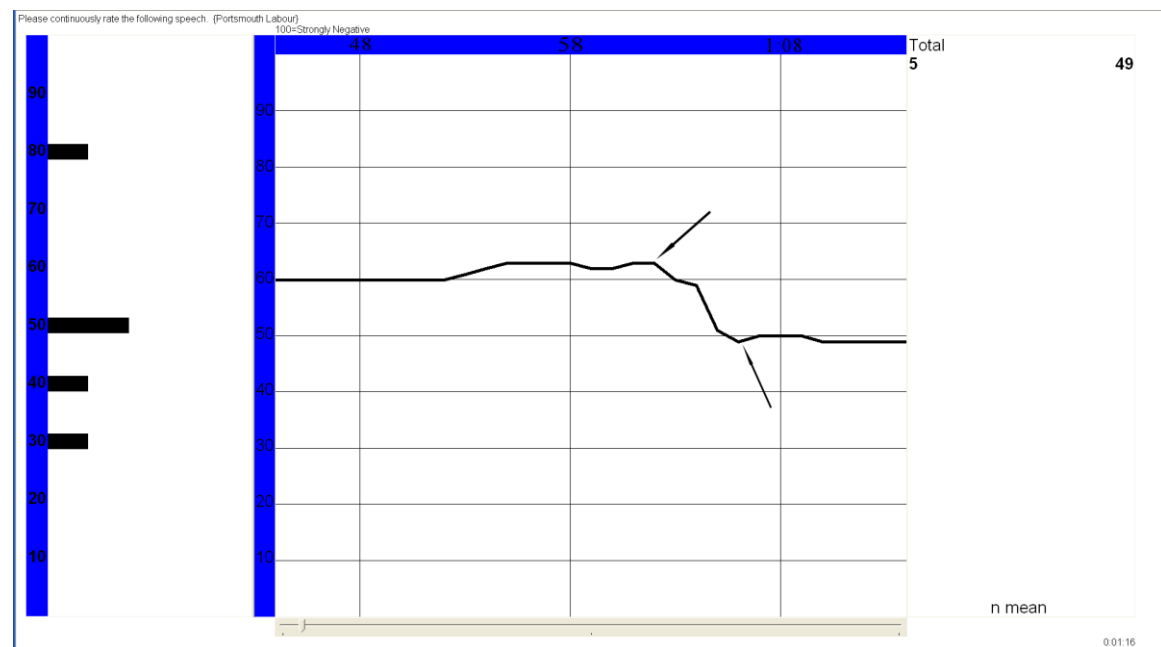
Figure 9.10: Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group
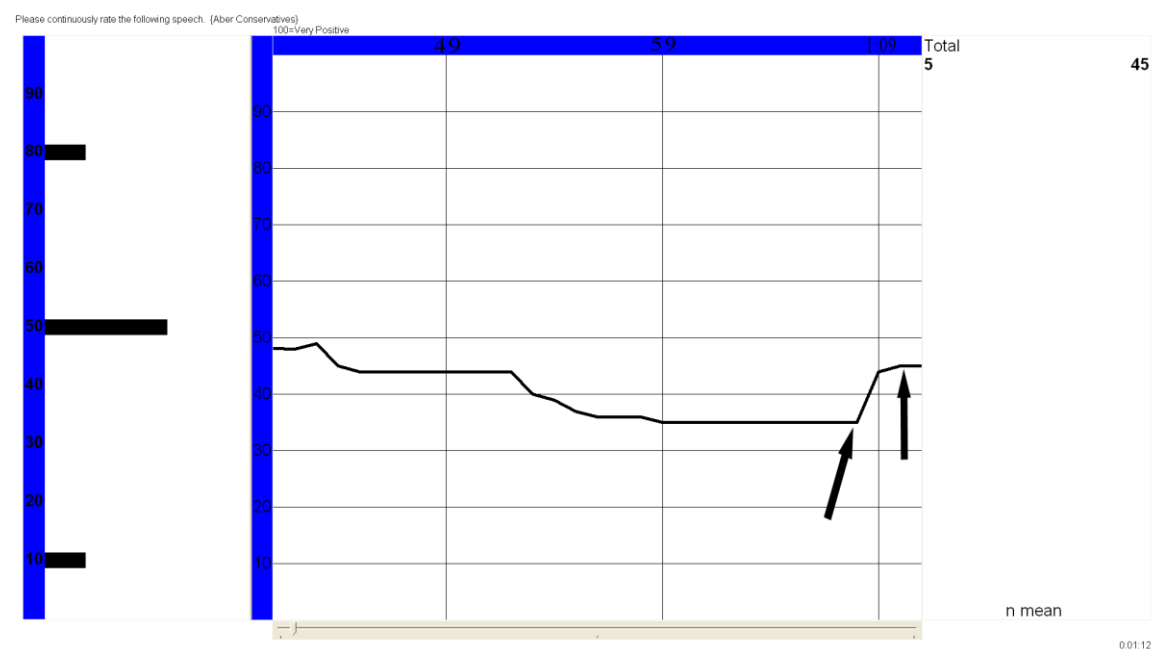
Textually, Obama uses the words word "divide" and "stalemate" and are the first part of a series of antithetical propositions that continue through Obama's speech as was referenced in the justification for reading the speech through a Burkean lens. Of course the word "divided" indicates we are firmly in the realm of identification and division, but even the word "stalemate" also signifies different positions at an impasse, a situation unable to produce an outcome and unable (or unwilling) to come

together. Looking at the speech, Obama could hardly be assuaging those voters who had lost favor with his candidacy because of Wright's remarks by insulting the Constitution as a document "stained by this nation's original sin of slavery," which could vicariously be seen as an insult to the Founders themselves, the demigods of America's civil religion and a powerful standard of cultural *doxa* in America that must not be violated when working within its parameters. But, continuing the theme of ingratiation Obama tells us that the document the Founders wrote "had at its very core the ideal of equal citizenship under the law; a Constitution that promised its people liberty, and justice, and a union that could be and should be perfected over time." This sentence outlining the normative values enshrined in the Constitution saw large PNAR increases from the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group (+13 from 45 to 58), the Portsmouth Labour group (+18 from 46 to 64) and the Sudanese group (+24 from 47 to 71) as shown in Figure 9.11, Figure 9.12 and Figure 9.13:

Figure 9.11: Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group
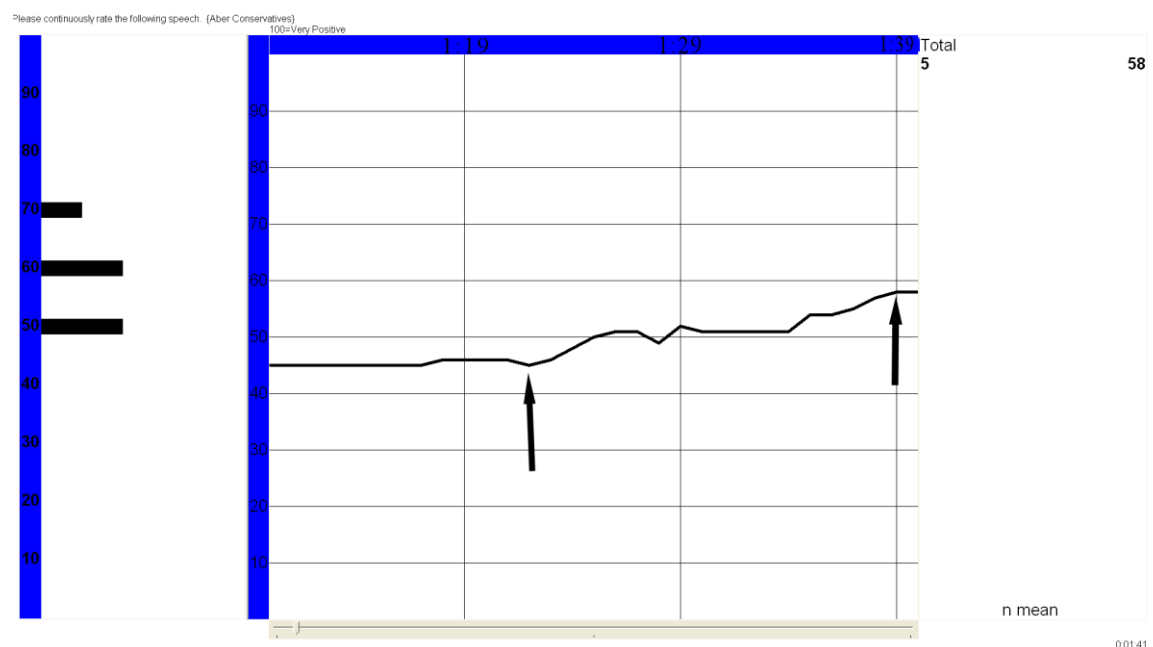
Figure 9.12: Portsmouth Labour Group:
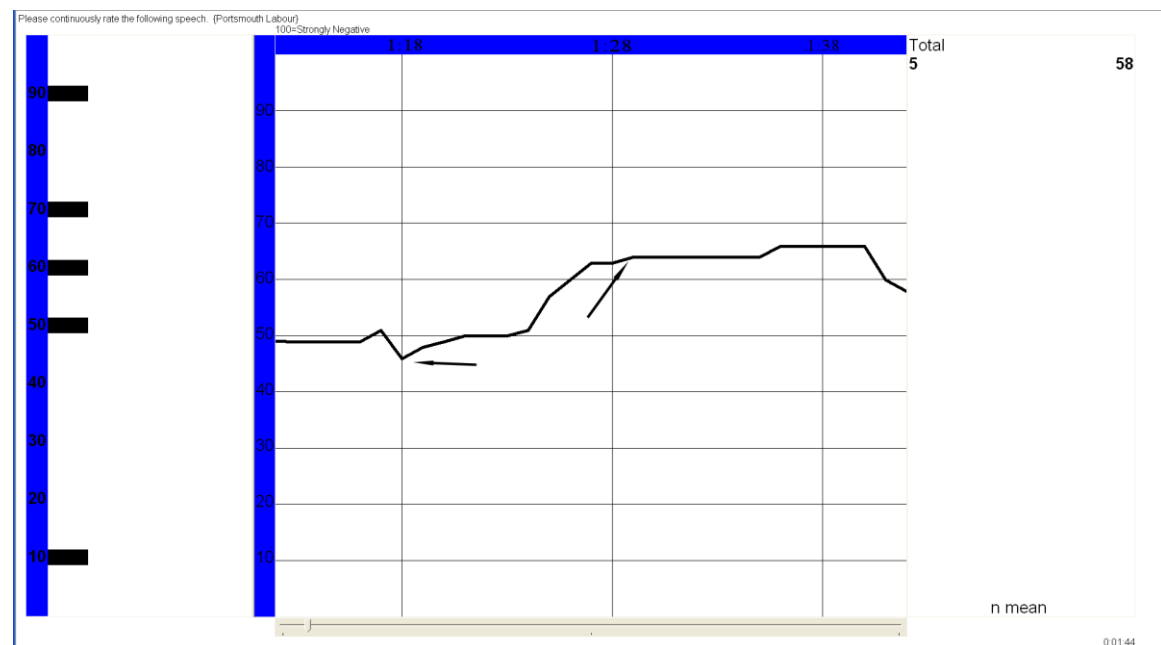
Figure 9.13: Sudanese Group
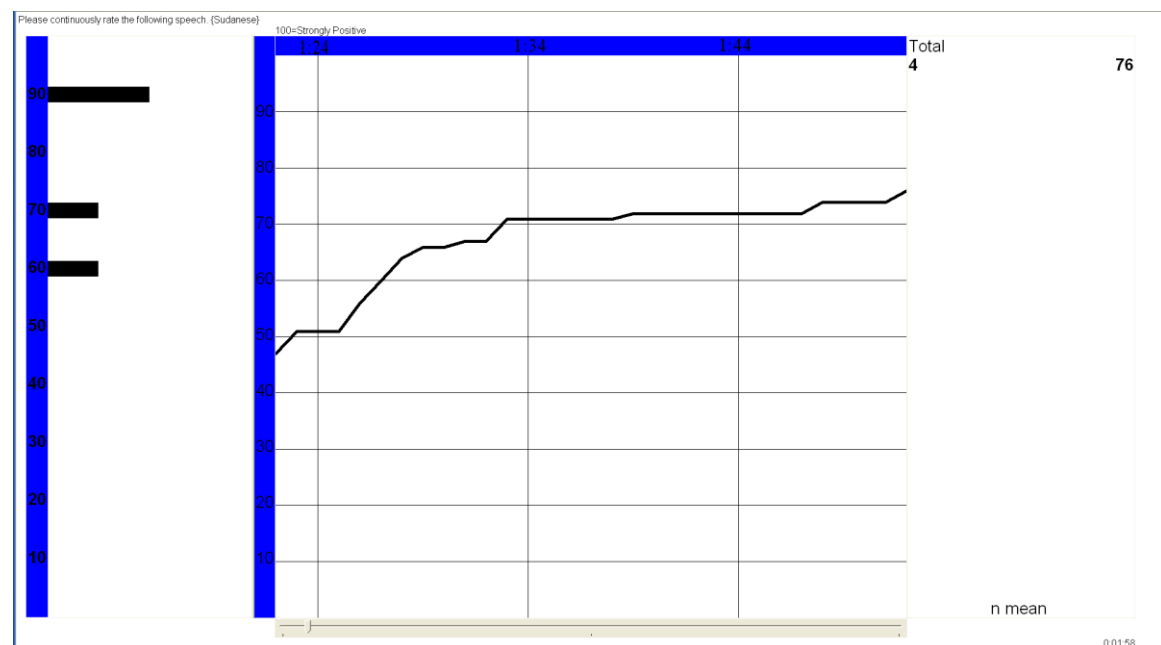
Textually, Obama creates a clear dichotomy between the nation's ideals and the reality of the Founder's time, necessitating action to "narrow the gap." Here, he associates slaves seeking to be free from bondage along with "men and women of every color and creed" seeking to achieve "their full rights and obligations as citizens of the United States." This foreshadows his appeal to black and white audiences later in the speech, and begins to ground what will be his appeal to transcendence in

American historical precedent of binding the particular to the universal. At the founding of the nation, slaves lost out on the dichotomy between ideals and reality but there were other losers, "men and women of every color and creed," and together "we" have common interests to perfect the union in which "we" live. This act of perfection, in Obama's historical narrative, has manifested itself "through protests and struggle, on the streets and in the courts, through a civil war and civil disobedience and always at great risk - to narrow that gap between the promise of our ideals and the reality of their time."

After laying the common reference point of the Constitution in a way that allows room for his campaign to be associated, Obama is explicit in his association of continuity:

> This was one of the tasks we set forth at the beginning of this campaign - to continue the long march of those who came before us, a march for a more just, more equal, more free, more caring and more prosperous America.

This sentence saw a PNAR increase with both the Portsmouth Labour group (+22 from 66 to 88) and the Sudanese group (+55 from 55 to 80) as shown in Figure 9.14 and Figure 9.15:

Figure 9.14: Portsmouth Labour Group
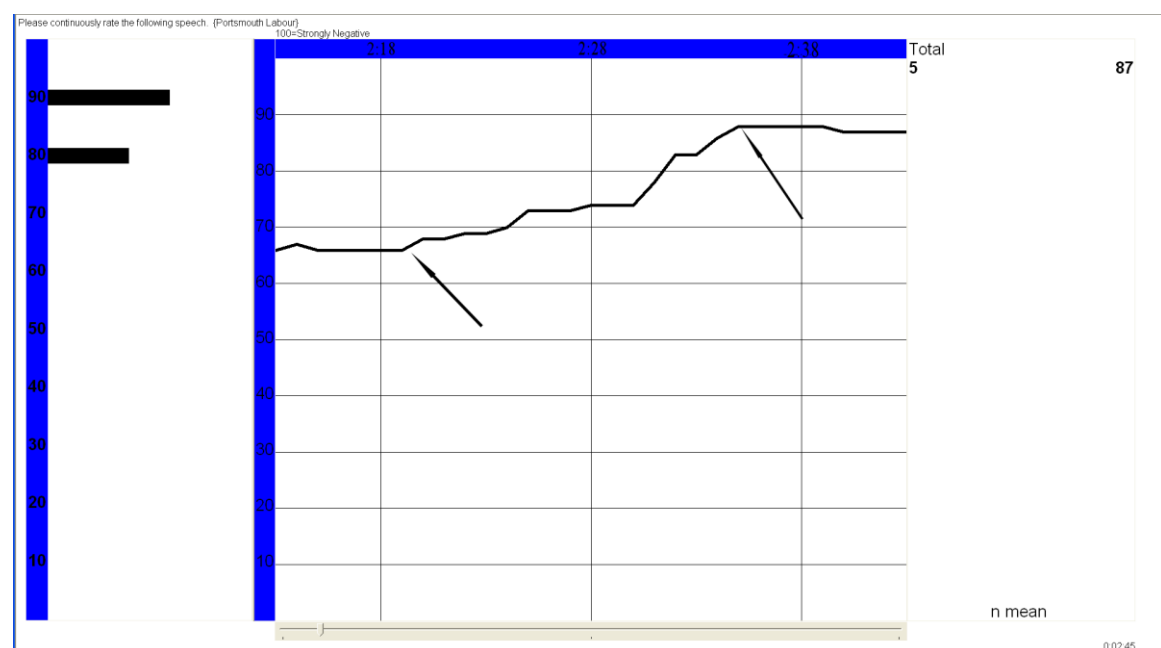
Figure 9.15: Sudanese Group
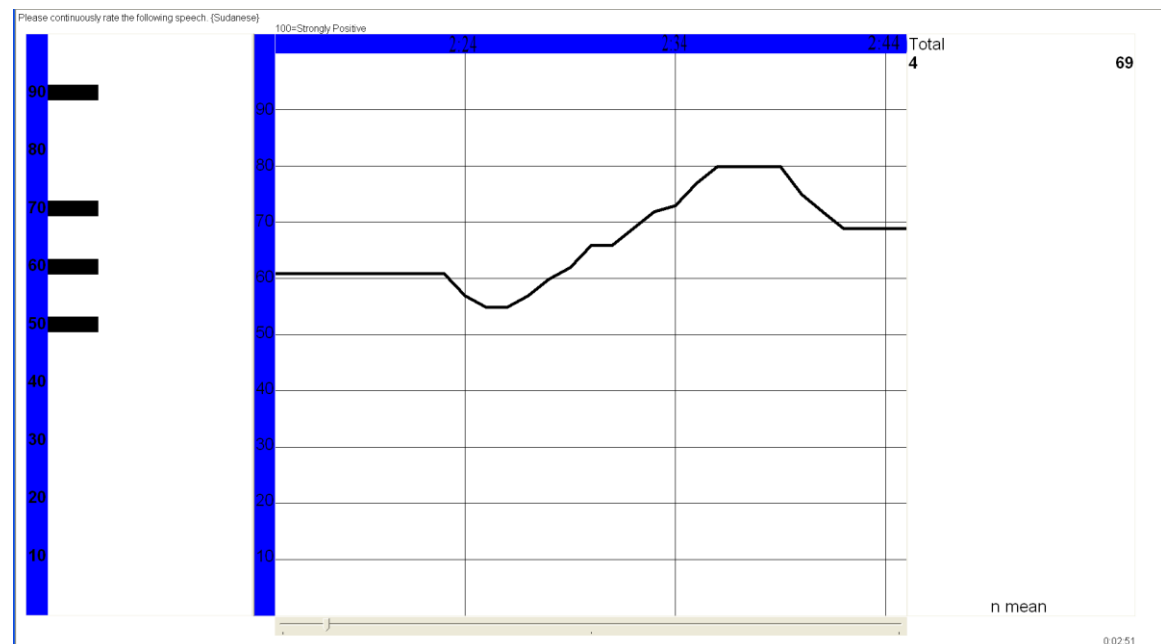
Rhetorically, the status of the Constitution as unfinished is the open and crucial link to which Obama ties his campaign. If one cannot accept this identification through association then it is hard to see how Obama is continuing the unfinished work of the Founders and is thus left open to charges of being unpatriotic, unfamiliar or outside "traditional" American values. In the Portsmouth Labour Group, one participant initially found the reference to the Constitution and social change as a positive point:

> *Participant 7*: I'm into the sort of reforms sort of things, you know, about, you know, bringing in social change um within American society. Um, how he has used, I mean, because America does have its constitution, he's actually, what he's done is brought in the American Constitution and the foundation on which the country was built on, you know, this country works itself from, as a state. And obviously how he said that that's still important today and [inaudible] for the future, so I think the reform side of things, that's what I found most positive (Portsmouth Labour, 2010).

Later in the focus group session, however, the same participant seemed to feel the Constitution was restrictive rather than progressive:

> *Participant 7*: I mean I'm a big fan of Barack Obama, it was what he represents, change, at the end of the day. Unfortunately he is in a country that can be resistant to change because of the Constitution and that's the big barrier

101

he has. And obviously the economic set-up as well that causes a lot of disparities on his side as well, it's like he's fighting a battle that is very hard to win. And um, idealism I agree, but when someone's got ideals and tries to implement a series of change, but when you're hit with that all the time, it tends to bring you down as a person and as an individual, and maybe that's why with the mid-term elections people said he wasn't out there trying to get votes or campaign, because there's only so much one person can do sort of thing, when you've got that wall in front of you (Portsmouth Labour, 2010).

Another participant in the same group felt that alluding to the founding of America was an overall positive beginning to the speech. He wondered aloud, however, as did other focus group participants, whether Obama's desire to "perfect our Union" was overly idealistic:

> *Participant 8*: He started with his union message and he stressed the word "union" about half a dozen times, implicitly implying there should be a union within the country, it should be one country. He made, I think, an error when he said, uh, when he revealed that of course the union did not abandon slavery, the union kept with slavery from '76 until all the way through until about 1863, um, when the civil war took slavery by the scruff of the neck and threw it out. He explained that, I thought, very lucidly and well, and I took that as a positive thing. But, he has a vision of America which, um, if I could be so rude as to liken it to Thomas Moore and Utopia, this wonderful land, we had the same vision when we sing "Jerusalem", this "green and pleasant land". Um, the unfortunate thing is that idealism like this is very, very difficult to deliver in a pragmatic and political world that we live in today (Portsmouth Labour, 2010).

While another participant in this group flatly disagreed with this statement, noting his favorite parts of the speech were the "idealistic bits" because "I think you've got to have some idealism," a participant in the Cardiff Council group felt this idealism manifested itself specifically in the concept of a "perfect union":

> *Participant 3*: For me, if Obama had made that speech about a perfect union, people in this country would be inclined to be "well what does perfect mean? What's he on about this 'perfect union'? What's this Founding Fathers thing?" You know, America has a very idealistic constitution. Over here, maybe if he'd said, "a union" it might have worked. As soon as he throws in perfect, and this is maybe where he connected with the kids more because you know it's well known that young people tend to be more idealistic and as they grow older they become more realistic. If you look at Winston Churchill, one of the you know greatest leaders some say we've ever had, he started out very idealistic and over time became very conservative. And I think this is where British politics is much more in the center because there is that kind of pull

towards idealism but still that kind of base of pragmatism whereas we want to have ideas but we want comfort somewhere in the middle [...] (Cardiff Council, 2010).

Another participant in the Portsmouth Labour group agreed, stating that "you're never going to get a perfectedness but I know what [Obama] meant (Portsmouth Labour, 2010)." Textually, Obama attempts to ground this idealism in the Founders' ability to overcome differences to write the Constitution and just as successive generations of "men and women of every creed and color" continued what Martin Luther King Jr. called "the long march towards justice," Obama adds to his *ethos* by asserting a personal belief:

> "that we cannot solve the challenges of our time unless we solve them together – unless we perfect our union by understanding that we may have different stories, but we hold common hopes; that we may not look the same and we may not have come from the same place, but we all want to move in the same direction - towards a better future for our children and our grandchildren."

Obama restates the same point in two slightly different ways. The corporate "we" is divided insofar as "we" have different stories and separate backgrounds but are consubstantial insofar as "we" have common hopes for the future. Framed as a personal belief, the first persona begins to merge with the constituted second persona through a mutual belief. This appeal occurred simultaneously with a 14 point PNAR increase from the Sudanese group from 69 to 86, shown in Figure 9.16:

Figure 9.16: Sudanese Group
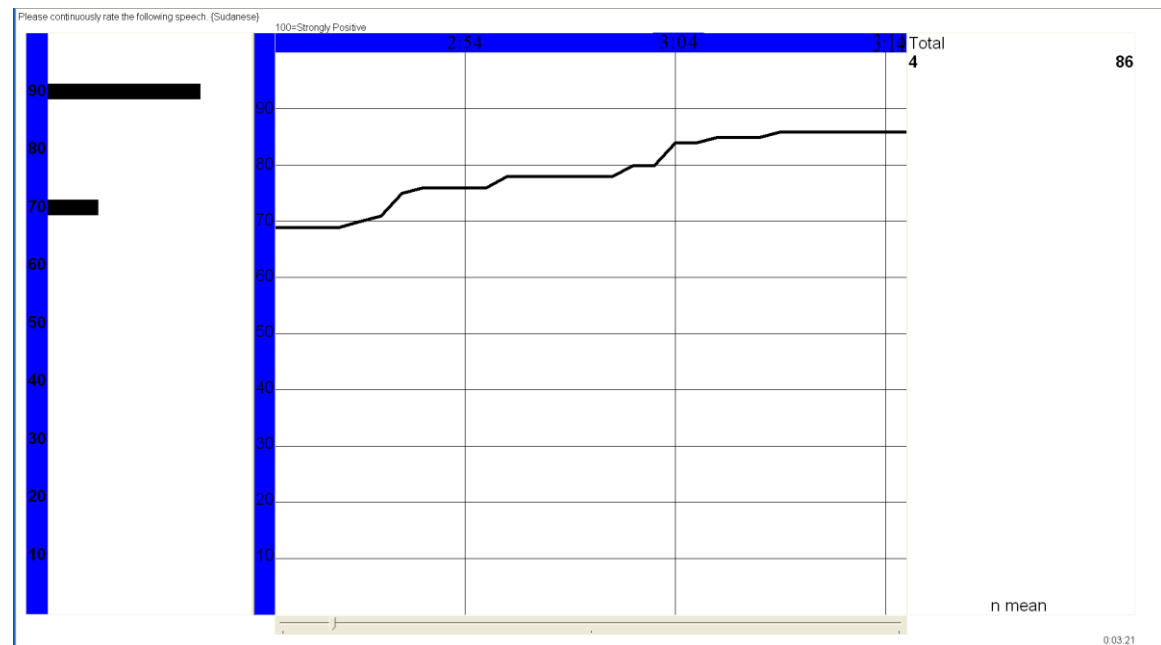
Obama subdivides the source of this belief. First, it comes from an "unyielding faith in the decency and generosity of the American people," a potential source of ingratiation of the American auditor. Second, this belief stems from his "own American story." The Cardiff Council group, however, saw a PNAR decrease of 17 from 90 to 73, shown in Figure 9.17:

Figure 9.17: Cardiff Council Group
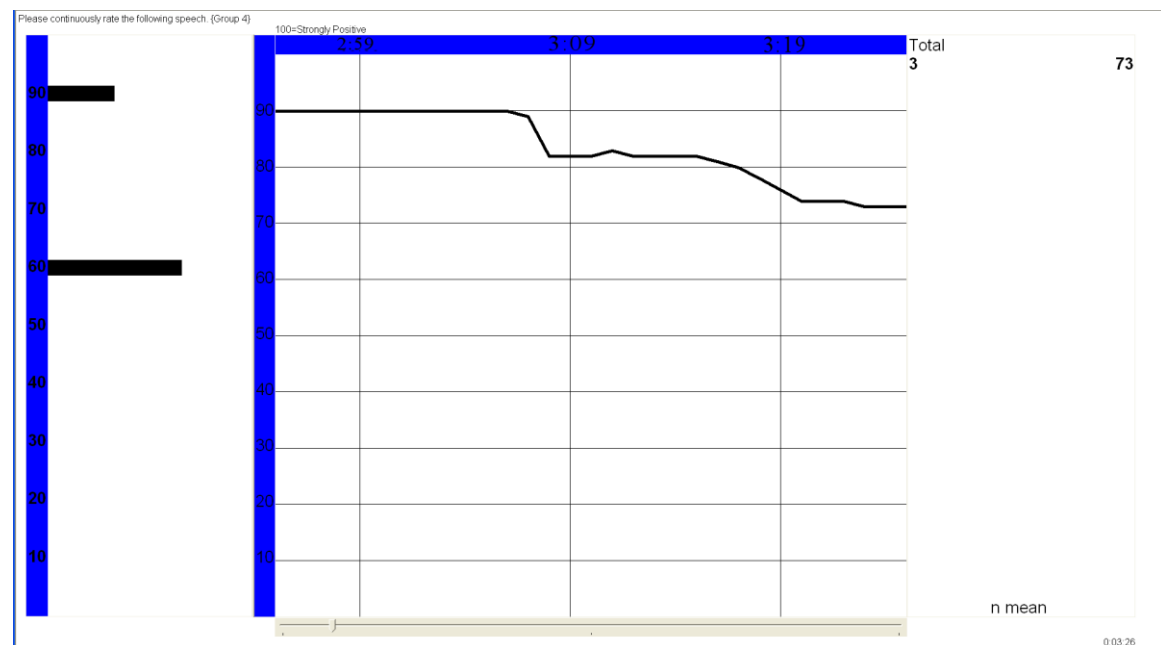
Much of the literature and commentary on the speech note that Obama comes to embody the complexity of race in America, and this subdivided premise seems to be the starting point. The description Obama has given of America and his own complex story creates a synecdoche between his own story and the story of America. "I am the son of a black man from Kenya and a white woman from Kansas," Obama tell us, as the alliteration makes his story's complexity more memorable. The Aberystwyth Conservative Future group decreased PNAR abruptly 21 points from 61 to 40 during this portion of the speech:

Figure 9.18: Aberystwyth Conservative Future
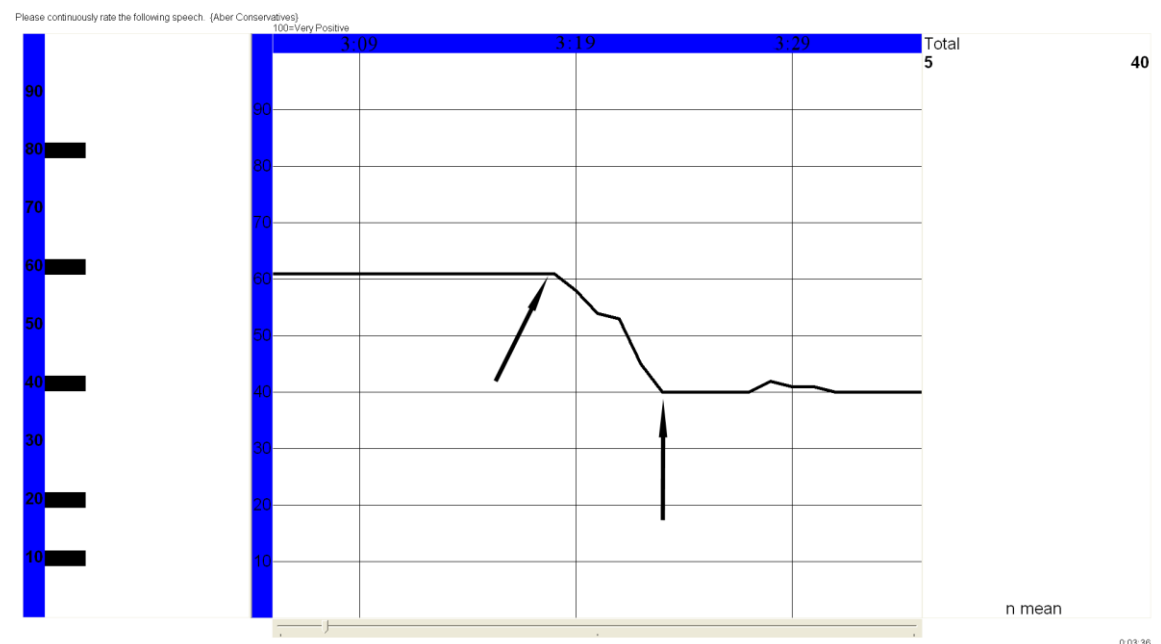
Obama elaborates on his upbringing and his time with his grandparents, a grandfather "who survived a Depression to serve in Patton's Army during World War II and a white grandmother who worked on a bomber assembly line at Fort Leavenworth while he was overseas." Here Obama can be seen in what Burke calls "corporate" or "vicarious boasting," highlighting the admirable qualities of "service" and "hard work" of those he would associate with that lend weight to Obama's first persona for those that would admire these qualities. He continues:

> I have brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, uncles and cousins, of every race and every hue, scattered across three continents, and for as long as I live, I will never forget that in no other country on Earth is my story even possible.

Rhetorically, Obama's story embodies America's very definition. Such a statement perpetuates the ingratiating notion of American exceptionalism, the nation-state is defined through what it is not; America has something the world does not. Focus group participants had a mixed reaction to Obama's constructed personal narrative. The discussion of this portion of the speech also sparked a discussion with the Aberystwyth Conservative Future of how politics is different in the United States. Upon one participant stating that "he kept going on about how he's black and those problems and it just got, it got quite boring," another participant replied:

Participant 4: Yeah...you've [Obama] made your point
Participant 1: When he started talking about, uh, you know "I'm from Kenya..."
Participant 2: Awww...
Participant: I DON'T CARE...
Participant 2: Who cares!
Participant 1: You know I don't care if a woman is running, a black man is running or you've got an old man running, I just care about your policies...
Participant 2: Yeah...that's all that
Participant 1: If you're up to the job, what do I care?
Participant 2: Yeah it's not like completely irrelevant, I suppose...you've got to have some sort of...where you're from, your background and sort of stuff influences you as a person. But that's irelleven- that's different to what you're going to do. What you going to do is the main thing that people...people are going to listen to you for what you're going to tell them you're going to change, not where you came from.
Participant 1: No, you think so but sometimes it's not like that, is it?
Participant 3: America...because it's always been different and because they've always had like middle-aged men as, as the President, whereas we have had Margaret Thatch-, we have had a woman
Participant 2: Yeah...
Participant 3: We've had different kind of people, so I suppose he had to justify...so he...you know...
Moderator: So we can separate...on the one hand, you didn't like it, but you could see why he did it...
Participant 3: Yeah...
Participant 4: Well there is still a very British view because British and American politics are very, very different in the way that they focus...
Participant 2: Mmm...
Participant 4: And in Britain we...you don't, politicians just don't do that. In America it is done. So I don't like it, but I can understand why he's doing it. It's the American style of doing it. No, I don't like it (Aberystwyth Conservative Future, 2010).

Surprisingly, this rejection of Obama's attempts to construct and use his personal narrative in the speech were glazed over, at least in *form*, when discussion moved from Obama to David Cameron and the stories of British politicians:

> *Participant 4*: It's things like, uh, Sarah Palin spent a lot of time goin' on about her family and her differences and Obama does it as well, but you look at Cameron who has had a lot more ups and downs with his family life, [he] doesn't mention it, at all. Very, very rarely does he mention it. Unless it's very, very related to...
> *Moderator*: And you like that?
> *Participant 4*: Yeah, because you know he's got a lot more to say about his family life...
> *Participant 2*: A lot more seems to have happened...
> *Participant 4*: Yeah.
> *Participant 2*: ...then Sarah Palin's daughter gettin' pregnant.
> *Participant 4*: Yeah especially because it all happened to him while he was in office...
> *Participant 2*: [Inaudible]
> *Participant 4*: 'Cause his father 's died while he was in office, his son died...
> *Participant 1*: A couple of years ago...
> Participant 2: Yeah
> *Participant 4*: Couple of years ago, before he was running. And it doesn't get mentioned, it's not...
> *Participant 2*: It's sort of lots more serious.
> *Participant 1*: He does relate to it in speeches
> *Participant 4*: He doesn't make a thing of it
> *Participant 2*: It can't not affect you, but it...
> *Participant 4*: In America they seem to make a big thing about their family lives anything, any little thing that happens is analyzed.
> *Participant 2*: Yeah...
> *Participant 4*: And in Britain it doesn't happen and then...
> *Participant 2*: They're trying to show they're human...
> *Participant 5*: And then here, then here Ed Milliband and his girlfriend and whether they should actually get married before the next election...
> *Participant 1*: They've got another kid, another kid...[inaudible]...Ed Milliband
> *Participant 5*: But he's not married, is he?
> *Participant 3, 2*: [Inaudible]
> *Participant 5*: We're not going to vote for him 'cause he's not married...
> *Participant 1*: Well, well, we voted for Ted Heath and he was gay,
> so...(Aberystwyth Conservative Future, 2010).

Obama's narration of his personal journey was interpreted by another member of the Aberystwyth Conservative Future later on in the focus group as demanding special consideration due to his race:

> *Participant 5*: I'm not American, but the next election it wouldn't bother me if a Republican wins, I wouldn't...I wouldn't give a damn really. Because he's

black he shouldn't win, he shouldn't have privileges compared to us, we all should be equal. And because he thinks he's black he's on a pedestal he thinks he can be immune from certain things but he can't. I'm not trying to be a racist or religious but I feel that...[inaudible]...the Republicans were slaughtered if they mentioned anything about him, you know, that is discrimination, that is racist and you're going to get done and you know I just thought well Obama is a nice guy but I just feel that sometimes he thinks he can stand on a pedestal and he's got a halo on his head. But he's not that, I admire him for his idealism but he thinks that as he's black...I'm not saying it should be used against him but sometimes I think he thinks he's got a halo on him and he thinks he can do what he wants (Aberystwyth Conservative Future, 2010)

At least one participant in this group disagreed about the role of personal narratives in politics, however, was not vocal about it until later in the session:

Participant 3: ...I thought, you know, he's related it to himself, he wasn't just a robot, he mentioned his own emotions, and so...
Moderator: And you like that?
Participant 3: Yeah, I like that.
Moderator: Do you like it when politicians do that in the UK?
Participant 3: Yeah...
Participant 1: We don't do it enough, I don't think. We don't put enough emotion into our speeches.
Participant 2: I don't know, sometimes it can come off as quite false and sort of "I've only got a wife and kids 'cause it looks good"
Moderator: And what did you think in this case?
Participant 2: I don't know...
Participant 3: [inaudible]
Participant 3: Yeah, it did seem more sort of, "yeah, I've got a family and stuff, so it makes me think like this" but it's not, he didn't seem to play on it. It was just sort of an aside, really (Aberystwyth Conservative Future, 2010).

However it is interpreted, Obama textually continues to establish a "communicative relationship" by merging his own identity with the second persona, in this case his "American" audience:

It's a story that hasn't made me the most conventional candidate. But it is a story that has seared into my genetic makeup the idea that this nation is more than the sum of its parts - that out of many, we are truly one.

The moment-to-moment data with the Sudanese group, for example, decreased when Obama referenced that he "lived in one of the world's poorest nations" by 19 from 83 to 64:

Figure 9.19: Sudanese Group
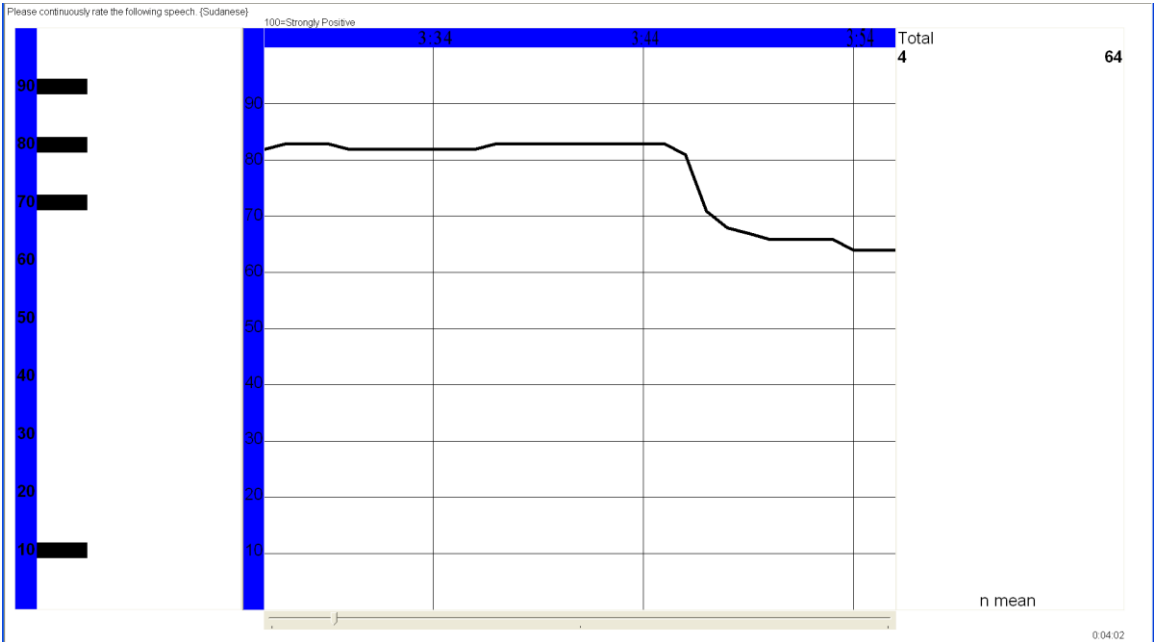
But, in the sentences discussing his family, preceding the claim that "in no other country is my story even possible," the Sudanese group saw a PNAR increase by 22 from 64 to 86, while the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group decreased by 6 points, as shown by the first arrow in Figure 9.21:

Figure 9.20: Sudanese Group
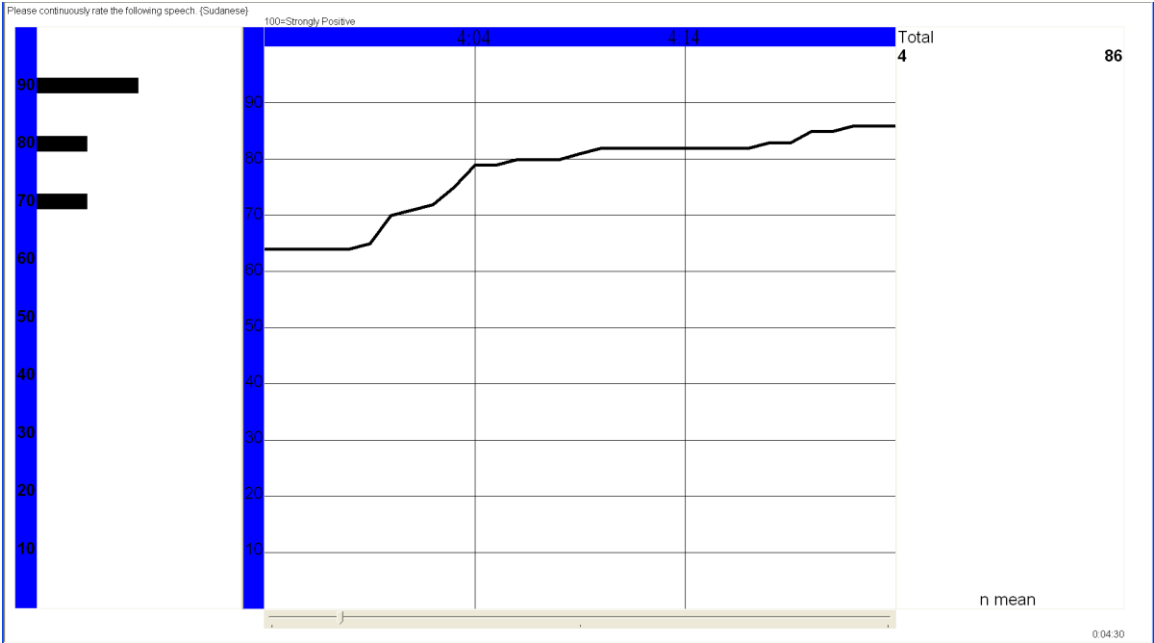
Figure 9.21: Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group
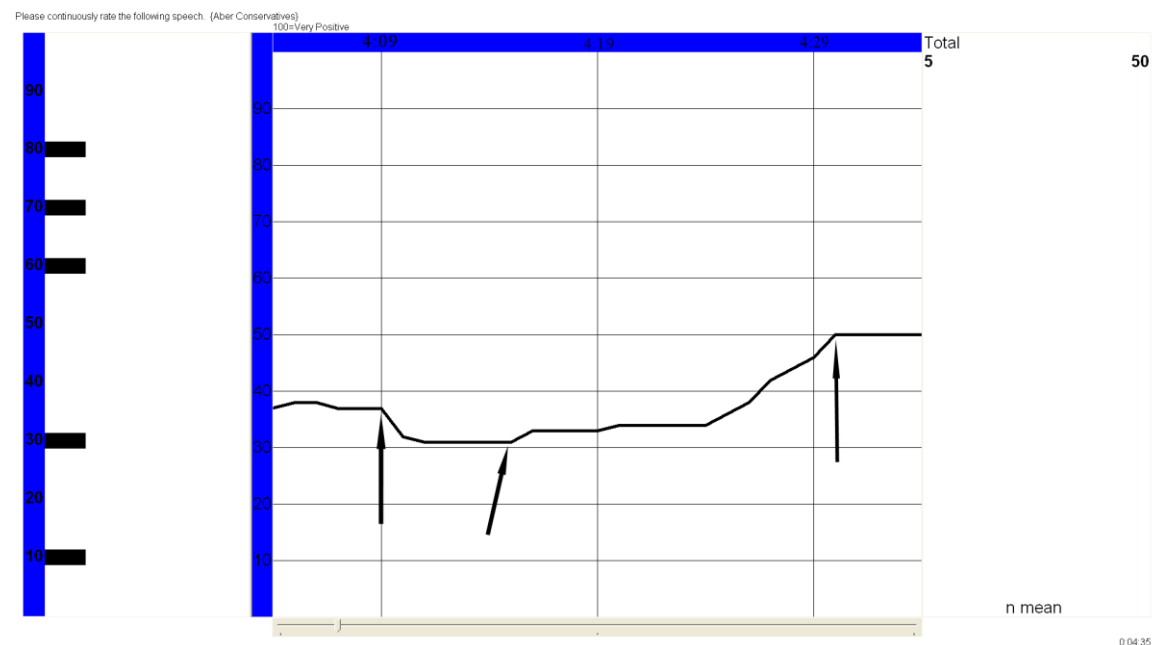
As the synecdoche becomes explicit, Obama's story serves as an inductive argument, what the Greeks called *martyiria* (confirming something from one's own experience) that illuminates the various racial and socio-economic antitheses which culminates in Obama's constitutive conclusion: "this nation is more than the sum of its parts – that out of many, we are truly one." Note how he says "the" idea, not "my idea." This is indicative of Obama drawing on pre-existing cultural *doxa*, yielding to powerful cultural "truths," the final seven words being the English translation of the nation's motto (*E pluribus, unum*). Finally, there are clear markers for identification: "out of many [divided]" we are truly "one [identification]." As second and third arrow on Figure 13.17 show, the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group saw a PNAR increase of 19 points from 31 to 50.

Textually, Obama moves to narrate the more immediate history of his own campaign. All the while constituting his audience:

> Throughout the first year of this campaign, against all predictions to the contrary, we saw how hungry the American people were for this message of unity.

The fact that Americans want unity is a convenient constitutive claim, a desire for what Obama is offering. Obama then recounts the events of the South Carolina

Democratic Primary. Despite the "temptation" to view his "candidacy through a purely racial lens, we won commanding victories in states with some of the whitest populations in the country. In South Carolina, where the Confederate Flag still flies, we built a powerful coalition of African Americans and white Americans." Use of the "purely racial lens" metaphor illuminates Obama's attempts to identify with his audience and transcend division. The word "coalition" is in direct antithesis with the "purely racial lens," "division" and "stalemate." Obama then draws upon the Aristotelian topic of possibility (Aristotle, 1991: 185). If Obama's message of unity seems unlikely, improbable or impossible (Obama uses "against all predications to the contrary"), he uses the South Carolina coalition, formed in a state "where the Confederate flag still flies" as an even more unlikely yet already achieved outcome. Upon Obama's assertion that the coalition was of "African-Americans and white Americans," the Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group increased 8 points from 51 to 59, while the Sudanese group increased 7 fro 55 to 62. As Figure 9.22 demonstrates, the Portsmouth Labour group's PNAR decreased 21 points from 94 to 73 when Obama referenced the "temptation to view his candidacy through a purely racial lens," and the Confederate flag that waived over South Carolina, but recovered 11 points to 84 as Obama referenced the "powerful coalition" of various races:

Figure 9.22: Portsmouth Labour Group

111

Obama does however qualify the racial achievements of his campaign. "This is not to say race has not been an issue in this campaign," Obama tells us, as he inches closer to the most pressing exigency at hand. Obama alludes to three examples of "racial" issues facing his campaign. First, "commentators," an entity Obama divides from throughout the speech have deemed Obama either "too black" or "not black enough," and as Obama will argue, he is both these things; to view him as either one or the other is to fall for the temptation of viewing his candidacy through the "purely racial lens." Second, Obama references "exit polls" that the "press have scoured" looking for evidence of "racial polarization." The word "polarization" refers offers metaphorical consistency in Obama's address with such words as "divided," "stalemate," and the "racial lens." The examples Obama cites predicate the most recent example of racial challenges facing the Obama campaign: Reverend Jeremiah Wright. In fact, "it has only been in the last couple of weeks that the discussion of race in this campaign has taken a particularly divisive turn." Rhetorically, Obama places this "discussion of race" on a metaphorical "spectrum" with two ends. Obama's spectrum can be seen as a way of creating an association between both Wright and the unnamed antagonist who would implicate Obama's candidacy as "an exercise in affirmative action." Obama identifies these two viewpoints as similar insofar as they are both misjudging his candidacy by reading it through the "purely racial lens" and outside of normative American values. Wright's views are "divisive," and these views actually "widen the racial divide" and denigrate "the greatness and goodness of our nation" and insults "white and black alike." In terms of identification and division, Obama creates a clear dichotomy between ingratiation and denigration, his candidacy as the defender of the "greatness and goodness" of America those that view his candidacy and the nation through a racial lens, including Wright, as not only misunderstanding of his candidacy but divided from the nation's ideals which Obama seeks to represent. The moment-to-moment data paint an interesting reaction to this portion of the speech. The Aberystwyth Conservative Future group saw two separate decreases in PNAR. First, the group decreased by 9 from 60 to 51 when Obama references "racial polarization" among white, black and brown racial identifications and the issue of race taking a "particularly divisive turn." Compounding this, the second PNAR decrease came as Obama referenced one end of the spectrum which consists of liberals seeking "to purchase racial reconciliation on the cheap" and

another decrease when Obama references the other end of the spectrum, Jeremiah Wright:

Figure 9.23: Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group
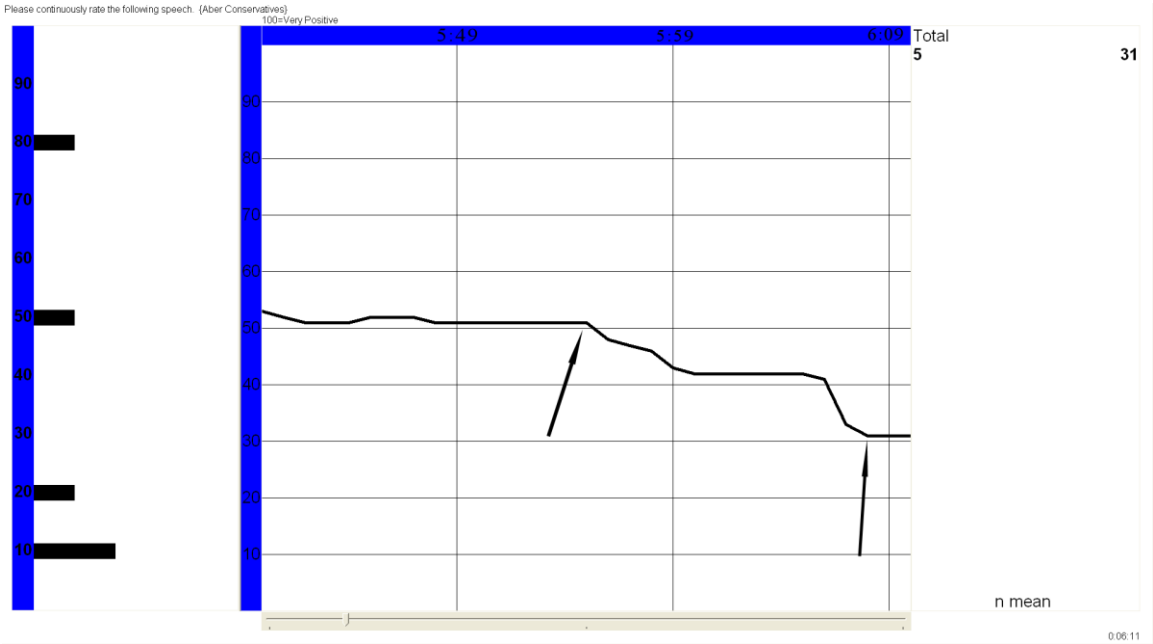
Simultaneously occurring with Aberystwyth Conservative Future's 9 point PNAR decrease during Obama's discussion of "racial polarization" among white, black and brown racial identifications, the Sudanese group saw a near inverse PNAR increase of 13 from 54 to 67. The Portsmouth Labour group shared, albeit more intensely, the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group's PNAR decrease of 30 from 84 to 54:

Figure 9.24: Portsmouth Labour Group
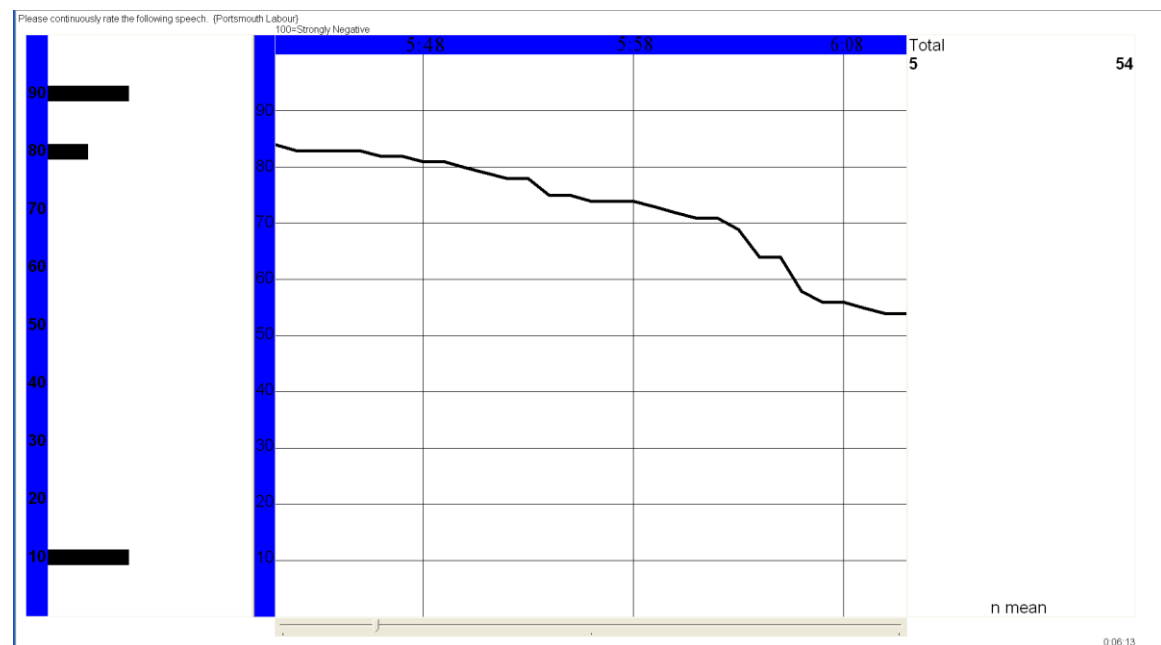
ii. Obama Addresses the Reverend Jeremiah Wright

Textually, Obama now squarely addresses what gave need to the speech to begin with. Obama does not condemn Wright but does condemn "in unequivocal terms, the statements of Reverend Wright that have caused such concern." This condemnation saw the Portsmouth Labour group increase their PNAR by 28 from 54 to 82 and the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group increase their PNAR by 11 from 33 to 44:

Figure 9.25: Portsmouth Labour Group

114
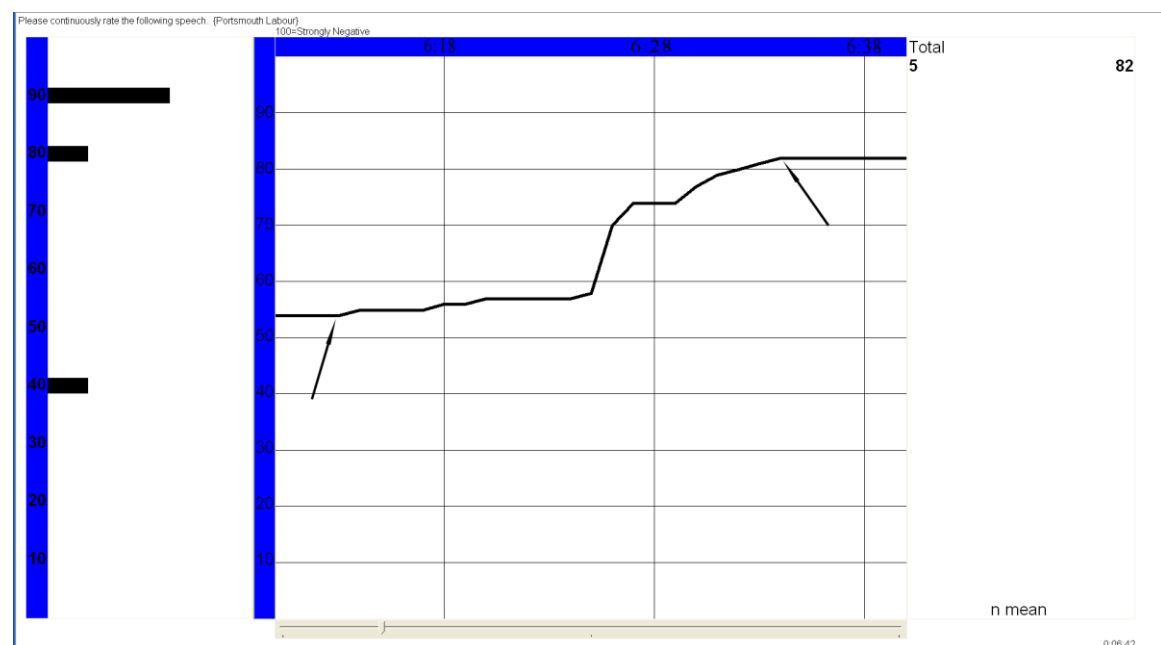
Figure 9.26: Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group
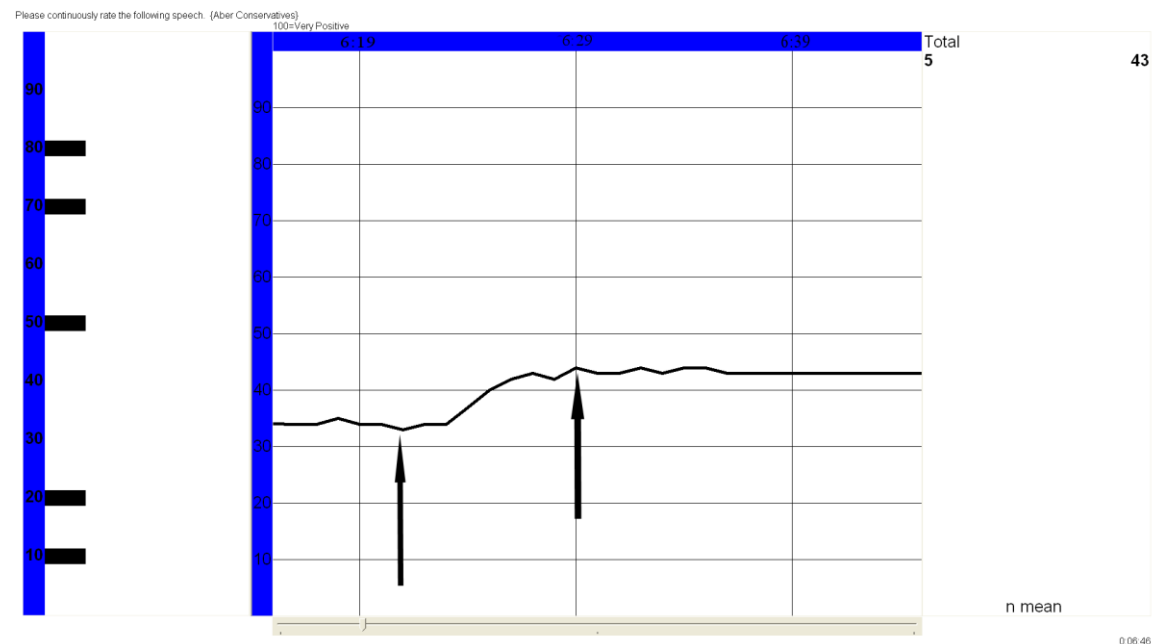
After the initial condemnation, Obama reframes the controversy in a series of questions and answers by assuming the skeptical voice and immediately answering the question (*anthypophora*). Utley and Heysey note that this too is a strategy of identification as Obama seeks to come into favor with his auditor by addressing their attitudes and beliefs; Obama explicitly seeks common ground by inviting his auditor to think of instances in which his or her spiritual leader said something they disagreed with (Utley and Heyse, 2009). This reference to his audience's spirituality and religion generally sparked several different conversations in the focus group sessions. A participant in the Portsmouth Labour group, a self-proclaimed "Christian" and "socialist" identified what Obama was saying as both of these things, according to her his socialism and "belief in Christianity came through" the speech (Portsmouth Labour, 2010). One participant in the Aberystwyth Conservative Future stated that "the moment religion is mentioned for more than a second" is when he "started getting irritated" while another in the same group claimed to "turn [the dial] down a bit" because "it doesn't play much a part in politics" while another agreed, stating that the "constantly going on about religion" was "just completely pointless (Aberystswyth Conservative Future, 2010)." This theme was later revisited when asked to explain specific points of moment-to-moment data:

Participant 4: They're not, they're not bedfellows, at all. They don't go together, they shouldn't be together, and when anyone...as soon as it gets mentioned, I get aggravated. It annoys me.

Moderator: That's interesting, and I wanted to get into that, because every time he mentioned religion, there was a lot of movement. Who in here dialed down when he talked about religion? [Participant 3, 4 and 1 raised their hands]. Why?

Participant 3: Yeah I mean when you mention religion in politics it causes an exclusion between people who don't have the faith, it should really be...it shouldn't be something that's mentioned too much because as I say it can exclude the people living in the same country who have a different religion

Participant 1: Yeah I just...don't see the point. I mean America was founded on separation of church and state and the state has become the most religious, politically religious, country in the world. So I just don't agree with it, but America is just such a deeply political religious country that you can't make a speech without saying "God Bless America" at the end, can you? [Laughter]

Moderator: So although you didn't like it...

Participant 1: Aw I understand it and I do like the whole togetherness thing, you know, "we all go to church" like that, but you know it's just, for the Brits it doesn't work

Moderator: So it didn't work for you personally or...you said you didn't like it?

Participant 1: Uh...why do I not think it works in Britain?

Moderator: Why didn't it work for you?

Participant 1: Oh work for me? Well like I say the church and state don't mix, yeah. And I think you'll find in Britain, compared to America, it's the same. We don't like to mix the two.

Participant 4: What happened with Blair, as soon as Blair started becoming all...Catholic

Participant 1: Religious, yeah.

Participant 4: ...conversion, that's how he got, well, a lot of bad press.

Participant 2: It's all well and good to have your religion and things, but it's back to what I think about the family and things, you don't...everyone's got their own opinion, and in that respect you don't...try to force it on anyone else? It's something you do in private. It's not anyone else's business (Aberystwyth Conservative Future, 2010.)

This sentiment cut across focus groups as one participant in the Sudanese group expressed a dislike for religion in the civil sphere:

Participant 2: But, one of the negative things I didn't like....I didn't like when he was talking about the church, he mentioned that many times, OK? Not because I hate that but his speech was targeting different people from different religions. So, it would be better not to mention religious things or to talk about one specific religion, and if it was about moral things, I think it would be better than talking about Christian church, or...

Participant 4: Yeah he said he taught me how to be Christian

Participant 2: Yes, I didn't like that.

Moderator: You didn't like that...

Participant 2: And even if he talked positive about Islam, for example, I

would say don't mention these things, you know? Because we all have different religions. Just talk about the goodness for all of us, regardless of all religions (Sudanese, 2010).

Continuing the theme of identification through means of ingratiation, Obama not only condemns Wright's statements but labels them as "profoundly distorted," statements that see "white racism as endemic" and elevate "what is wrong with America," a degrading claim, "above all that we know is right with America," an ingratiating claim. Obama's assertion that this "distorted view" that sees "white racism as endemic" saw a PNAR increase from the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group of 13 from 39 to 52:

Figure 9.27: Aberystyth Conservative Future Group
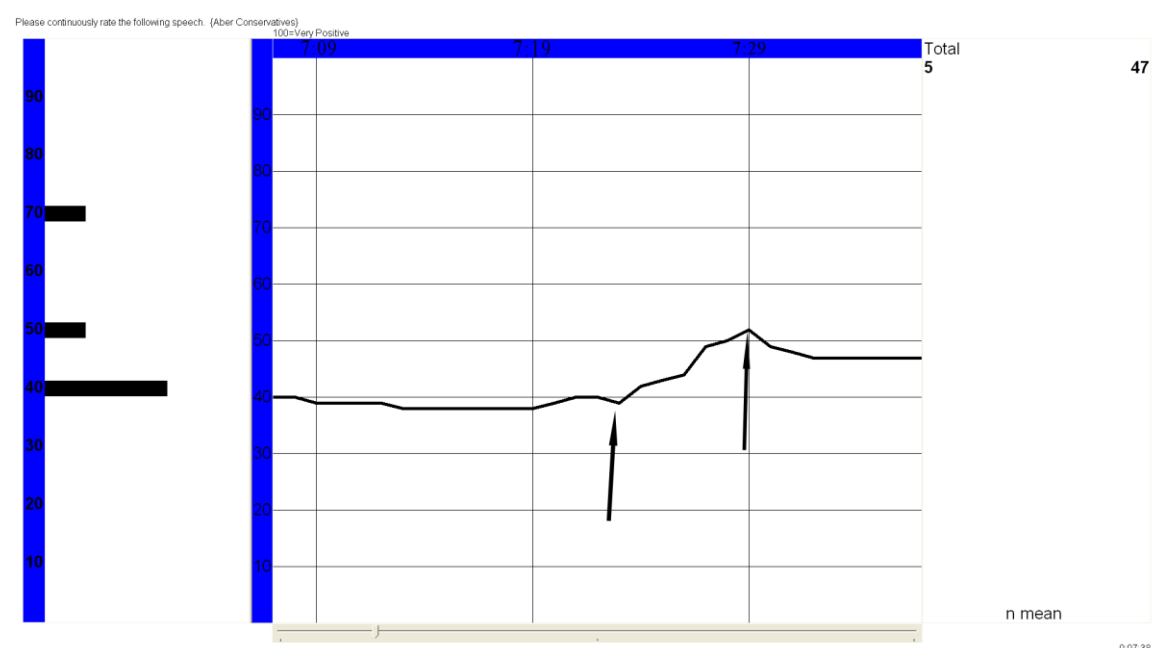
The Portsmouth Labour group saw a long, steady decrease in PNAR of 25 from 82 to 57 over half a minute of speech. It decreases when Obama discusses the "distorted view" of America, decreases when Obama talks about "all that we know is right with America," and decreases again when Obama talks of Israel as a stalwart ally:

117

Figure 9.28 Portsmouth Labour Group

Obama continues in what is a crucial passage in this *teleological* reading:

> As such, Reverend Wright's comments were not only wrong but divisive, divisive at a time when we need unity; racially charged at a time when we need to come together to solve a set of monumental problems – two wars, a terrorist threat, a falling economy, a chronic health care crisis and potentially devastating climate change; problems that are neither black or white or Latino or Asian, but rather problems that confront us all.

This portion of the text saw a PNAR increase from the Portsmouth Labour group and PNAR fluctuations with the Sudanese and Aberystwyth Conservative Future group. As Figure 9.29 demonstrates, the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group saw an initial decrease when Obama began discussing the need to come together to solve America's challenges. As Obama listed America's challenges, the group's PNAR continued to rise until Obama mentioned climate change, where the PNAR decreased significantly and rebounded when Obama tells his audience that these issues "confront us all":

Figure 9.29: Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group
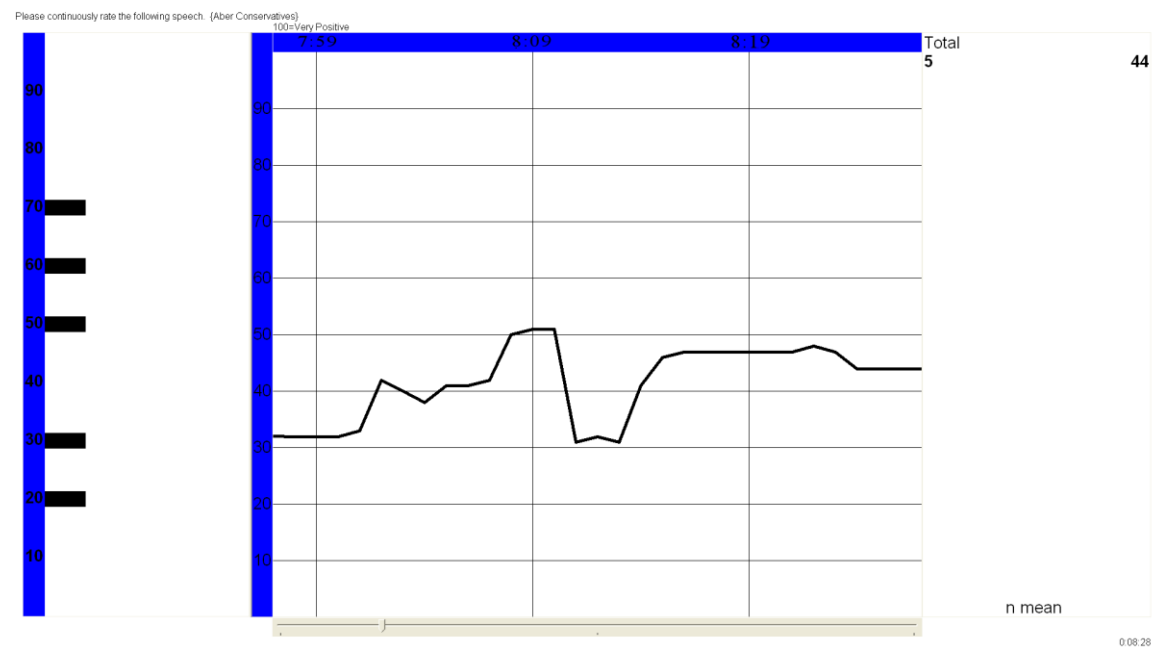
Meanwhile the Sudanese group also fluctuates according to the issues Obama references, decreasing on "terrorist threat" but also increasing on the unifying appeal that these challenges "confront us all":

Figure 9.30: Sudanese Group
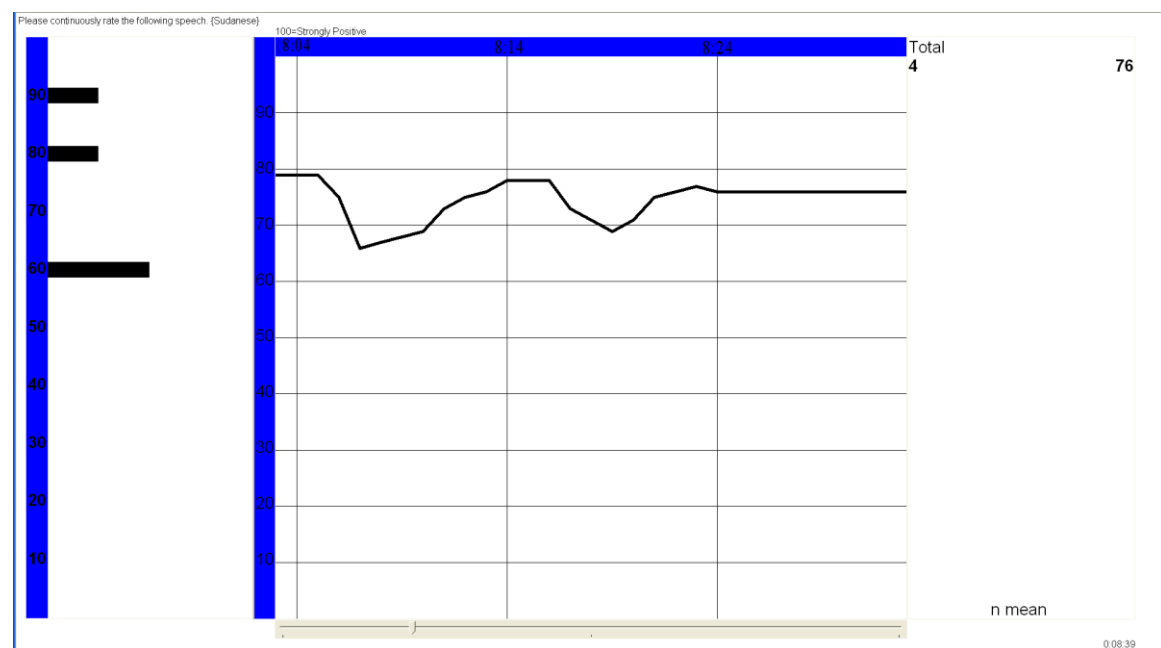
Rhetorically, Obama calls for unity just as the Founders overcame difference to write the Constitution; Obama's strategy of identification is also to predicate action. The

reason "we" need to "come together" is "to solve a set of monumental problems" as he lists several examples to support his point. The unstated premise of this truncated argument is that "black or white or Latino or Asian" are divided through the "purely racial lens," however, Obama links them together both in form and content: the polysyndetonic structure links each race with an "or," and, in terms of content, Obama finds each race identified through a set of common "American" challenges. At least one participant in the Aberystwyth Conservative Future admitted to turning their dial up during this portion of the speech:

> *Participant 5*: And I cranked it back up when he started talking about togetherness or something like that
> *Participant 1*: Yeah...
> *Moderator*: And that's something that appealed to you?
> *Participant 1*: Yeah...
> *Moderator*: What was the appeal there?
> *Participant 1*: Um just like you know um [inaudible] about Asians, blacks, whites, where it's...we're the United States of America. There no black America there is no white America, it's the United States of America, you know, that sort of thing (Aberystwyth Conservative Future, 2010).

Evidently, this portion of the text is polysemic, however, as the same participant (Participant 5) would later denigrate Obama's attempts to build unity:

> *Participant 5*: I didn't mind him talking about race as such but I didn't like it when he was trying to...to make it negative, where he was talking about Dr. Wright like he's got something to hide. Then he was talking about "we're all in this together" you know, racially, and I thought yeah I don't mind that, but not when he was saying "blacks, whites, Hispanics"...
> *Participant 2*: Mmm...
> *Participant 5*: It was like he was trying to divide people (Aberystwyth Conservative Future, 2010)

Another participant of that same group voiced identification less with Obama's ability to appeal to unity of disparate groups of people but to the policies he was offering and his views of America, while another drew on his personal experiences in the United States:

> *Participant 4*: Opposite to that, with the reforms, I went up with the reforms because I'm very for a much more fairer...America strikes me as a very unfair nation.
> *Moderator*: In what way?

> *Participant 4*: Well health care is the one that always...They decided that if you're not rich you die, so any, so I support his idea of reforming it...
> *Moderator*: So when he talked about health care, you cranked it up?
> *Participant 4*: Yeah...
> *Moderator*: Because you're in favor of that reform...
> *Participant 4*: Yes because I feel America is a very, very, very, very unfair nation and anyone who tries to change that...
> *Moderator*: They're good in your book...
> *Participant 4*: Is good, yeah.
> *Participant 3:* But I went up when he was on about the reform, like education especially, that's one of the most important thing any politician can do is improve the education system as much they can in order to um, for a nation to progress. And then like health care because when I was in America, in New York our lecturers was saying that so many people are on the street just because they've got into a cycle and if there was some sort of fairer health system homelessness might go down a bit in America...that's it (Aberystwyth Conservative Future, 2010).

Two participants in the Portsmouth Labour group saw themselves, and the policies outlined by Obama in this speech, as "socialist" (Portsmouth Labour, 2010). While assigning little meaning to the policies Obama outlines, an additional Portsmouth Labour group member, upon being asked where he felt most positive towards the speech, replied:

> *Participant 6*: Uh obviously the things that stood out are the things he was campaigning for, for equality for all, on health, education and employment. But it's for a complementary thing to the uh white middle class, uh not in competition with, the more people that are educated in America and can go forward through to employment, the better the American economy is going to do (ibid).

After the strong and explicit invitation for various races to see themselves as consubstantial through a common set of challenges, Obama moves back to the personal. "Given my background, my politics, and my professed values and ideals, there will no doubt be those for whom my statements of condemnation are not enough." In terms of the speech's internal movement, Obama never actually ceases the *anthypophora* and the appeal of identification is a crucial subpoint. This time, however, Obama uses *ethos* as a rhetorical instrument, an elevated standard by which the public might judge him. These questions anticipate, or perhaps directly answer, the charge that "it's fine to condemn Wright once he is a net negative for your campaign, but why didn't you do it twenty years ago?"

To answer this question, Obama moves to set out to do what much of the literature described Obama as wanting to do: contextualize Wright (Plouffe, 2009: 211; Ballz and Johnson, 2009: 201-202). In fact, Obama's contextualization of Wright manifests itself in three ways throughout the speech: Wright is contextualized as a person, Obama's relationship with Wright is contextualized, and Wright is placed in the larger context an overarching African-American historical narrative. Obama seeks to not only name Wright's substance, as this would not be enough in a presidential campaign; the speech may have been a "teaching moment" but Obama needed to neutralize the Wright controversy to pursue an effective electoral strategy. Simply put, Obama needed to shift seamlessly from the "identifying of" Wright in such a way that "Obama" could "identify with" his constituted second persona, "Americans."

In so doing, Obama begins with a hypothetical "if, then" proposition, arguing from the *topoi* of cause and effect and creates a sense of falsity around what "commentators" have said about Wright:

> I confess that if all that I knew of Reverend Wright were the snippets of those sermons that have run in an endless loop on the television and *YouTube*, or if Trinity United Church of Christ conformed to the caricatures being peddled by some commentators, there is no doubt that I would react in much the same way. But the truth is, that isn't all I know of the man.

Obama supports his conclusion with several contextualizing examples of Wright's past. In contextualizing Wright, Obama surrounds him with qualities that, should the auditor deem them admirable, could potentially be a way of neutralizing Wright's soundbites. He does so by describing what Wright is and what he does. The rhetorical term *antanagoge* is the most fitting for the verbal action Obama takes here: while sometimes described as outright "spin," Lanham describes the argumentative strategy as "balancing an unfavourable aspect with a favourable one (Lanham, 1991: 191)." During Obama's building up of Wright with what might be labeled "admirable" qualities, the Sudanese group's PNAR increased by 16 from 66 to 82:

Figure 9.31: Sudanese Group
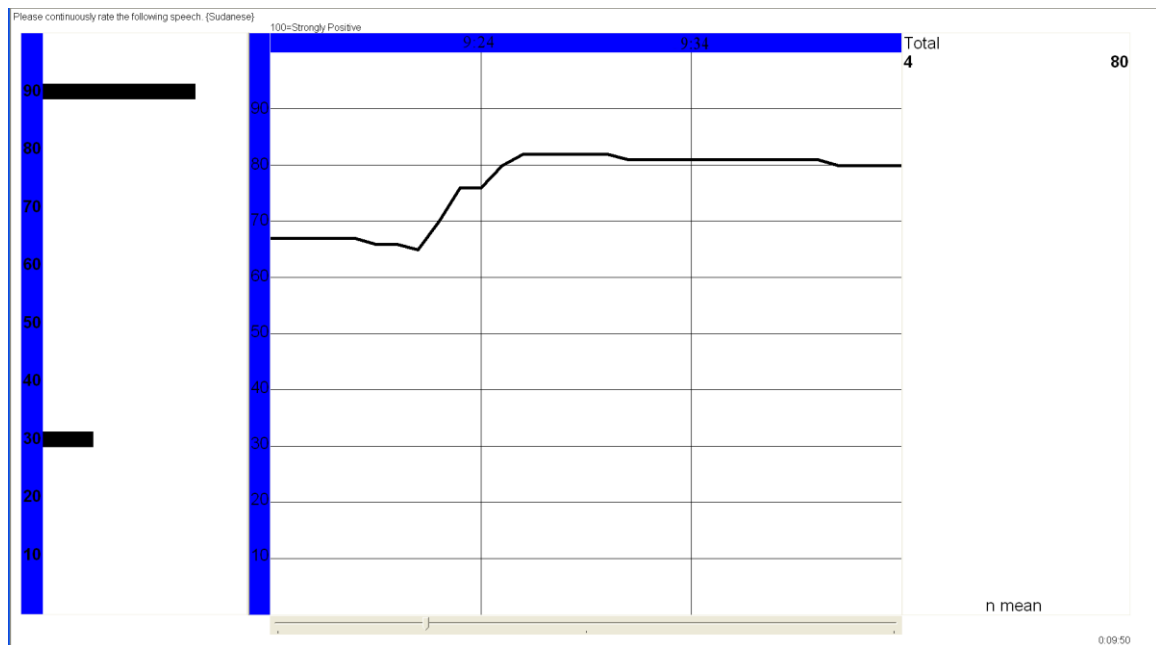
The Aberystwyth Conservative Future group also saw a PNAR increase during this portion of the speech of 12 from 32 to 44 before dropping 8 from 44 to 36 (as shown by the third and fourth arrows in Figure 9.32) when Obama asserts that Wright is doing "God's work here on Earth":

Figure 9.32: Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group
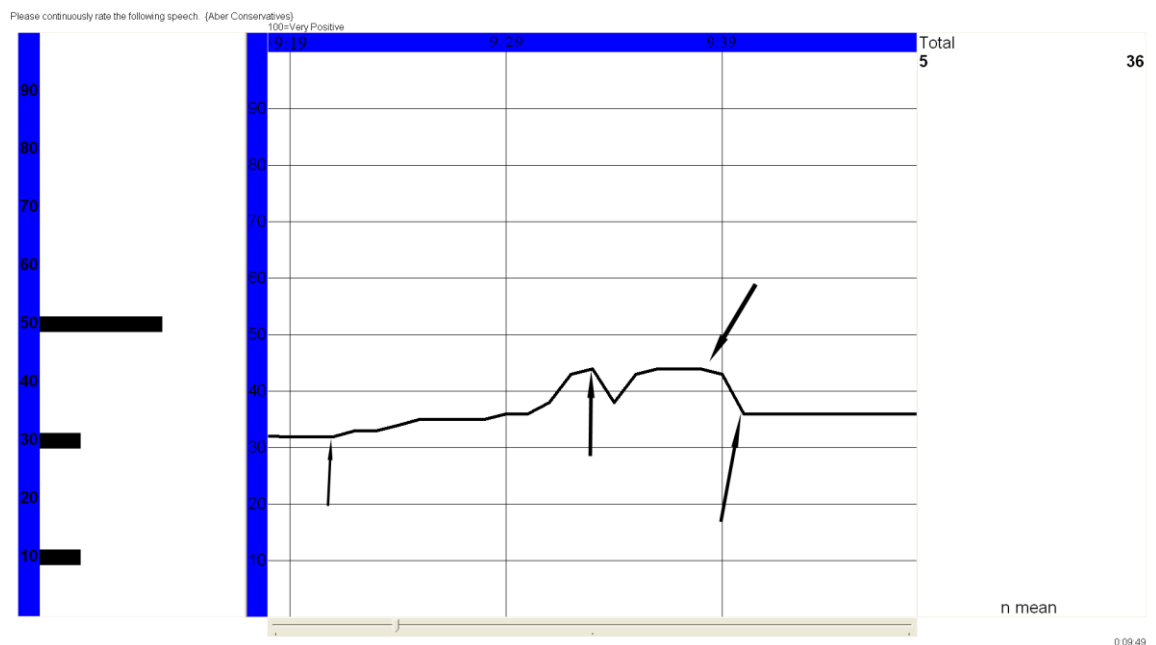
At least one participant in the Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group grew tired of Obama's focus on Wright. Indeed, he was unfamiliar with the controversy generally:

> *Participant 5*: He kept bangin' on about Dr. Wright, who is Dr. Wright? If Dr. Wright wants to stand, he can stand, I'm just sayin. You know, it's like Jesse Jackson stood in 1984 as a presidential candidate, if Dr. Wright [inaudible] he'd stand himself.
> *Moderator*: Does anyone remember the Jeremiah Wright thing, even vaguely? [Participant 1 and 3 raised their hands]
> *Participant 4*: I remember him, I don't remember what he said...
> *Participant 1*: [In Jeremiah Wright voice] "God bless America, God damn America!] [laughter]
> *Moderator*: Yep, you got it. [Laughter]
> *Participant 1*: And then the Republicans just kept running that ad, didn't they? Again and again.

One participant in the Portsmouth Labour group felt similarly, but probably for different reasons. He felt that "[Obama] needed to do [discuss Wright] in quite a lot of detail to convince and explain to people why he'd said those things and why Obama...but for me that wasn't, you know, particularly engaging because, you know from my point of view he didn't need to do that to that extent because it didn't worry me like it obviously worried a lot of Americans. So that was the least positive bit for me (Portsmouth Labour, 2010)."

Textually, there is tension between this passage of praise being heaped upon Wright and Obama's previous condemnation of Wright's statements, but Obama crystallizes this tension through a passage from his book *Dreams from My Father*. In the passage Obama continues the *martyiria* by arguing from personal experience, and from his book, the word "hope" is a shift from the particular to the universal, a way for Obama and the black church to identify with the transhistorical. For Obama, "hope" is the linguistic vehicle for various backgrounds to unite under in directional consubstantiality, past and present. This story is also an indicative and illuminating example of Kenneth Burke's ladder of terminology (see Burke's poem of the Presbyterian): Obama considers himself "black" and "more than black," his trials and triumphs became

> "at once unique and universal [to his/our identity]. [Their] stories of survival, and freedom and hope – became our story, my story."

The passage from Obama's book *Dreams from My Father* received a steady PNAR increase from the Aberystwyth Conservative Group of 10 from 30 to 40:

Figure 9.33: Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group
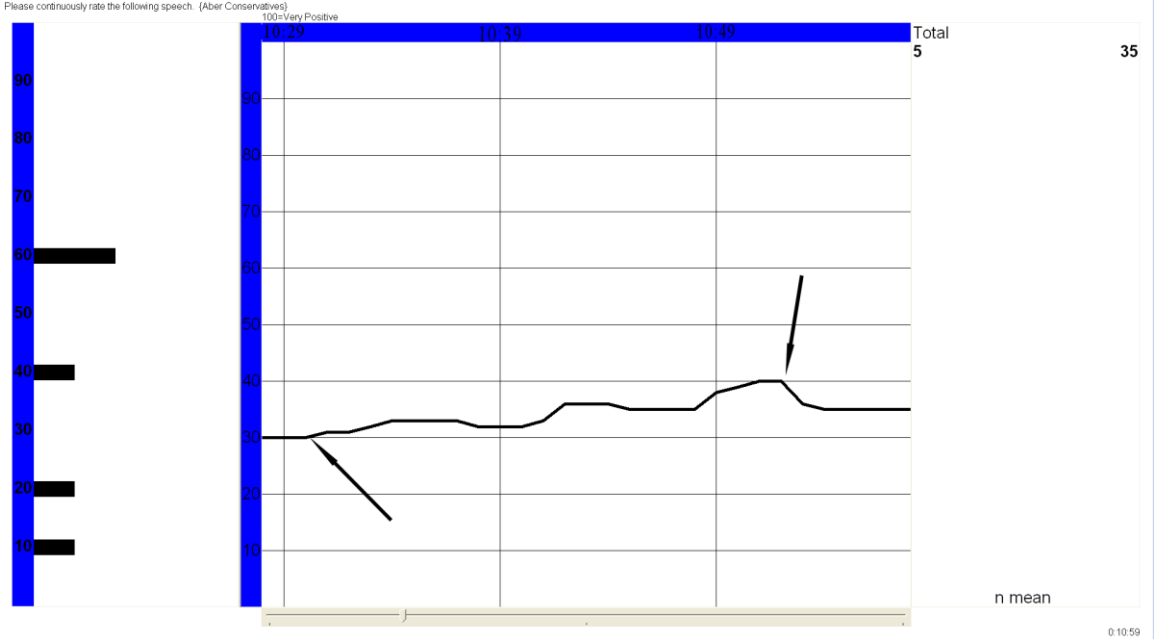
Moreover, the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group saw an additional 10 point increase from 35 to 45 upon Obama's comment that he and his church could become "black and more than black" as shown by the first two arrows of Figure 9.34:

Figure 9.34: Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group
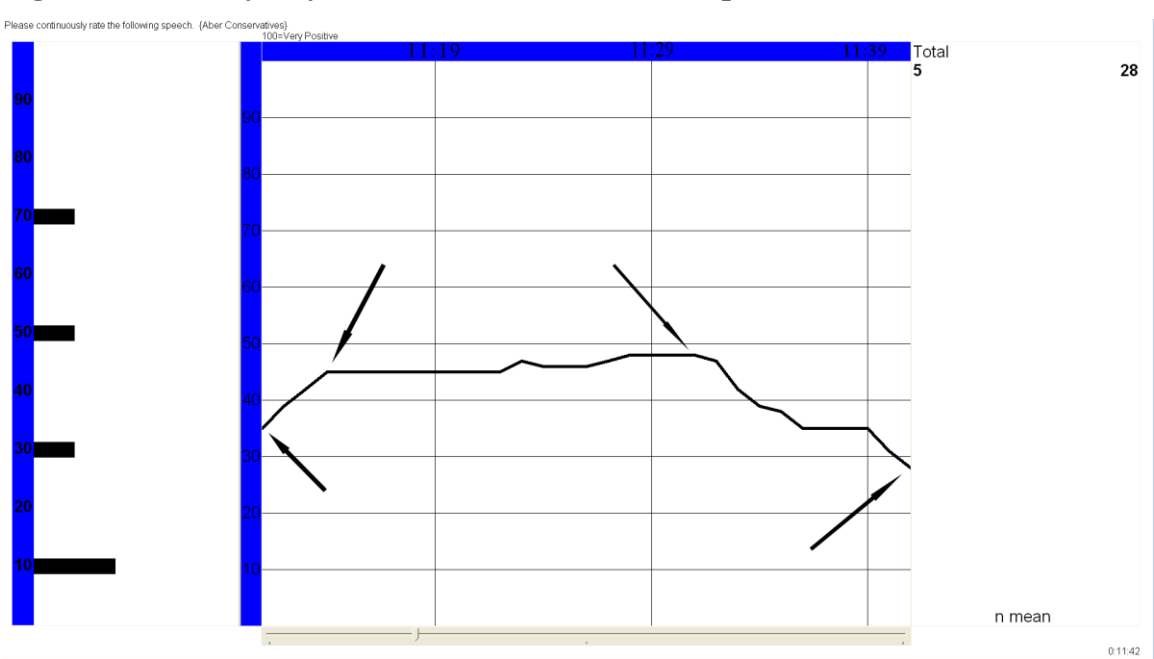
This illuminates the communicative relationship of *ethos* perfectly. In fact, the whole passage from *Dreams from My Father* does. Clearly, Obama is telling us he identified with these stories and, moreover, it is possible for black and white audiences to overcome the division of familial substance, "where one comes from," and identify with futuristic aspirations of "hope," and "survival" and "progress," ideographs grounded in the purpose of the Constitution. Obama uses this excerpt from his book, and several other examples, to support his larger contention about the paradoxical and seemingly contradictory nature of his experience at Trinity and more broadly the identity of the black church in America:

> That has been my experience at Trinity. Like other predominantly black churches across the country, Trinity embodies the black community in its entirety – the doctor and the welfare mom, the model student and the former gang-banger. The church contains in full the kindness and cruelty, the fierce intelligence and the shocking ignorance, the struggles and successes, the love and yes, the bitterness and bias that make up the black experience in America.

Formally, Obama sets up a parallel structure of the passage through antithesis, inviting the auditor to swing back and forth between opposite examples of the characteristics that embody the black church. As has been documented by rhetorical theorists such as Max Atkinson and Kenneth Burke, there is persuasive power in the form of lists, regardless of content. And while Atkinson acknowledges that the "list of three" can most easily evoke audience applause, Burke suggests that the formal appeal can often precipitate identification. As Obama moves from example to example, the content changes but the form remains consistent and, Burke argues, the audience would find elation in participating in the development of the series thus continuing the theme of ingratiation (Burke, 1966; Burke, 1961; Atkinson, 1984). As the previous analysis of focus group data and religion indicated, whatever pleasure gained from the development of a series might be gained can be tempered with an oppositional reading of the appeal. As second pair of arrows in Figure 9.34 indicates, the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group saw a PNAR decrease once Obama applied his book's passage to Trinity United Methodist Church. Indeed, several members of the Aberystwyth Conservative Future saw Obama's discussion of black churches in America as an attempt to *divide*, not *unite* various ethnic audiences:

> *Participant 5*: I actually didn't mind him talking about religion, it's when he started to try to define people like black churches, white churches, it's like

he's got, he wants to make a point of it. It doesn't matter if you're white, black, brown, Asian, we're all as one as far as I'm concerned. And I don't mind when he was talking about faith and religion in a positive way but when you start talking about black churches, white churches sort of thing, I thought oh no, oh no he's going down a slippery slope and then he got this Dr. Wright and I'm like I don't want to hear about Dr. Wright I want to hear about you, not about Dr. Wright...

Participant 2: He seemed to sort of be putting people in the sort of, in the separate groups and things, going on about black churches and white churches and things. And it just sort of ...well if you're talking to us about integration and things, surely it's best to talk about churches of mixed race where race is irrelevant rather than reinforcing the idea that black and whites should go to separate churches and things...

Participant 5: I tend to agree...

Participant 2: It just seemed a bit backwards in that respect...

Participant 5: Yeah...

Moderator: And then when he started talking about integration, did it improve for you or was it already kind of...already...

Participant 2: I think it was just already so far down in that respect. Just switched off really. It just got to the point where he was going on so much, just sort of...didn't listen (Aberystwyth Conservative Future, 2010).

Another participant in the Cardiff Council group agreed that religion and politics do not mix, however, felt positive in the way Obama framed this portion of the speech:

Participant 3: I liked the bit, for many reasons I find it difficult when religion gets brought into politics, which I'm not sure they are two related things, and I always question the need to integrate those two things. Um but I liked the bit where he said at church we accept everybody, there is anger in the church and that's reflective of society, it's true and it's honest there is anger everywhere, there are different emotions everywhere and I think that was a good way to connect talking about corporate accountability and self-responsibility I think is important (Cardiff Council, 2010).

As the first two arrows of Figure 9.35 demonstrate, the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group increased steadily by 19 points from 31 to 51 with this portion of the text:

Figure 9.35: Aberystyth Conservative Future Group
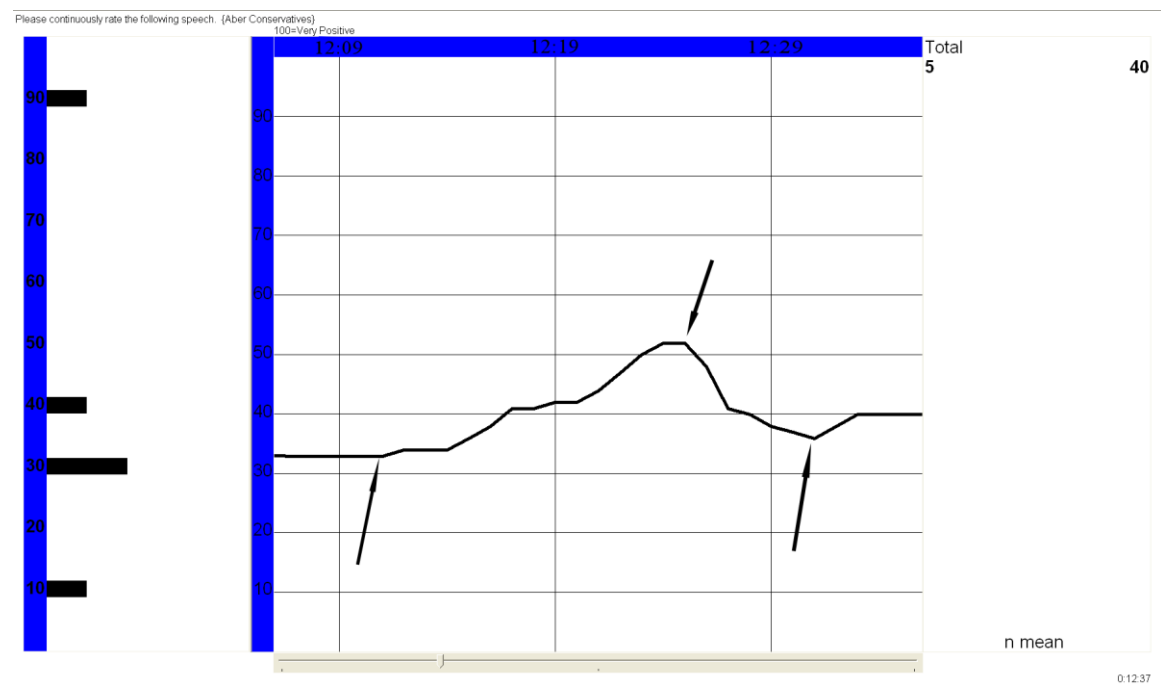
Figure 9.36: Portsmouth Labour Group
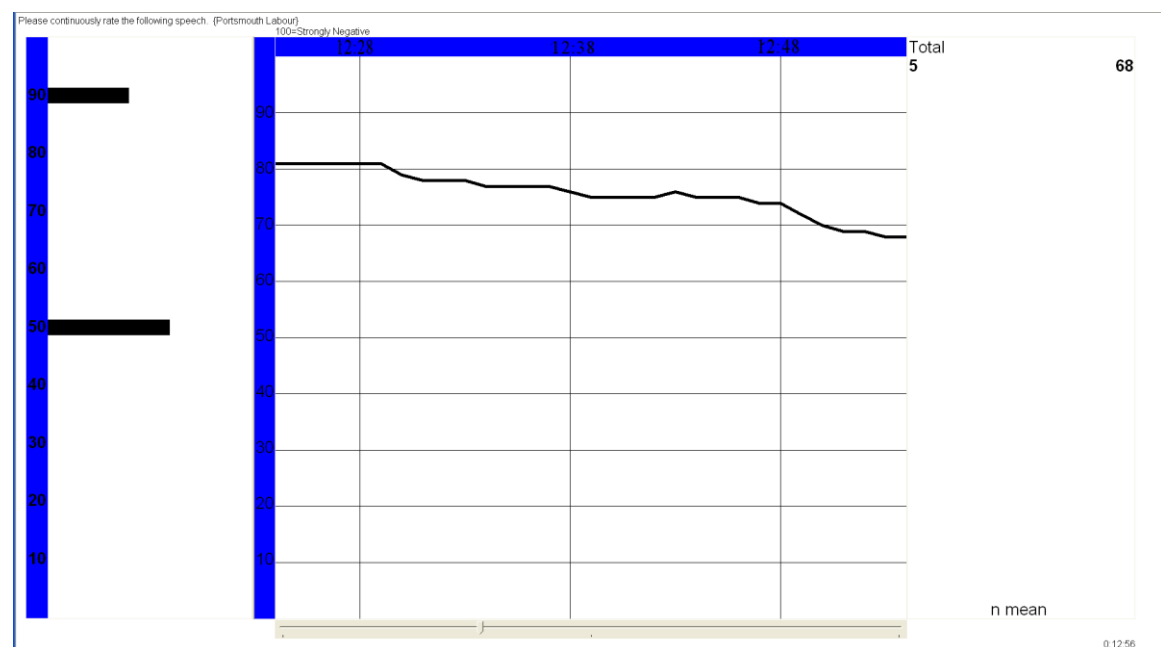
Obama's constitution of the black church is a crucial premise in Obama's explanation and contextualization of Wright as a person as well as Obama's relationship with him. As a proposition it may or not be true, but those that buy into this constitutive appeal may find themselves more understanding and accepting of Wright. As Obama moves to the next proposition, he asks his auditor to see Wright as a synecdoche of the black

church as the embodiment of the black church's contradictions. With Wright's "negative" comments already on full display in public discourse, Obama seeks to balance "God damn America!" with several examples of Wright's "positive," and more "acceptable" qualities serving as data to the claim that Wright, like the black church, is more complex than emerging descriptions from outside the Obama campaign:

> As imperfect as he may be, he has been like family to me. He strengthened my faith, officiated my wedding, and baptized my children. Not once in my conversations with him have I heard him talk about any ethnic group in derogatory terms, or treat whites with whom he interacted with anything but courtesy and respect.

One participant in the Portsmouth Labour group agreed with the way Obama handled the Wright controversy:

> *Participant 4*: I mean, if he had come out and sort of had tried to say that he didn't you know want anything to do with this guy who's you know married him and baptized his kids he would have been hung out by the...hung out by people because of that because it would have come across as untrue (Portsmouth Labour, 2010).

Following the temporal movement of the speech, Obama moves to build a positive set of associations around Wright that sets up the next premise: he won't disown Wright. Each example would make it that much more difficult to disown or disapprove of Wright or Obama for any of Obama's auditors who find these examples "praiseworthy," "just," or "admirable." Interestingly, as Obama contextualizes Wright into a larger community, he temporarily drops discussion about the black church and instead substitutes it with the black community, employing the power of *ad populum* to his argument. If we can assume, only briefly participating in audience conjecture, that these values provide a normative rhetorical function in the text for certain segments of the American voting public Obama needed to win back, the moment-to-moment data show a clear occurrence of polyvalence with two of the British focus groups. Both religion and the discussion of Wright, a man of little immediate value to several participants, saw PNAR decreases with the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group (indicated by the second set of arrows in Figure 9.34, nor the Portsmouth Labour group, which decreased 13 points from 81 to 68:

Figure 9.37: Portsmouth Labour Group
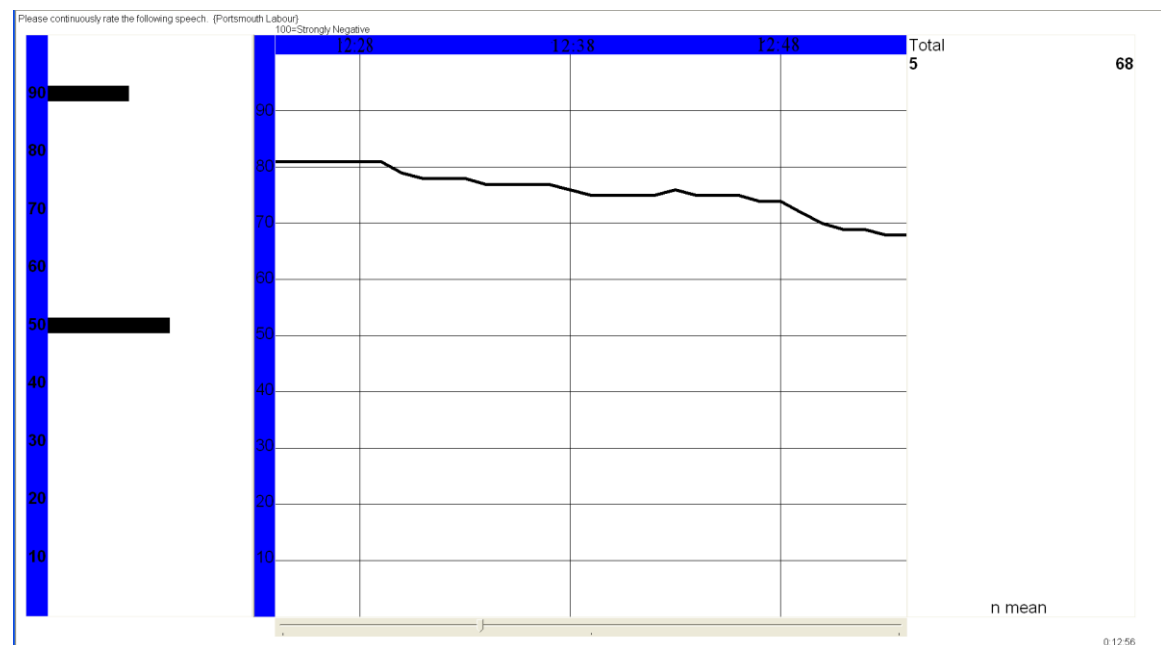
Rhetorically, Obama "cannot" disown Wright; to do so would be like disowning the black community, an unlikely and electorally unwise scenario. One participant expressed that he felt "very positive" towards this moment of the speech (Portsmouth Labour, 2010). Obama moves from this comparison of unlikely action to an even more unlikely course of action: disowning his white grandmother. Obama cites his seemingly antithetical conclusion first and then supports it with antithetical contextualizing examples:

> I can no more disown him than I can my white grandmother – a woman who helped raise me, a woman who sacrificed again and again for me, a woman who loves me as much as she loves anything in this world, but a woman who once confessed her fear of black men who passed by her on the street, and who on more than one occasion has uttered racial or ethnic stereotypes that made me cringe.

Obama finds his white grandmother and black pastor identified insofar as they cannot be completely divided through the "racial lens." Obama acknowledges that there is ambiguity in identity and that line of closure is drawn in various places by Wright, the black and white community, "commentators," his grandmother, and now him. Obama invites us to transcend with him these immediate differences and see each case as parallel. In Obama's worldview, boiling identity down to "the racial lens" leaves big contradictions and paradoxes not easily resolved. "These people," Obama tells us,

referring to the black community, Reverend Wright, and his white grandmother, "are a part of me." Although the point has already been made in different ways, Obama places these three identities in his own familial substance, Obama tells us that they are also "a part of America, this country that I love." Ending on a note of ingratiating patriotism, Obama would have his auditor see no distinction between each of these identities; to accept one is to accept them all, by "transcending" from black and white to "American," and placing Wright in this context, Obama provides an avenue for his American auditor to share in the praise of Wright as an American. This is rhetorically advantageous for those "commentators" and political opponents who would seek to create a dividing line between "America," and "traditional" American values on one side with Wright, and Obama by association, on the other. It is worth mentioning that there are paradoxes and ambiguities in an "American" vocabulary also but for Obama this terminology as an "ultimate" order is the preferable end of transcendence as the term links back to the unfinished business of the Constitution, which necessitates social action and the need to join the Obama Coalition.

With the communicative relationship between communities and individuals in question established, Obama moves to anticipate criticism that the entire speech is designed to "justify or excuse comments that are simply inexcusable," a statement that saw a 7 point PNAR increase from the Aberystwyth Conservative Group but a PNAR decrease with the Sudanese group of 8 from 82 to 74. He denies attempting to justify these comments, but clearly this is not enough in itself. "I suppose the politically safe thing would be to move on from this episode and just hope that it fades into the woodwork." This is a man inviting his auditor to see him as leveling with his audience. It signifies "honesty" and "straight talk," a man willing to take a political risk to speak the truth, thus building his *ethos*. Obama is inviting us to pursue a particular course of action, as Terrill says, to utilize a particular vocabulary with which to speak about race in America (2009). First, Obama draws upon a topic long recognized by rhetorical theorists which can be found in Aristotle's treatise. In deliberation, a frequent argument used is "in general, what is harder is better than what is easier (1991: 97)." For Obama, the easy thing to do would be to "simplify and stereotype" through the racial lens, allowing the racial stalemate to continue. He will not take this course of action, and asks his audience to follow suit. In fact, he argues

from the consequences of taking the easy route: such a choice "would be making the same mistake that Reverend Wright made in his offending sermons about America."

iii. Re-Constituting an "American Audience"

Obama shifts to the collective "we" and asserts the central idea of what is to continue throughout the rest of the speech: the need to overcome racial division and unite under the need to address the nation's challenges. Obama believes his auditor would be making a mistake to view his candidacy through the "racial lens," to see racial identities in America as essentially divided. To transcend, however, Obama needs a destination, a new term or a new direction to accompany his invitation. This starts by firmly addressing race. And while Obama is careful not to undermine the "positive" values he has previously attributed to Wright, he warns his audience that to ignore the issue of race "we would be making the same mistake that Reverend Wright made in his offending sermons about America -- to simplify and stereotype and amplify the negative to the point that it distorts reality." Obama immediately follows with what that reality is:

> The fact is that the comments that have been made and the issues that have surfaced over the last few weeks reflect the complexities of race in this country that we've never really worked through - a part of our union that we have yet to perfect.

In the world as Obama sees it, simplification and stereotyping, what Wright and commentators have done can be addressed by solving the unfinished business of the Constitution and yielding to the ideals of the Founders. Once Obama establishes that the first step to transcendence is by addressing the issue of race in its complexity, and by grounding this transcendence in a Constitutional context, Obama continues the metaphor of identification and division through familiar terms:

> [If] we walk away now, if we simply retreat into our respective corners, we will never be able to come together and solve challenges like health care, or education, or the need to find good jobs for every American.

Division occurs through "retreating into our respective corners" and identification occurs through "coming together." But to what end? Obama provides a glimpse of the new "Other" he is at pains to create for the rest of the speech: challenges (Obama offers several examples) facing each race are the substance that Obama finds in his

survey of each identity, culminating in Obama's "ultimate" term, the "American." Instead of Wright becoming a threat to torpedo his campaign, Obama reframes the debate to one where Wright's comments provide a unique opportunity for the Union to be put on the path towards "A More Perfect Union." Obama invites various perspectives to transcend the differences of their respective corners and unite under a new terminology, the "Obama coalition" which synecdochially represented by the constituted "American" to solve challenges that face "us." The applause that came at the end of "every American" saw a 7 point PNAR increase from the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group and a 9 point PNAR increase from the Portsmouth Labour group from 66 to 75:

Figure 9.38: Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group
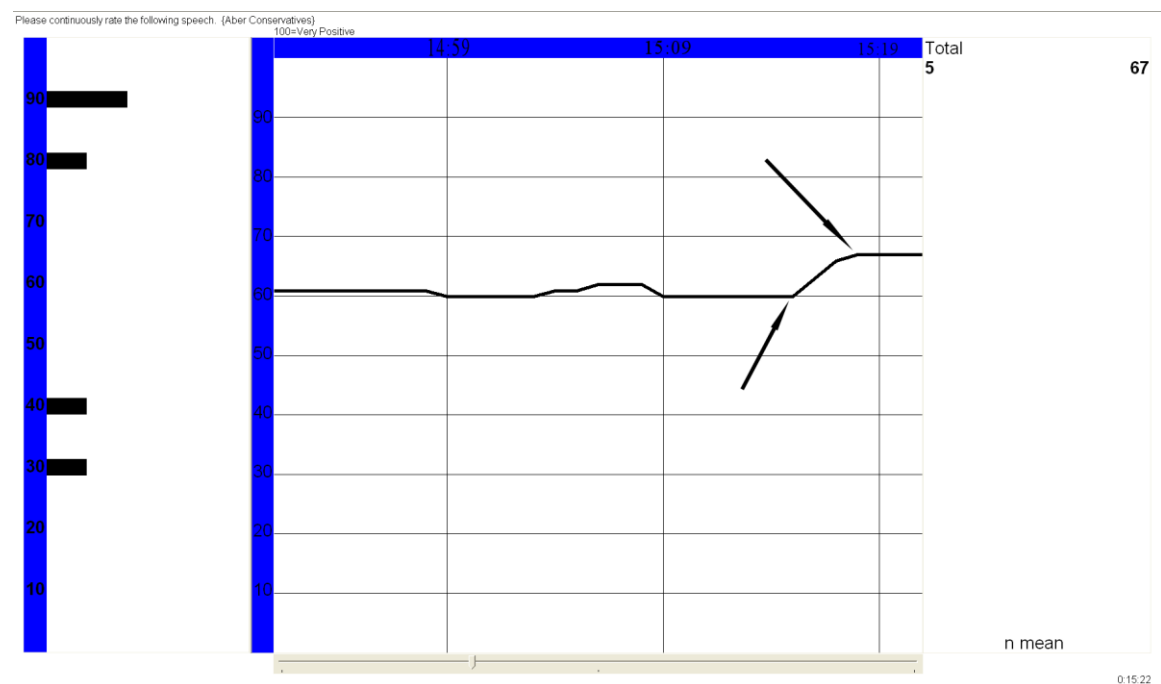
Figure 9.39: Portsmouth Labour Group
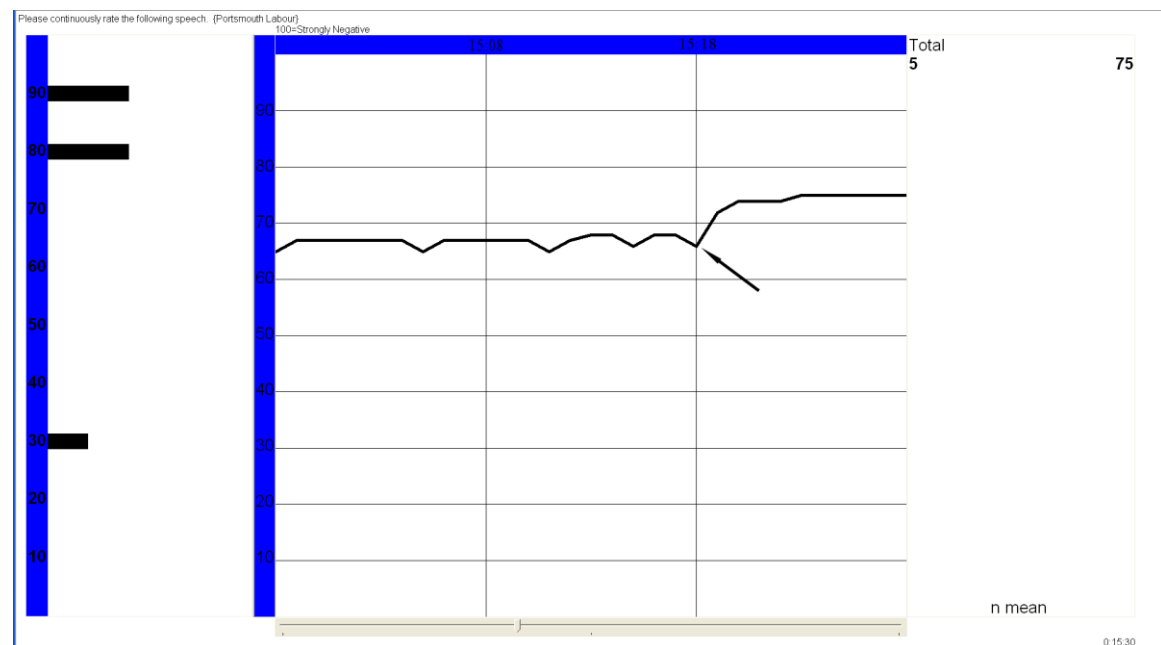
The fact that each challenge Obama cites can only be addressed by coming together is crucial to the speech as it unfolds. "This reality," Obama tells us as he attempts to demonstrate how misplaced anger has been unable to address "our" common challenges, requires "a reminder of how we arrived at this point." Obama has already contextualized and complicated the background of Wright and the black community. In form, Obama continues his strategy of contextualization. In content, he shifts from constituting intrinsic identity to extrinsic historical and socio-economic considerations, both under the heading of "substance." The sentence grows directly from the previous, to understand the complexities of race and the need to redirect the anger that emerges, we need to look at racial context, which is as much a part of the complexities and ambiguities of racial substance as the intrinsic identifications of Obama, Wright, and his white grandmother.

Just as Obama moves from proposition to proposition and premise to premise as his speech unfolds in real time, each new passage builds on the previous, so too does Obama invite his auditor to see the present "racial stalemate" as a direct result of the past in historical time. Obama invokes a quotation from William Faulkner, noting that "the past isn't dead and buried. In fact, it isn't even past." He offers two examples to support the connection between current disparities and previous injustices: segregated schools as inferior schools and "legalized discrimination," which Obama then

subdivides into a long list of racial grievances. These examples serve a dual purpose: first to lend weight to and illuminate his contention that the black community was discriminated against, but a closer look reveals a subtle argument with each example building upon the previous. Each example Obama cites of "legalized discrimination" meant black families could not amass wealth. An inability to amass wealth is a reason there are pockets of poverty today. In these pockets is a lack of economic opportunity, which has led to the erosion of the black family. And in these poverty pockets the lack of basic services "created a cycle of violence, blight and neglect that continue to haunt us." Obama is imploring the auditor to see this cycle in context, rather than Wright's statements in isolation.

In terms of the audience response to this history Obama constructs, the Portsmouth Labour group was overwhelmingly positive (+24 from 68 to 92; Aberystwyth Conservative Future +6 from 64 to 70) in response to Obama's assertion that segregated schools "were and are inferior schools" and the ensuing applause:

Figure 9.40: Portsmouth Labour Group
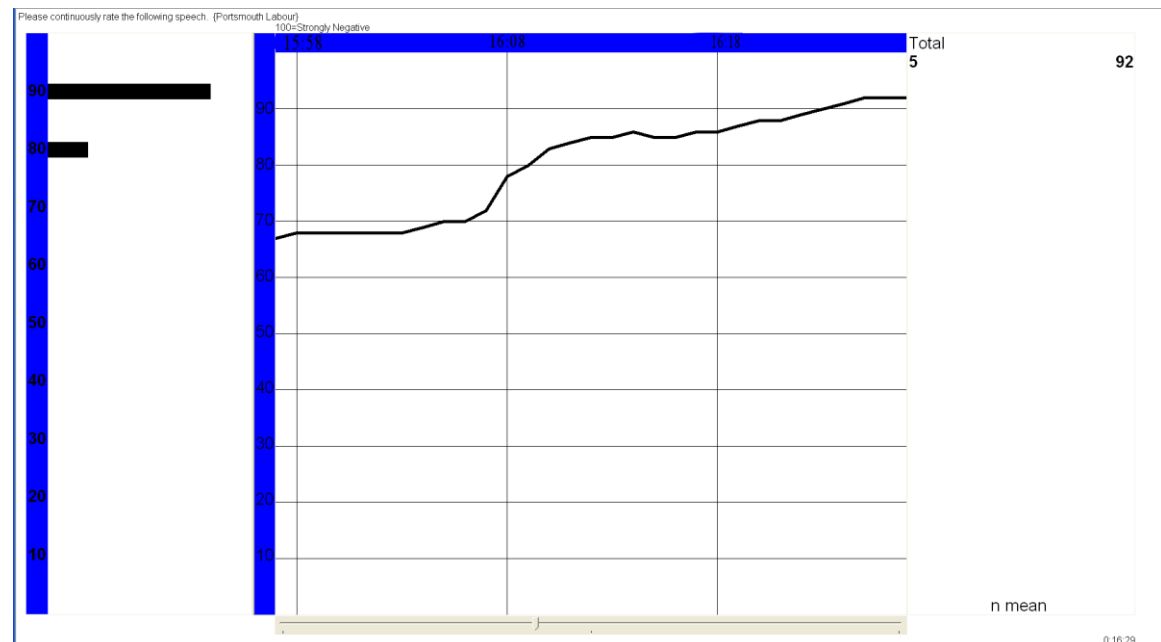
As Figure 9.41 illustrates, the Sudanese group initially decreased in PNAR as Obama began to talk about the need to trace America's history of racial injustice (-13 from 79 to 66), but increased (+14 from 66 to 80) when he specifically mentions segregation in America's schools and the applause after:

135

Figure 9.41: Sudanese Group
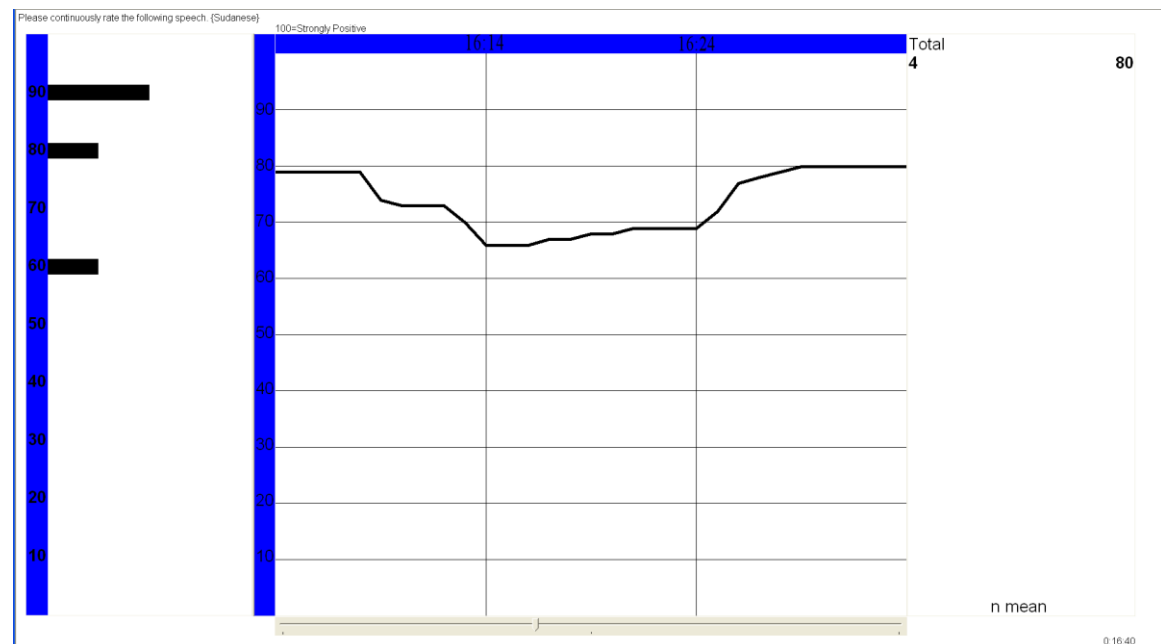
Obama must be careful in his attempts to cite previous racial injustices in America. That is, Obama would find it hard to identify with a predominately white audience by pulling America's racial skeletons out of the closet in which the white audience is the perpetrator. Indeed, one white female participant in the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group expressed a dislike for this:

> *Moderator*: Sounds like you got a little bored by it
> *Participant 2*: I did to start off with, 'cause it's like fair enough you talk about the pain and things but then you get on with what you're going to do. It wasn't until the last bit that he started talking about anything substantial. Before that it all just seemed a bit "I'm black, you're white, we've had such a bad past, the whites have done a bad thing, it's all...it's just...he seemed to be poncing about a bit. Shut up and get on with it.
> *Moderator*: OK...
> *Participant 2*: That's what I thought (Aberystwyth Conservative Future, 2010).

In terms of identification, perhaps this is why Obama has gone to great lengths to ingratiate the "American" audience he is addressing. While this passage viewed in isolation may very well perpetuate the "racial lens" Obama is seeking to move beyond, Obama continues his nuanced contextualization. Moreover, this history of race and socio-economic status in America continues to serve as a contextualizing

tool for Wright. This history of racial discrimination that Obama constructs saw a steady 20 point PNAR increase from 71 to 91 with the Sudanese focus group:

Figure 9.42: Sudanese Group
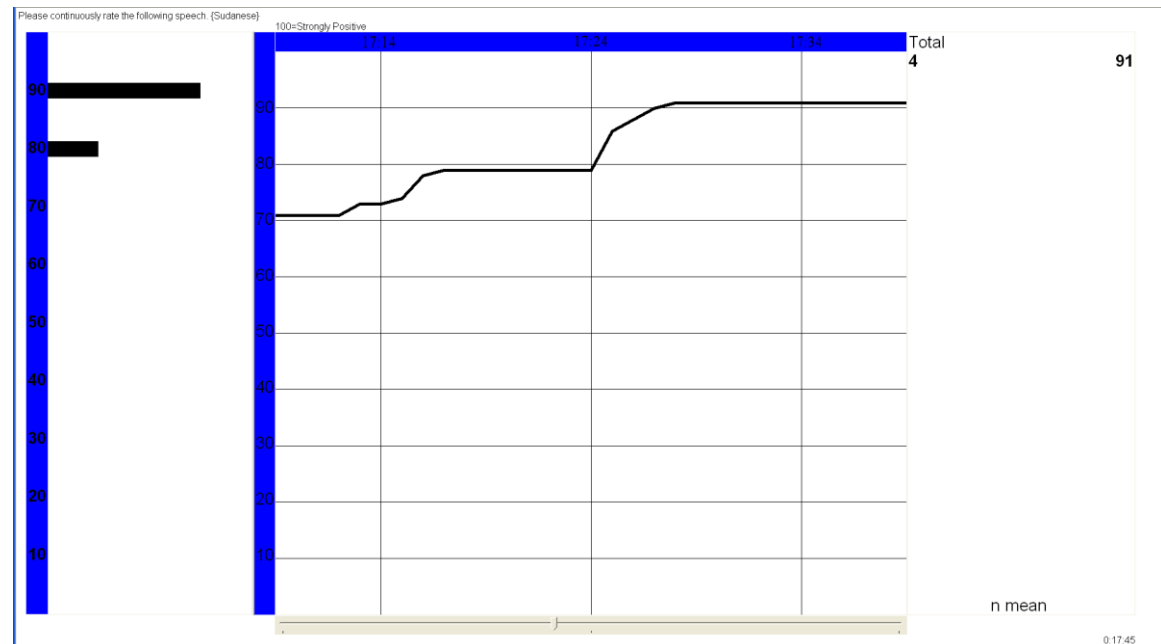
By contextualizing America's tortured racial past, Obama walks the tight rope of "justifying" Wright's comments and giving context and motivation to what the public were seeing of Wright. By systematically neutralizing Wright's comments, Obama systematically defends and builds upon his own *ethos* having not disassociated from Wright. As it stood when Obama took the stage, "America" could not be consubstantial with "Jeremiah Wright" as seen on TV, but if the substance changes, that is, if the context changes, then consubstantiation is possible.

Having set the scene, Obama again references Wright, placing him in the "late fifties and early sixties." And, having already created a synecdochal relationship between Wright and the black community, Obama uses both terms with ease as identities emerging from and shaped by this context, complicating associations between Obama and Wright as well as his comments. This period in which "Reverend Wright and other African-Americans of his generation grew up" was "a time when segregation was still the law of the land and opportunity was systematically constricted." Yielding to what might be referred to as the "American love of the underdog," Obama calls "remarkable" what has been seen in American national mythology and folklore:

overcoming the odds to succeed despite obstacles; "when the going gets tough, the tough gets going," and consubstantiation would occur for any auditor who admires this as a job well done. Obama makes this more explicit through referencing the American Dream, continuing the theme of holding "American" ideals up as an ingratiating standard. Discrimination kept many from achieving the American Dream, Obama tells us, and "[that] legacy of defeat was passed down to future generations," and Obama argues from cause and effect that this legacy has caused a lack of hope and prospects for the future. In terms of the moment-to-moment data, the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group saw a PNAR increase of 13 from 50 to 63 as Obama discussed the black community's resilience in "making a way out of now way" as shown by the second set of arrows on Figure 9.43:

Figure 9.43: Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group
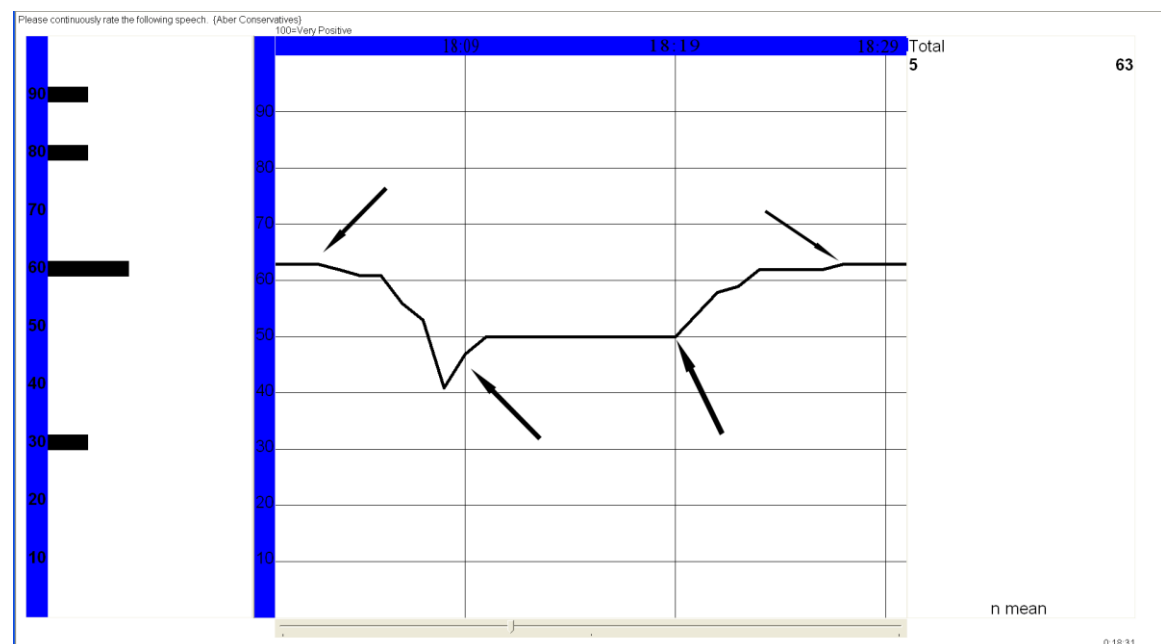
During this portion of the speech, the Sudanese group fluctuated. There was an initial PNAR decrease of 15 from 86 to 71, however, their PNAR increased at approximately the same time as the Aberystwyth Conservative Group by 12 from 71 to 83, only to decrease again once Obama identifies the struggle of the black community with the American Dream from 83 to 75:

138

Figure 9.44: Sudanese Group
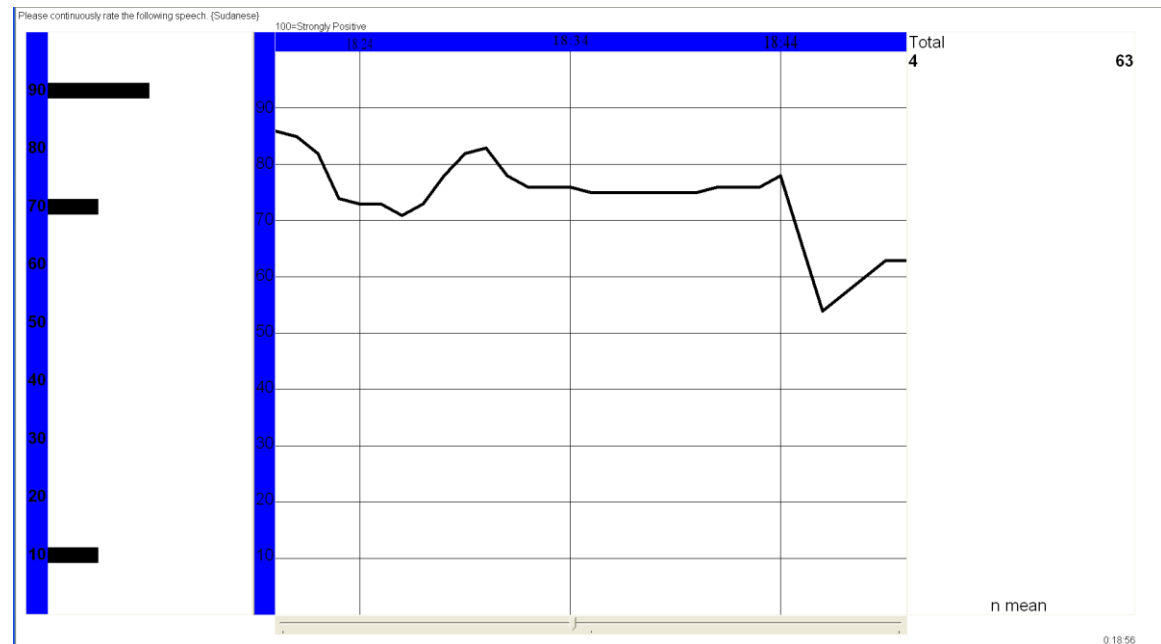
Continuing his historical construction, Obama subdivides Wright's generation into two categories: those who made it and those who didn't. Having already described the plight of the latter, Obama tells us that

> Even for those blacks who did make it, questions of race, and racism, continue to define their worldview in fundamental ways. For the men and women of Reverend Wright's generation, the memories of humiliation and doubt and fear have not gone away; nor has the anger and the bitterness of those years.

This broad contention Obama has laid out posits that the present can be directly traced to events of the past. Discrimination in the past is the cause of a lack of hope or prospects in present time. It is also the source of anger, bitterness, humiliation, fear, and doubt that has shaped Wright, his comments, and Wright's generation. This portion of the speech saw a 24-point PNAR increase from 63 to 87:

Figure 9.45: Sudanese Group
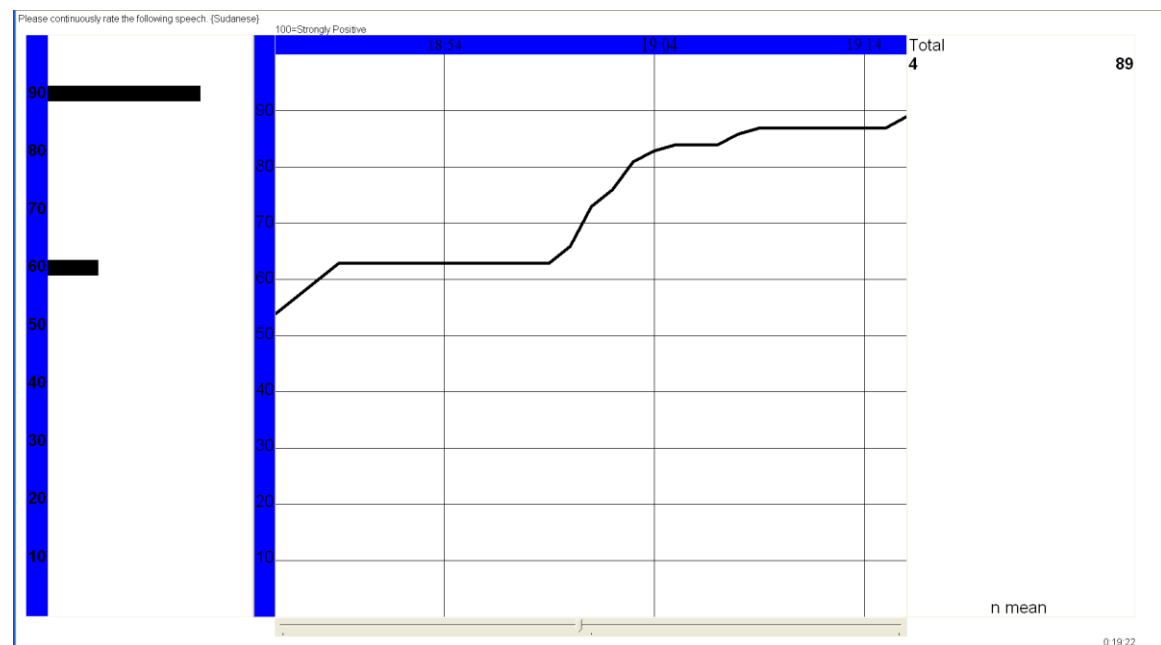
As Figure 9.46 demonstrates, the Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group saw a much more modest PNAR increase of 6 from 62 to 68:

Figure 9.46: Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group
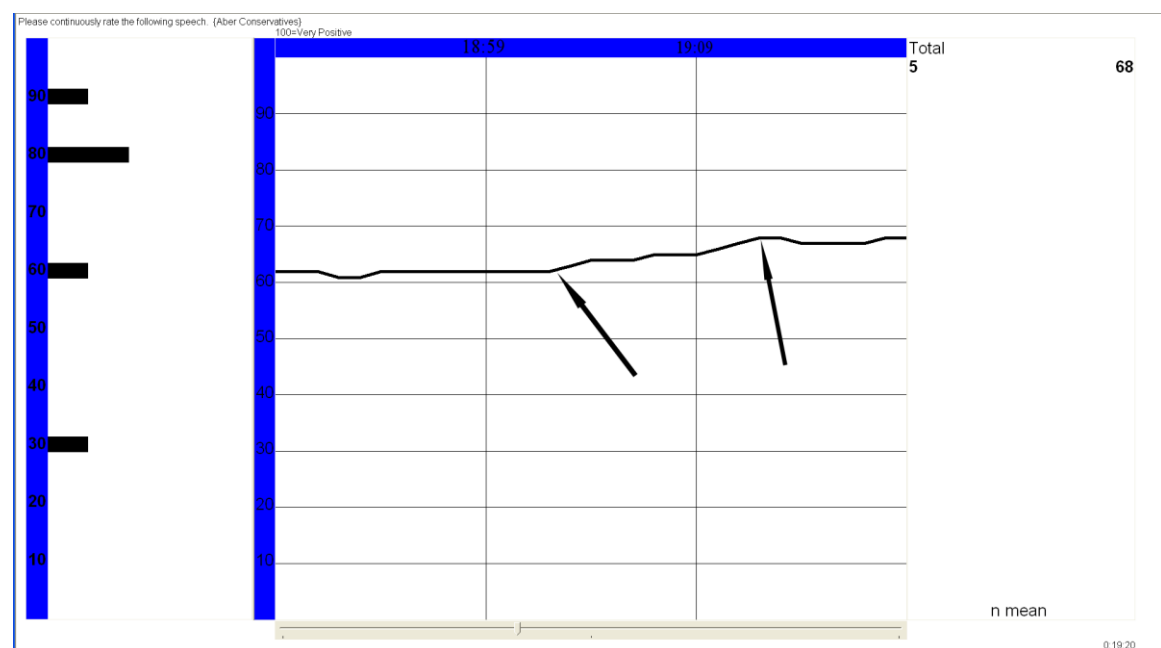
Obama hones in and expands upon the former two emotions, anger and bitterness. In fact, these two emotions become the passions Obama would seek to refocus as the rocket fuel of transcendence for racial communities living in America (Westen 2007;

Aristotle, 1991). Having contextualized why this anger exists, Obama tells us where and how it is expressed:

> That anger may not get expressed in public, in front of white co-workers or white friends. But it does find voice in the barbershop or around the kitchen table. At times, that anger is exploited by politicians, to gin up votes along racial lines, or to make up for a politician's own failings. And occasionally it finds voice in the church on Sunday morning, in the pulpit and in the pews. The fact that so many people are surprised to hear that anger in some of Reverend Wright's sermons simply reminds us of the old truism that the most segregated hour in American life occurs on Sunday morning.

The Cardiff Council focus group saw a PNAR increase of 5 from 80 to 85:

Figure 9.47: Cardiff Council Group
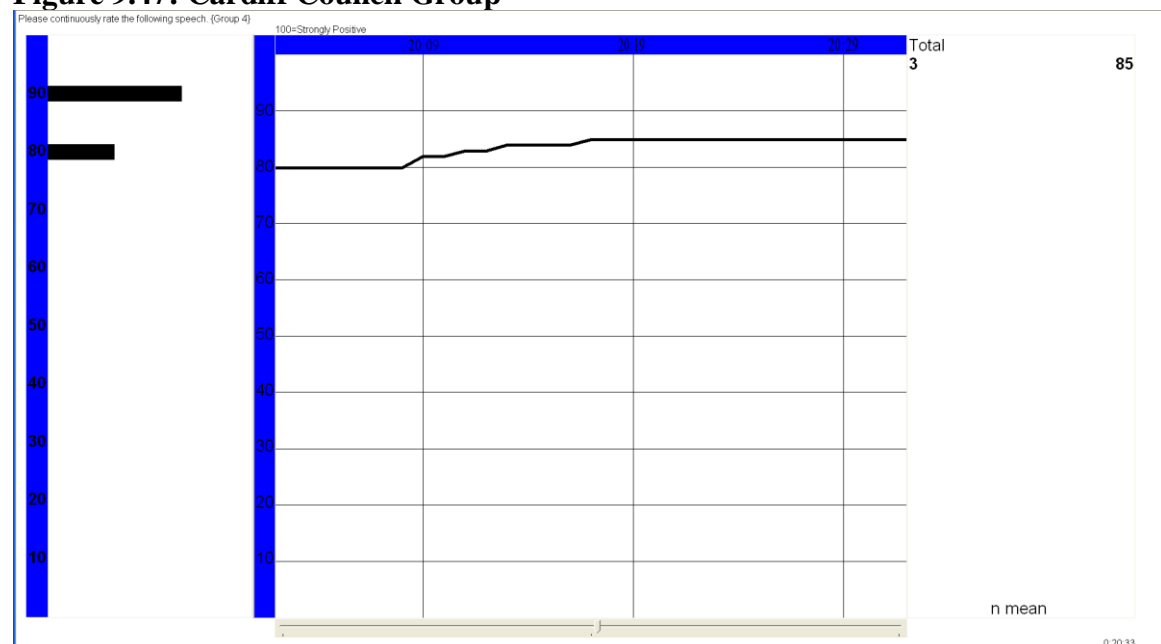
One participant felt this was an important point to make and alludes to, or perhaps repeats back, Obama's next rhetorical maneuver:

> *Participant 3*: The point he made about America is never more divided than it is on Sunday I think is a very important statement, um and I think in America they use religion a lot more as a tool and it's a lot more divisive in America, whereas over here I think it's not quite as divisive as it is...
> *Moderator*: Did you see it being used as a tool in this particular speech?
> *Participant 3*: Yeah I did.
> *Moderator*: OK
> *Participant 3*: Absolutely. And I think over here, we would more relate to it...I would more relate to that in terms of class and I would see deprivation happening in terms of class more so in terms of race (Cardiff Council, 2010).

The reference of segregation on Sunday morning also saw the beginnings of a larger PNAR increase with the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group and the Portsmouth Labour group that would continue through Obama's assertion that this anger is unproductive:

Figure 9.48: Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group
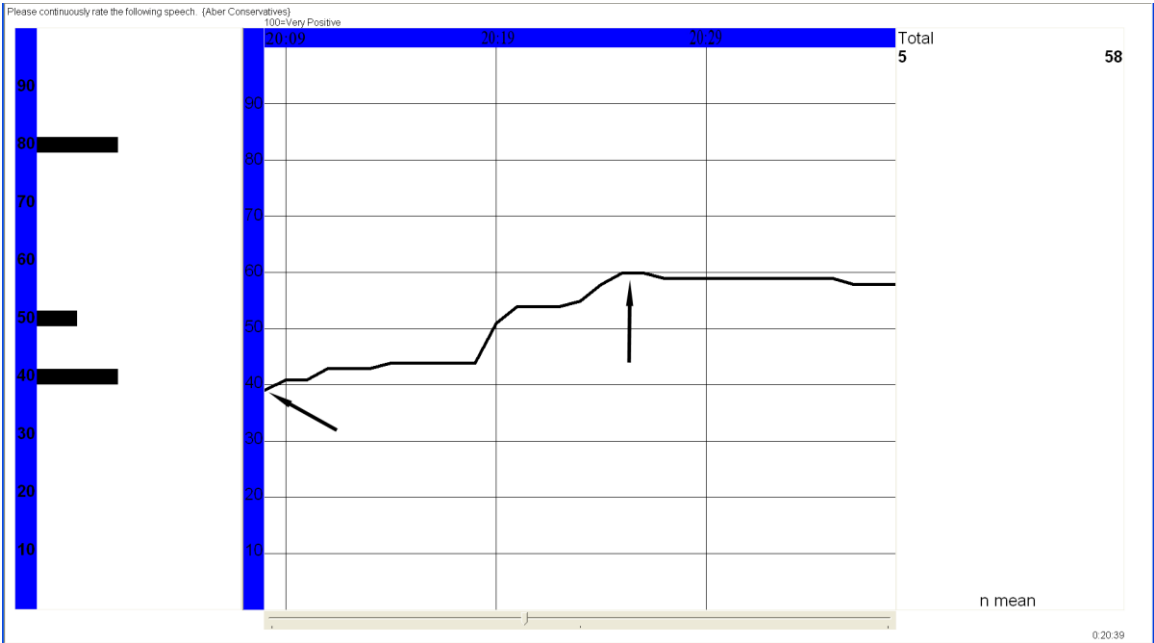
Figure 9.49: Portsmouth Labour Group
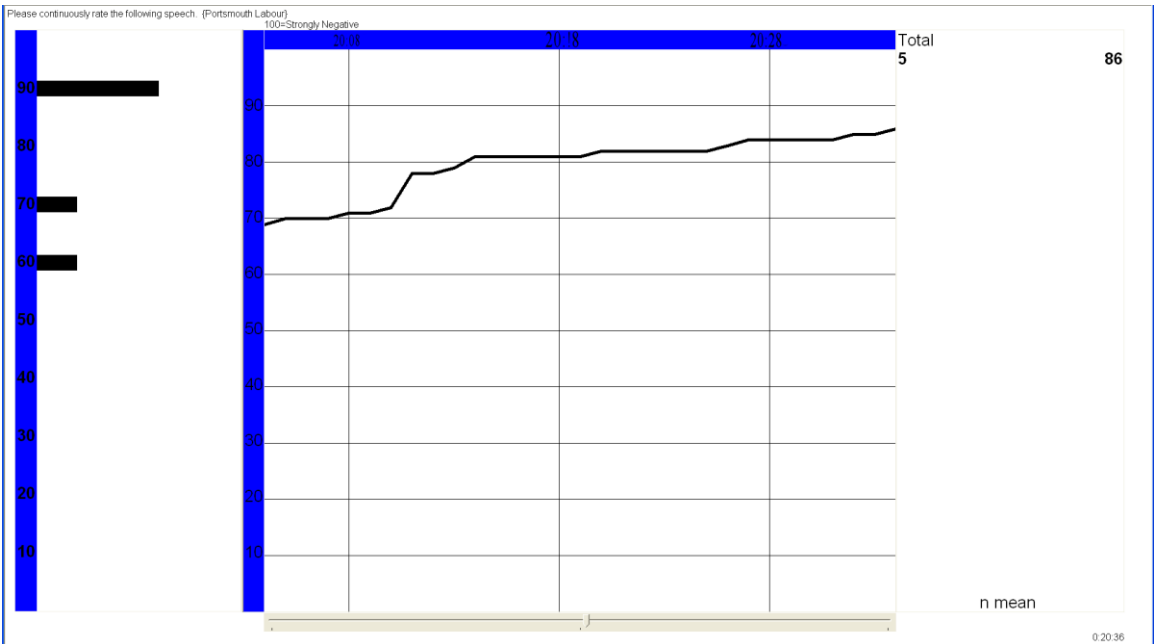
Looking at this portion of the text, Obama extends this metaphor of division through the term "segregation" and the politician's attempts to "gin up votes along racial lines." Obama finds this anger "not always productive," in the sense that it can "distract attention from solving real problems" and prevents the African-American community from forging the alliances it needs to bring about change. "Alliance" can be associated with this sort of racial transcendence through identification, its Latin root, *alligare* literally meaning "bound together." Obama is saying that the anger Wright and others express is real but unproductive because it does not bring about real change. Obama measures this anger by whether or not it produces results for social progress. In the final proposition of Obama's historical and socio-economic contextualization of Wright and the black community, Obama links the anger he has been speaking of and the immediate exigency at hand while simultaneously extending the metaphor of division through the term "chasm":

> to condemn [this anger] without understanding its roots, only serves to widen the chasm of misunderstanding that exists between the races.

In what is to be a strikingly parallel structure, Obama pivots from diagnosing the anger that exists in the black community to diagnosing the anger that exists in the white community. Obama finds each racial community identified through a "similar anger" that exists in each. Obama attempts to ingratiate "many" in the white community, praising their experience as "the immigrant experience," Obama tells us that "[most] working- and middle-class white Americans don't feel they have been particularly privileged by their race, [...] as far they're concerned, no one's handed them anything, they've built it from scratch." Obama praises white working- and middle-class white Americans as having "worked hard all their lives," and just as discrimination kept those in the black community of Wright's generation from achieving the American Dream, white working families work hard to the same end "only to see their jobs shipped overseas or their pension dumped after a lifetime of labor. They are anxious about their futures, and feel their dreams slipping away;" Obama notes the perception of opportunity as a "zero sum game," it is not that both the black and white community can find economic opportunity, it is perceived that either only the white community or only the black community that can achieve the American Dream; this perception has no room for consubstantiation. For Obama, the consequences of this perception in the white community are clear. Obama argues

from consequences, first listing several examples as sources of resentment within the white community:

> So when they are told to bus their children to a school across town; when they hear that an African American is getting an advantage in landing a good job or a spot in a good college because of an injustice that they themselves never committed; when they're told that their fears about crime in urban neighborhoods are somehow prejudiced, resentment builds over time.

This portion of the speech generated a considerable PNAR increase of 26 points from 57 to 83 with the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group, a 14-point PNAR decrease from the Portsmouth Labour Group and a 14-point drop from 88 to 74 with the Sudanese Group as Obama identifies the lower middle class white experience as the "immigrant experience." The Sudanese group saw a further 17-point PNAR decrease as Obama discussed the "resentment" in the white community that "builds over time" as shown in Figure 9.50:

Figure 9.50: Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group
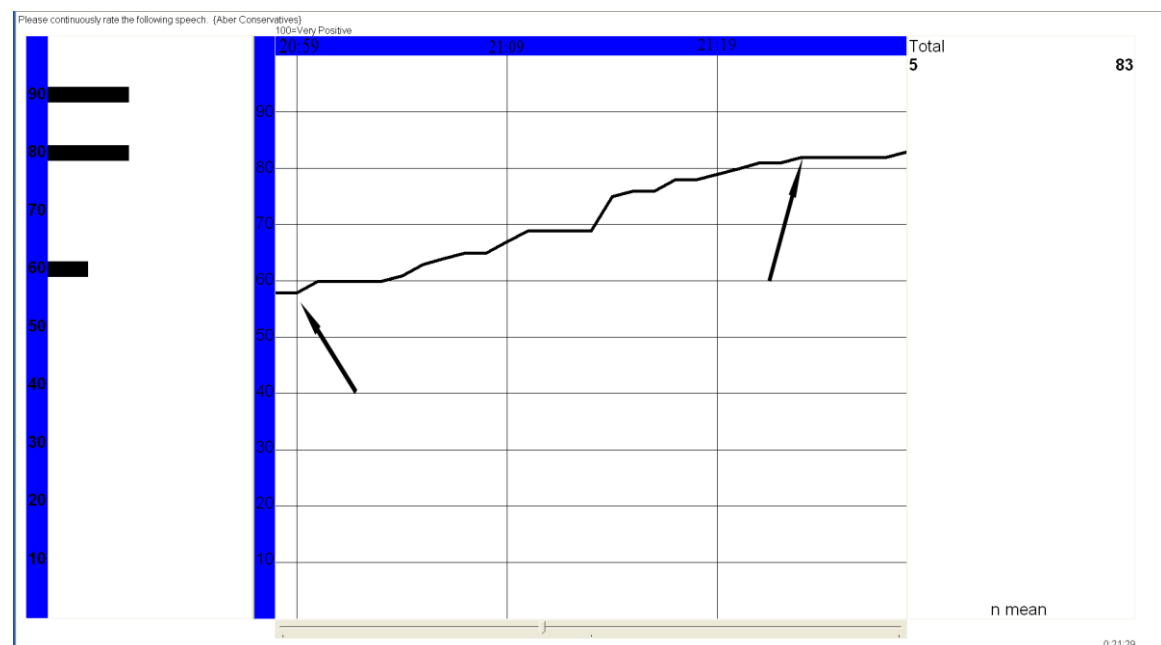
Figure 9.51: Portsmouth Labour Group
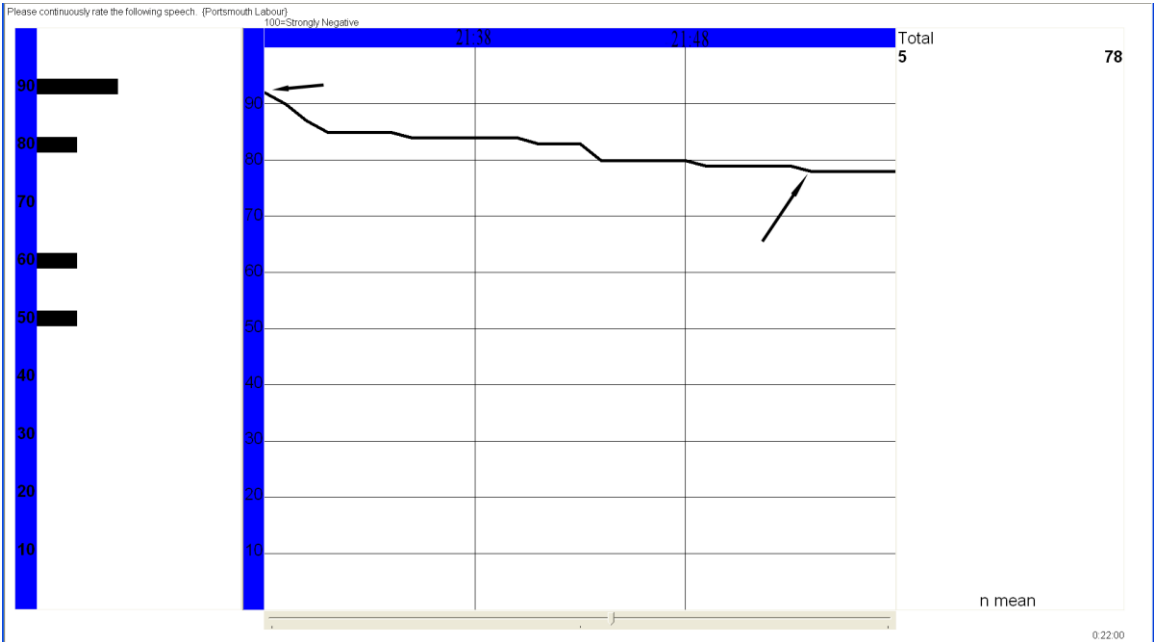
Figure 9.52 Sudanese Group
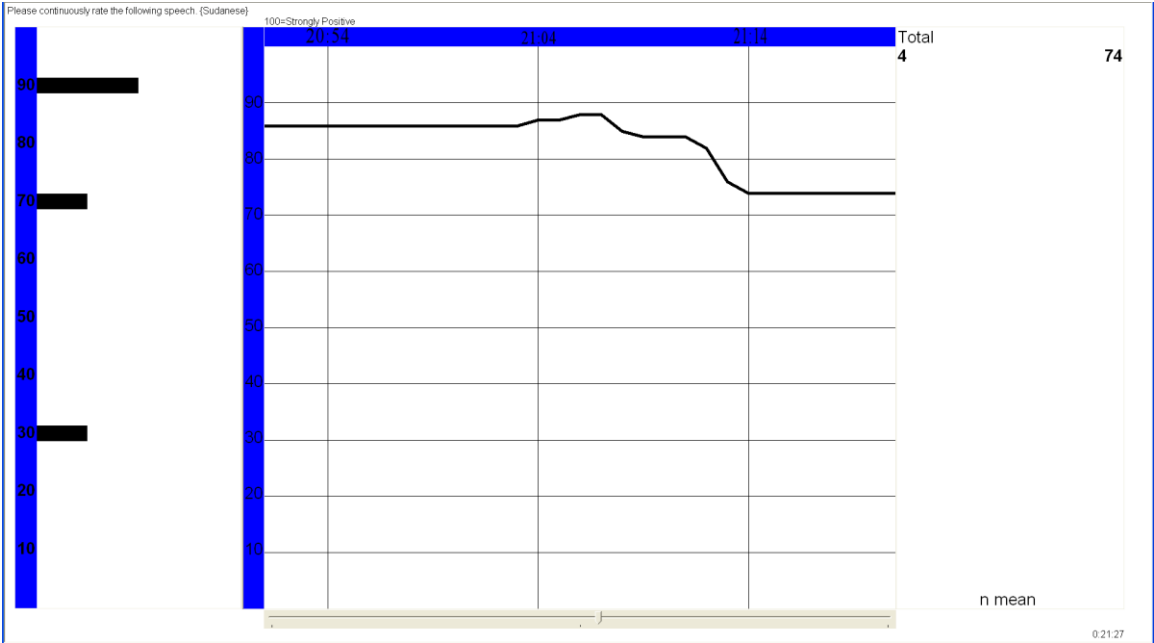
Figure 9.53: Sudanese Group
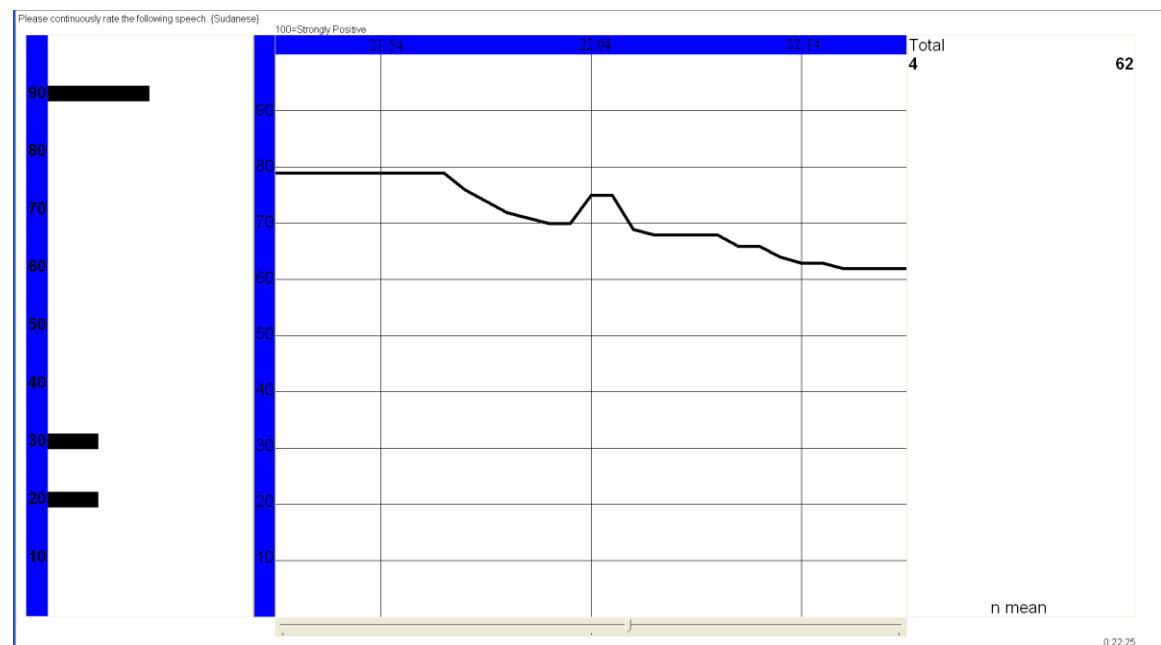
Rhetorically, for the black community it was overt discrimination in which the white community benefited instead of, not alongside, the black community that was a source of anger. For the working- and middle-class white families, the perception of reparations and affirmative action programs that benefit the black community over white families who have not benefited from previous injustices is a source of anger. In both form and content, Obama makes the point in parallel terms, strengthening each community's similarities. Obama continues by finding not only a similar anger existing in both communities but also in the private manner in which that anger is expressed. For the black community, the anger kept them from forging the alliances they needed to bring about real change; for the white community this misplaced anger is, like the black community, functionally very real and powerful, "shaping the political landscape" a consequence expanded upon by Obama with three supporting examples: the Reagan coalition, crime, and once again, commentators. Interestingly, the Reagan "coalition" forged in the 1980's is precisely the "alliance" apparatus the black community lacked. The unstated link is that those former white Democrats who joined the Reagan coalition are, yes, able to bridge divides and form alliances but that it is the wrong kind of association; it quenches *homo sapiens'* yearning for identification but leaves economic interests and "class" issues unable to be resolved without Obama's version of social progress. For Obama, neither the black community with a lack of allies nor the white community with its uneasy bedfellows can bring

about real change on their own. Indeed, Obama continues to compare the similar substance of each community using "Just as..." In both communities, anger is misplaced, counterproductive and distracting. Obama attempts to redirect racial anger to "the real culprits of the middle class squeeze" which, as Obama names each one, are "a corporate culture rife with inside dealing, questionable accounting practices, and short-term greed; a Washington dominated by lobbyists and special interests; economic policies that favor the few over the many." In the last passage of this subpoint, Obama makes another attempt at the parallel and consubstantial circumstance of each community by noting the anger in the white community is real and requires a nuanced and contextualized "understanding." The comparison with the black community is made through the words "this too" and the metaphor of identification and division is extended with "widens the racial divide, and blocks the path to understanding." Obama's new antagonists and terms of division saw simultaneous PNAR increases among the Portsmouth Labour group and Aberystwyth Conservative Future group:

Figure 9.54: Aberystwyth Conservative Group

Figure 9.55: Portsmouth Labour Group
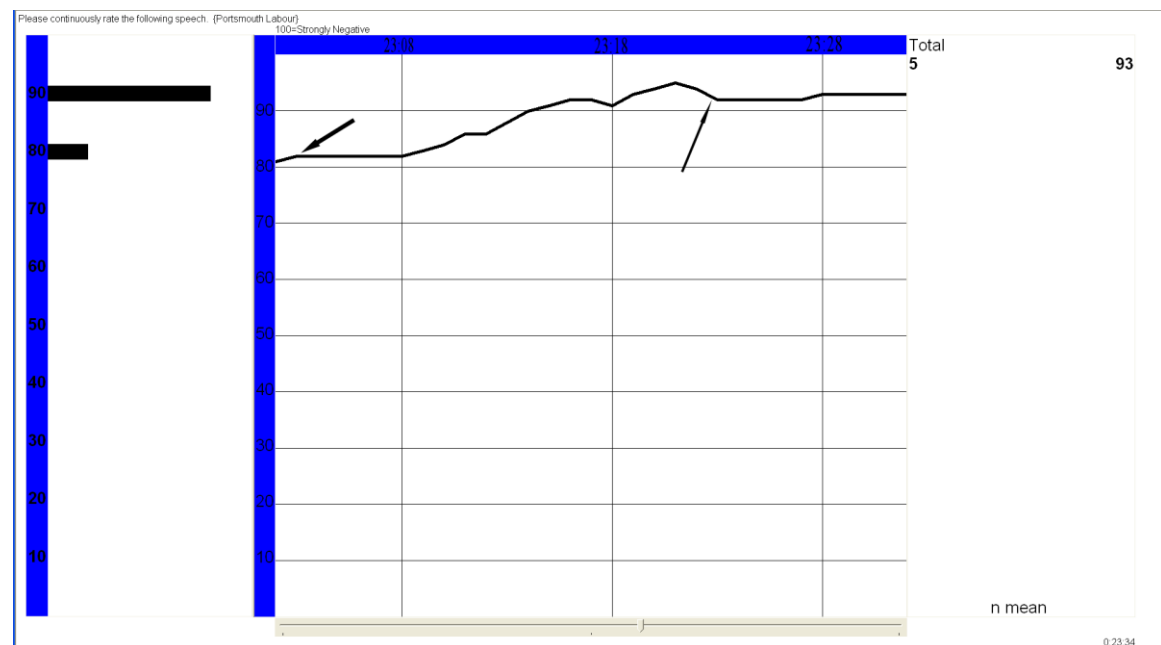
Obama's constant referencing of the black and white community led one Sudanese focus group participant to ask what would actually be done to address the challenges each community faced:

> *Participant 1*: I think he tried many things to make the whole nation unity. He mentioned black and white, black and white, mentioned it many times during his speech. Um and he promised that change had taken over two hundred years, but he didn't mention the changes he was going to do for the society. What is actually the role (Sudanese, 2010)?

Another participant from the Portsmouth Labour Group, noted that "obviously you get comparisons of you know Martin Luther King and stuff with a lot of Obama's things, but with that speech there where he's sort of addressing the problems of racism on both the white and black side that is quite, um, you can draw similarities with Nelson Mandela and his tackling of issues, definitely (Portsmouth Labour, 2010)." Having contextualized and consubstantialized the black and white communities as a real but unrealized "fact," Obama returns to the more immediate present: "This is where we are right now. It's a racial stalemate we've been stuck in for years." He counters his critics, noting his candidacy alone could not overcome the existing racial divisions. Building on his own *ethos*, Obama offers qualification in the form of a personal, audience-ingratiating conviction:

148

> a conviction rooted in my faith in God and my faith in the American people - that working together we can move beyond some of our old racial wounds, and that in fact we have no choice if we are to continue on the path of a more perfect union.

"Working together" in order to move "beyond some of our old racial wounds" is in large measure an act of transcendence. Obama also references back to "a more perfect union." Because Obama has associated himself with the Constitution, Obama is implicitly stating that if "we" want to continue what the Constitution started (and what Obama would continue), "we" need to accept his conviction (or perhaps, prescription) of how to move forward to perfecting the union. Contained within Obama's speech is a choice for the auditor to make: side with Obama and the Constitution or continue holding misplaced anger conjured up by commentators and Washington politicians, which is the same mistake Wright has made. Siding with Obama and the Constitution means continuing on the path towards a more perfect union, and Obama offers each community a concrete plan of action to take the onramp towards that path. Obama once again subdivides this action plan into parallel cases of the black and white communities. For the black community to continue on the path of a more perfect union, Obama offers two points followed by a crucial qualification:

> [this path] means embracing the burdens of our past without becoming victims of our past. It means continuing to insist on a full measure of justice in every aspect of American life. But it also means binding our particular grievances - for better health care, and better schools, and better jobs - to the larger aspirations of all Americans –the white woman struggling to break the glass ceiling, the white man whose been laid off, the immigrant trying to feed his family.

Speaking with African-Americans using the collective "our," Obama tells the black community they must acknowledge the context from which their community and current circumstances grew but must "bind our particular grievances…to the larger aspirations of all Americans." Obama offers three dialectical examples of the areas he is thinking of: education, jobs, and health care. Then, he humanizes them with two examples of a white woman and white man struggling and aspiring. The word "binding" continues the approach of relevant parties seeing themselves as identified. This process thus includes a few concrete steps for the black community: acknowledge their past, address their past in a constructive way, bind their grievances to the larger "American" narrative of social justice and progress as well as take on

more responsibility for their lives. The Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group increased their PNAR during Obama's prescriptive portion of the text by 6 from 70 to 76, while the Portsmouth Labour Group by 9 from 83 to 92 and the Sudanese group saw a 9-point PNAR increase as Obama declares the black community cannot be victims of their past:

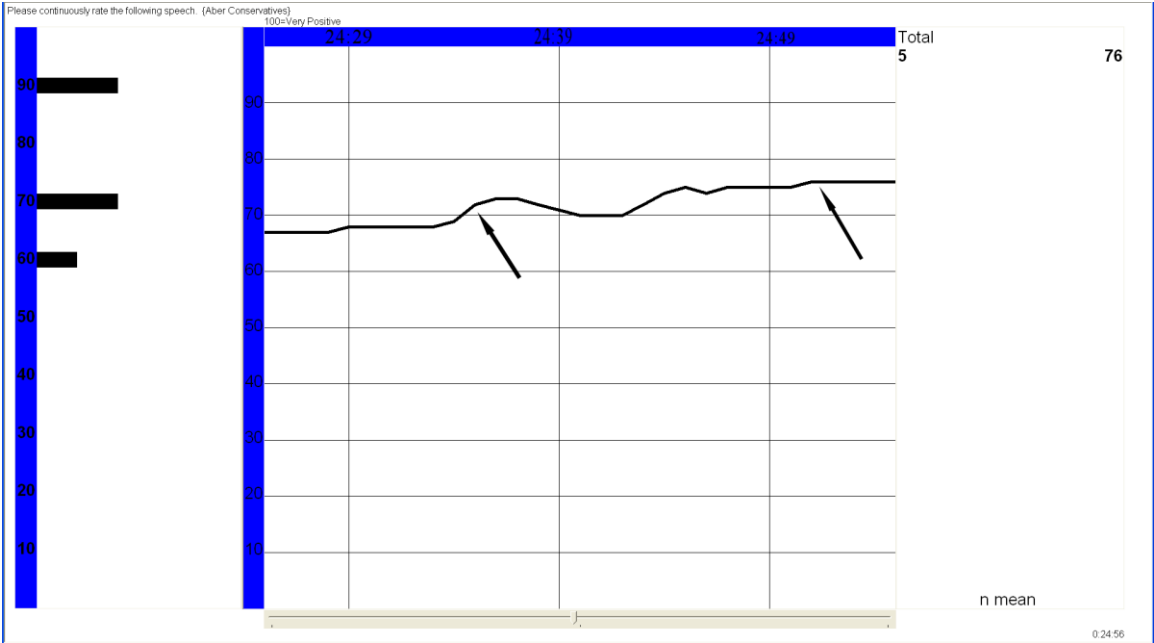**Figure 9.56: Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group**
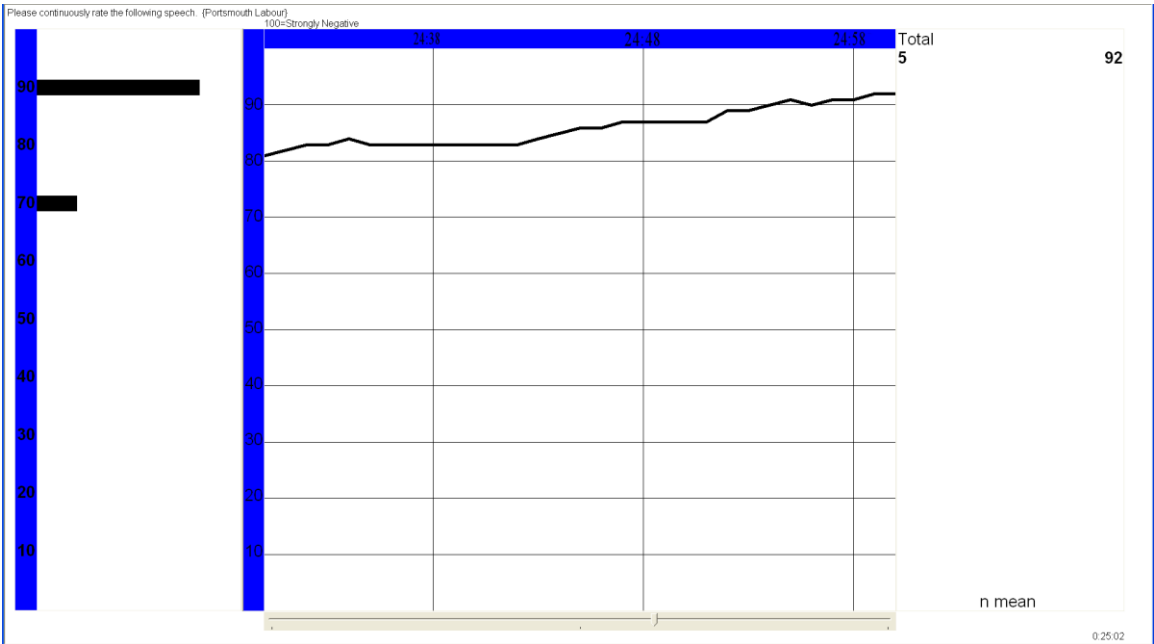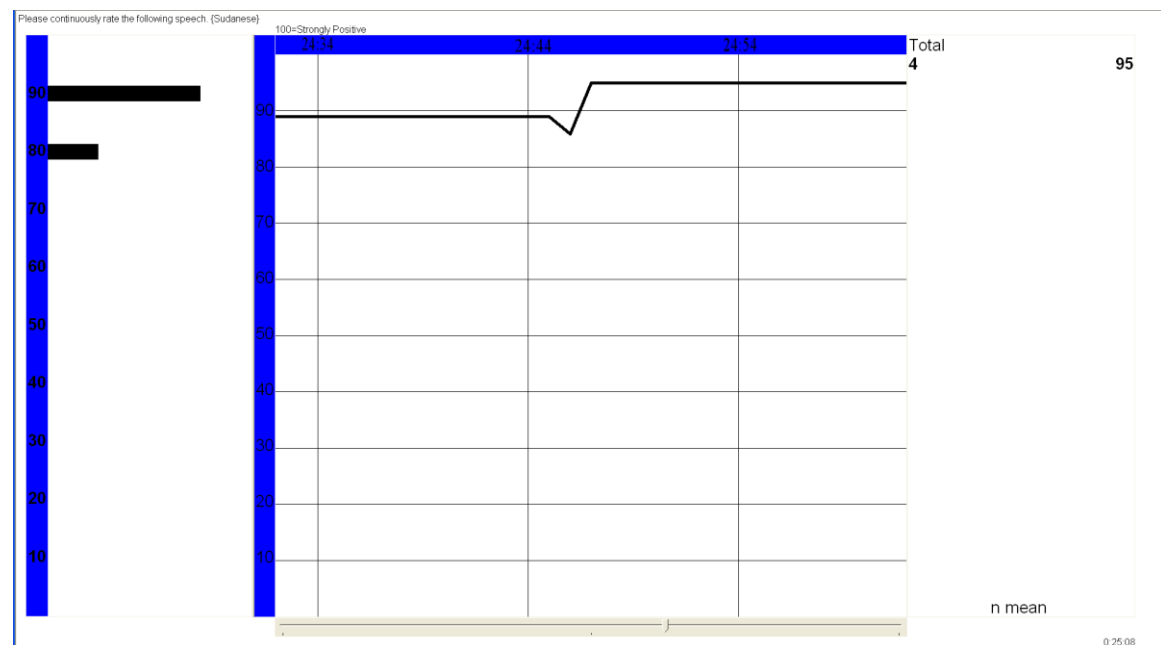

Figure 9.57: Portsmouth Labour Group

Figure 9.58: Sudanese Group

On the note of personal responsibility, Obama slyly colonizes the middle ground by appealing to values championed by center-right Americans and conservative Republicans, the "American, and yes conservative notion of self-help." By identifying Wright's sermons and Obama's own prescription with "American" and "conservative" ideas of self-help, it could be more difficult for political opponents and "commentators" to condemn a man who stands for the same thing they do, because just as corporate or vicarious boasting boosts ones own image, degrading, blaming, and criticizing that corporate unit that you adhere to (in this case the idea of self-help) is more difficult to do if not damaging to your own cause. The opposing political party cannot define themselves in unique terms through ideas shared and articulated by both parties. The argumentative thread could be limited, however, as the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group dropped 16 points and several participants of the group responded negatively in the focus group data towards Obama as he identified Wright with notions of conservatism:

> *Participant 5*: I did start to crank it down when he had a go at conservative people, I didn't really like that. He's saying he is for consensus, you know, 'I'm for everyone' but when he started having a go at conservative people and I'm like well you know why didn't you look in your own house before you start...
> Participant 2: Yeah...
> *Participant 5*: ...throw stones in ours

151

Participant 2: And in that respect it sort of, black and white discrimination...conservative and...whatever it would be...
Participant 1:...socialist
Participant 2: That's the one...That sort of discrimination. It almost seems hypocritical really, saying well we can't have this type, but we can have a go at people with quite conservative views, cause everybody should be this way. It just sort of...
Participant 5: Yeah I find he was a bit sort of a bit...Say he was for political unity because he kept Robert Gates as his Defense Secretary, but did he that just as tokenist...just to keep conservatives happy (Aberystwyth Conservative Future, 2010).

With the Portsmouth Labour Group, it remains unclear whether Obama's statement that this notion of "self-help" is either American or conservative led to a 15-point PNAR decrease from 83 to 68:

Figure 9.59: Portsmouth Labour Group
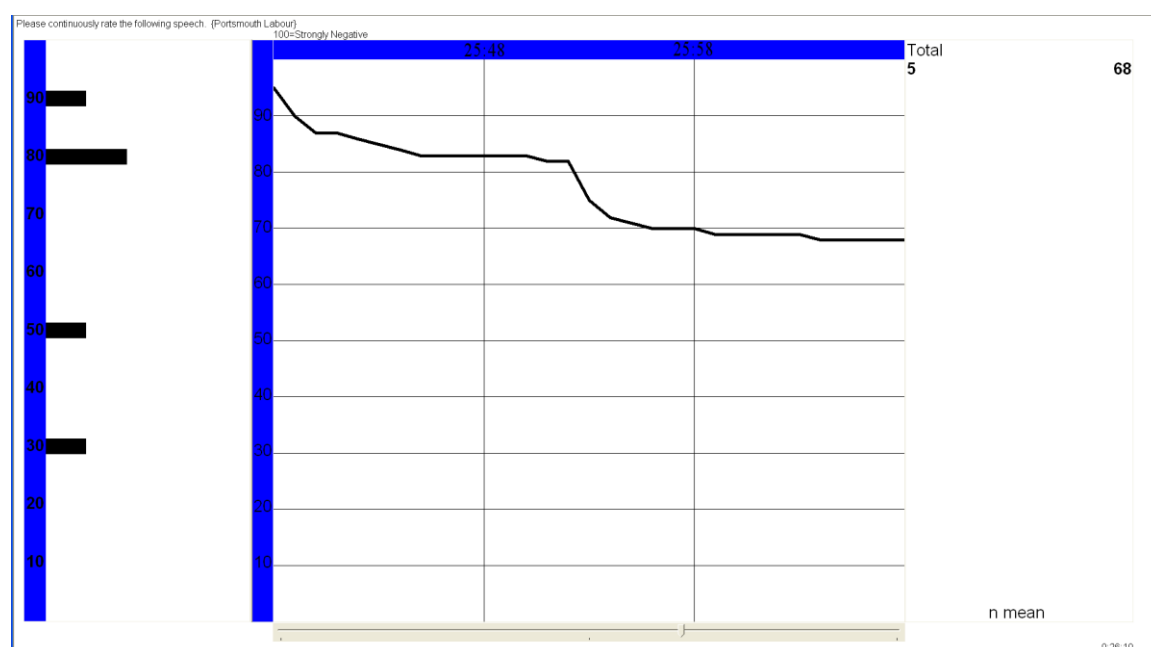
Textually, Obama moves to qualify this notion of "self-help" as insufficient on its own by bringing the speech back to one of Obama's core campaign messages: change. Obama finds Wright's comments wrong not because "he spoke of racism in our society" but

"[it's] that he spoke as if our society was static; as if no progress has been made; as if this country - a country that has made it possible for one

152

of his own members to run for the highest office in the land and build a coalition of white and black; Latino and Asian, rich and poor, young and old -- is still irrevocably bound to a tragic past."

Obama extends the metaphor of identification and division in both terms in this passage: Wright's view of society as static (and thus, perpetually divided) and Obama's assertion that his campaign has built a "coalition" of various backgrounds, socio-economic positions and perspectives. To view Obama's campaign through the racial lens not only impedes social progress, it is "still irrevocably bound to a tragic past." This portion of the speech saw a steady PNAR increase from the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group of 10 from 72 to 82:

Figure 9.60: Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group

The Portsmouth Labour group too saw a PNAR increase of 8 from 71 to 79:

153

Figure 9.61: Portsmouth Labour Group
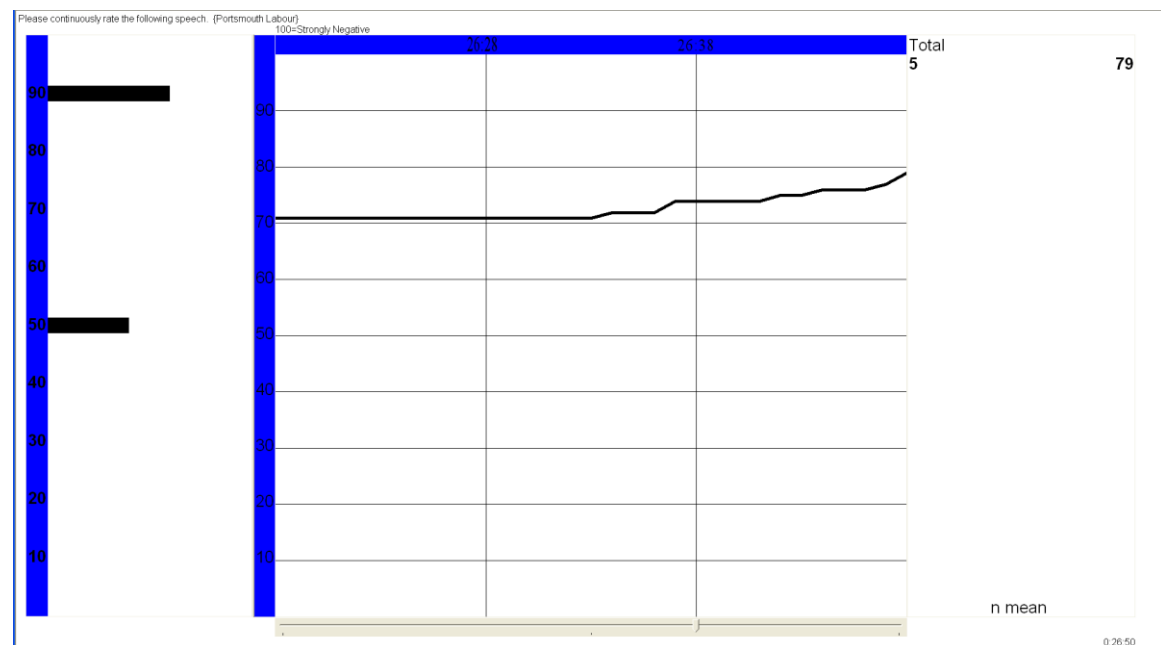
Most focus group participants vacillated between identifying with Obama's appeals to unity among various factions or, by the very mentioning of these factions, was actually dividing his audience. As two participants in the Sudanese Group explained:

> *Participant 3*: Yes I think the good things is that he tried to make unity for the whole society, and their rights, what they hope, what he's going to provide them. The negative is I think to apply this is positive discrimination: white and black, he has to look at the nation as one nation without applying these categories for black and white and Asian, we are all American, we have one dream...he has one dream
> *Moderator*: So you didn't like it when he started talking about individual...
> *Participant 3*: Yeah, yeah, yeah...
> *Moderator*: And [Participant 4] didn't either?
> *Participant 4*: Well, to a certain extent, no. But if you're going to talk about ethnicities, just focus on all and don't name some because when you forget some, you have a problem (Sudanese, 2010).

This reflects at least a portion of the moment-to-moment data with the Sudanese Group. It saw an initial 19 point PNAR decrease during Obama's assertion that Wright's beliefs saw society as static but would rebound by a 20 point increase as Obama asserts his very candidacy for president complicated Wright's views and receives applause from the audience:

Figure 9.62: Sudanese Group
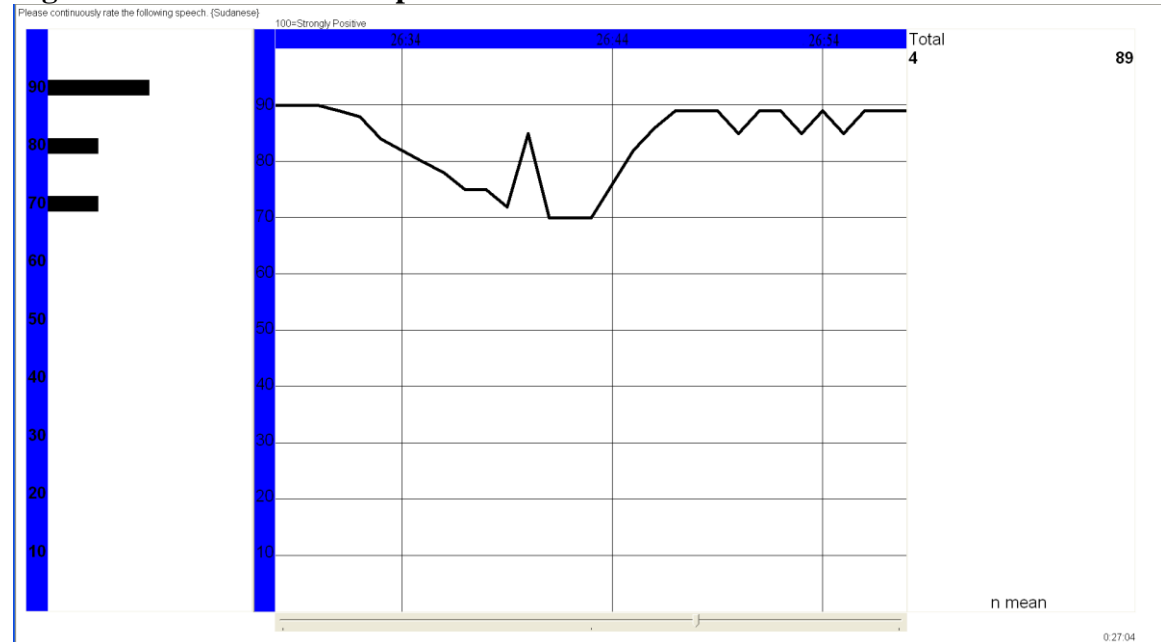
The previously mentioned focus group data was shared by a member of the Cardiff Council Group:

> *Participant 3*: I grew up in an environment where everyone was the same and I retained that throughout, so if I was being campaigned to by Obama in America the way that he did, I'd certainly be thinkin' hang on, why every time you make a statement do you have to say black, Hispanic, Latino, white, you know, do I need to read something in the order that you're reading these out? 'Cause every time he made a point it was like instead of sayin' "our children" he would make a point of saying "our black children, our Hispanic children, our white children" which is an issue he needs to address (Cardiff Council, 2010).

Another participant in the Cardiff Council Group felt that these appeals were "when I went most negative" and were designed to "appease the masses." This participant didn't "really believe [unity] exists, you know, [inaudible] the world, there's a lot of divisions (ibid)." Another participant, however, in the Aberystwyth Conservative Future saw this not only as rhetorically effective, given the situation Obama was in, but also effective for the focus group participant personally:

> *Participant 1*:...to say "right, here's the ball game: I'm black, I'm running for President, this is a perfect Union, we're a union, we're blacks, Hispanics, Latinos, blah, blah, blah, we're all in this together, let's get this out of the way now and move on, and it did, it did the job.
> *Participant 5*: Yeah...

155

Moderator: YOU thought he did the job?
Participant 1: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And I mean the outcome of that, I mean, race hardly ever came up after that, and the Republicans stopped playing that ad again, as well, about the Jeremiah Wright thing (Aberystwyth Conservative Future, 2010).

Two participants from the Portsmouth Labour Group saw this as a positive moment in the speech:

Participant 5: After about half way through, he was very positive when he was talking about certain aspects of race, how everyone had their own visions of the American Dream. And that, um, "the black man want to get ahead" shouldn't upset the American white middle classes, 'cause the black man and the Hispanics, Native Americans should not be competing with the white middle classes, but they should be more progressive equally. You know, once they're not competing with the white middle classes, you're not depriving the white middle classes, because that is part of the perceived racism in America, that "if we give the black man affirmative action, they're taking our jobs." He was trying to say that everyone should have equal opportunities without discrimination. I thought that was a very important point.
Participant 3:...a vision, really, so there were those bits when he talked about the coalition of interests, you know the different cultures and the different groups of people who were joining together to try and get change in America and some of the things that they were trying to do. So those were the most positive bits for me, really (Portsmouth Labour, 2010).

Watching the video, Obama raises his voice and shifts to an emotive tone to be heard over the applause as "Change We Can Believe In" and "Yes We Can [Change]" lurk in white space of the speech. Finally, Obama once again grounds his campaign in the ingratiating proposition that the fact that the Obama coalition exists and what it has achieved so far is living, breathing testimony to the "genius of the nation."

Having directly addressed the black community using the collective "our," Obama shifts in parallel form to the white community. Obama repeats the point that the anger of past and present discrimination is real, and cannot be wished away, concerned with concrete action, Obama expands on what the white community can do "not just with words, but with deeds." Self-promotion exists as Obama's own candidacy is strengthened as the prescription Obama is offering the white community also happens to be prescriptions from his presidential policy platform. The transcendent term becomes more explicit than ever as Obama shifts from investment in education and welfare for "black, brown, and white" children to "helping all of America prosper," a

portion of the text that saw a 5-point PNAR increase from the Cardiff Council group. After this, Obama appeals to what Terrill calls the maxim with a powerful place in the "American" psyche, "the Golden Rule":

> In the end, then, what is called for is nothing more, and nothing less, than what all the world's great religions demand – that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us. Let us be our brother's keeper, Scripture tells us. Let us be our sister's keeper.

While Obama does not linger or expand upon this, he surveys the various religions and speaks in "universal" terms just as he has attempted to do with race. Identification through invoking the maxim can be achieved through two routes: first, it isn't a particularly difficult concept to get behind, and so anyone else who holds "the Golden Rule" in high regard may find themselves identified with Obama. As Aristotle notes, "one should use the tritest and most banal commonplaces, if they should be useful; for from their being banal, as all men agree with them, they are thought to be right (1991: 193)." Second, there is what Aristotle calls a certain delight the audience can find in the rhetorician's use of maxims, perpetuating the ingratiating theme (1991: 194). For Obama, although various religions and races have profound differences, he implores "us to find that common stake we all have in one another," the term "common stake" being nothing less than consubstantiality. In terms of the audience response to this "golden rule," the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group saw a PNAR decrease of 17 when Obama references religion, but when the "golden rule" is expressed in content (rather than a religious form), the group saw a PNAR increase of 15 from 58 to 72, only to drop again 26 points when Obama invokes what "scripture tells us":

Figure 9.63: Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group

With Obama's plan of action for reach racial community on the table, Obama offers his audience a "choice" which is really an additional argument from the consequences of failing to take his proposed course of action. By providing the audience with two detailed alternatives (*alloiosis*), Obama continues to identify with America's civil religion enveloped in one choice and presents a dilemma, in the classical sense, an "argument that offers an opponent only unacceptable choices," insofar as "commentators," "Wright," and those that would view Obama's candidacy through a "purely racial lens" are placed firmly outside the "genius of our nation," the Constitutional values that demand generational change (Lanham, 1991: 192).

In the first "choice," Obama lists what he calls distractions stemming from the "politics of division and conflict": treating race as spectacle, only discussing Wright from now until the campaign, pouncing on gaffes, and speculating about how racial communities will vote. At the end of these choices, Obama offers a reservation of the potential consequences:

> But if we do, I can tell you that in the next election, we'll be talking about some other distraction. And then another one. And then another one. And nothing will change.

Despite some fluctuation, the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group saw a net PNAR increase of 13 from 64 to 77:

Figure 9.64 Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group
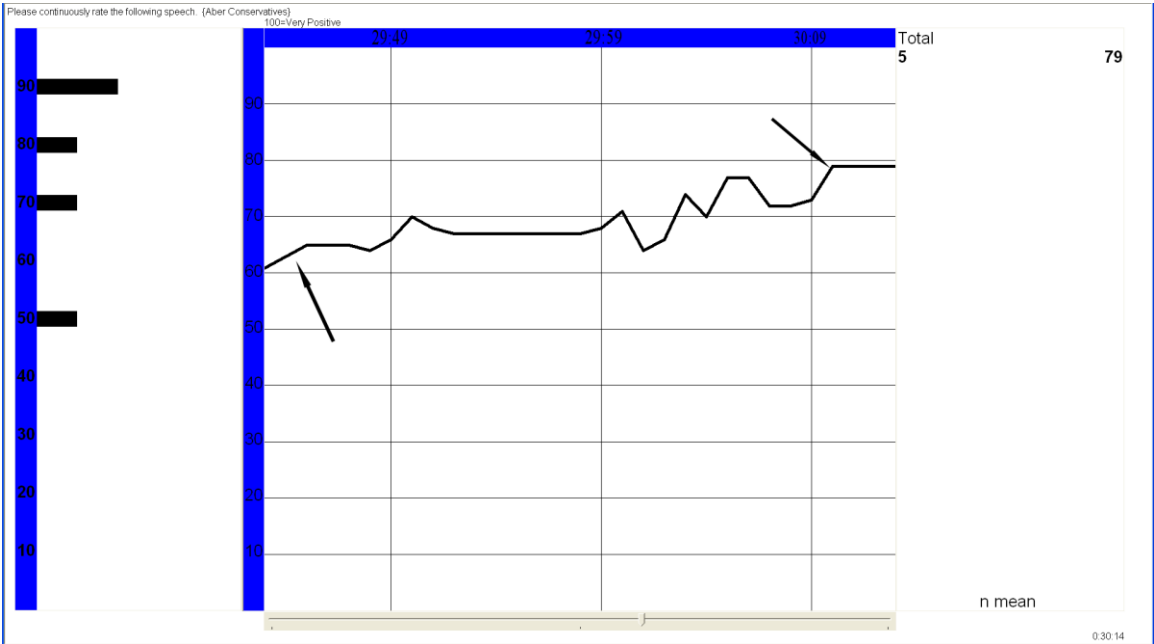
This applause-receiving line also saw PNAR increase of 13 from 64 to 77:

Figure 9.65: Portsmouth Labour Group
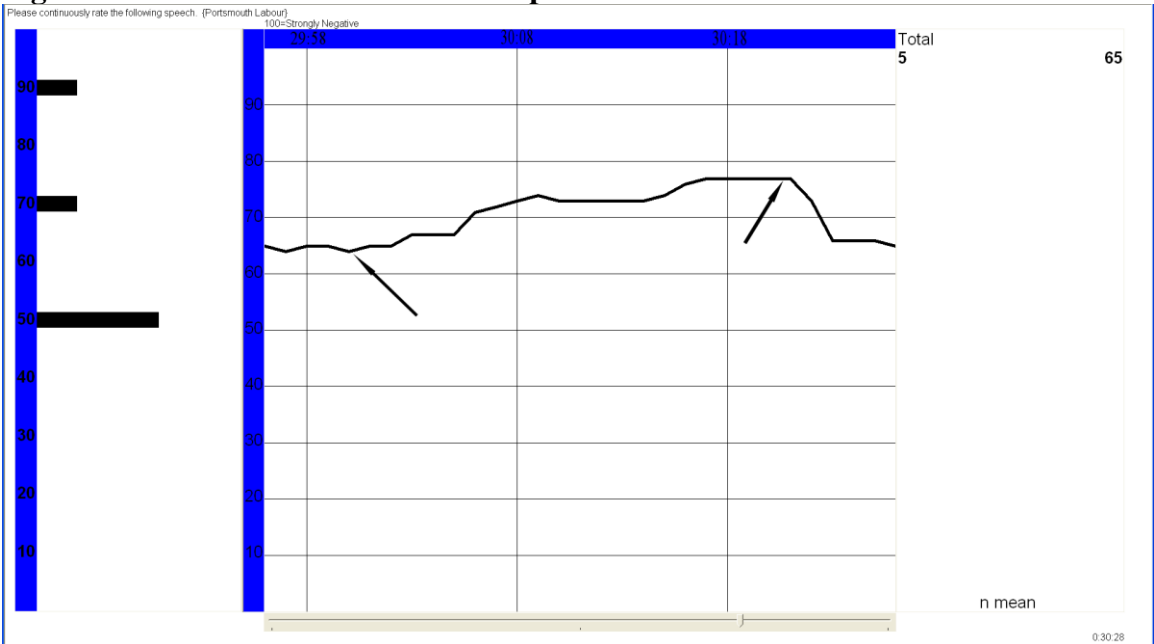
As Obama shifts to the next "choice," it is worth mentioning that this may indeed be a false choice, however, the absurdity and futility of the first set of options paves way

for the much more logical and constructive set of options Obama has set out in his plan of action. "Or," Obama tells us "we can come together and say "Not this time." Formally, Obama sets up this list of possibilities in the second "choice" as an *anaphora*, and while each example is slightly different, the style in which it is placed can aid the auditor see the "universal" in the "particular," that is, that the challenges the new transcendent term "America" faces, health care, a war, the economy, jobs, affect every race; one particular race is not the source of the other's grievances, in fact, if the auditor is to accept the logic bound up in Obama's speech, the "other" race is no longer the other. One Sudanese focus group participant after watching the speech noted:

> *Participant 4*: Just one observation. He mentioned blacks, whites, Asian and Hispanic six times. And he mentioned Native Americans only once. The whole speech. So I don't know how people would feel about this.
> *Moderator*: How did you feel about it?
> *Participant 4*: Well I felt sorry for them because they should be more on top, more top priority for him because if you talk about change and giving rights back these are one of the groups that you should really fight for (Sudanese, 2010).

While Obama has already made this point, he repeats it differently but is still creating a new "other" by redirecting racial anger to "special interest" or "corporate" anger, and to great applause:

> This time we want to talk about the fact that the real problem is not that someone who doesn't look like you might take your job; it's that the corporation you work for will ship it overseas for nothing more than a profit.

This portion of the speech received PNAR increases from the Aberystywth Conservative Future group (+7 from 78 to 85), the Portsmouth Labour group (+25 from 65 to 90) and the Sudanese group (+26 from 86 to 92):

Figure 9.66: Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group
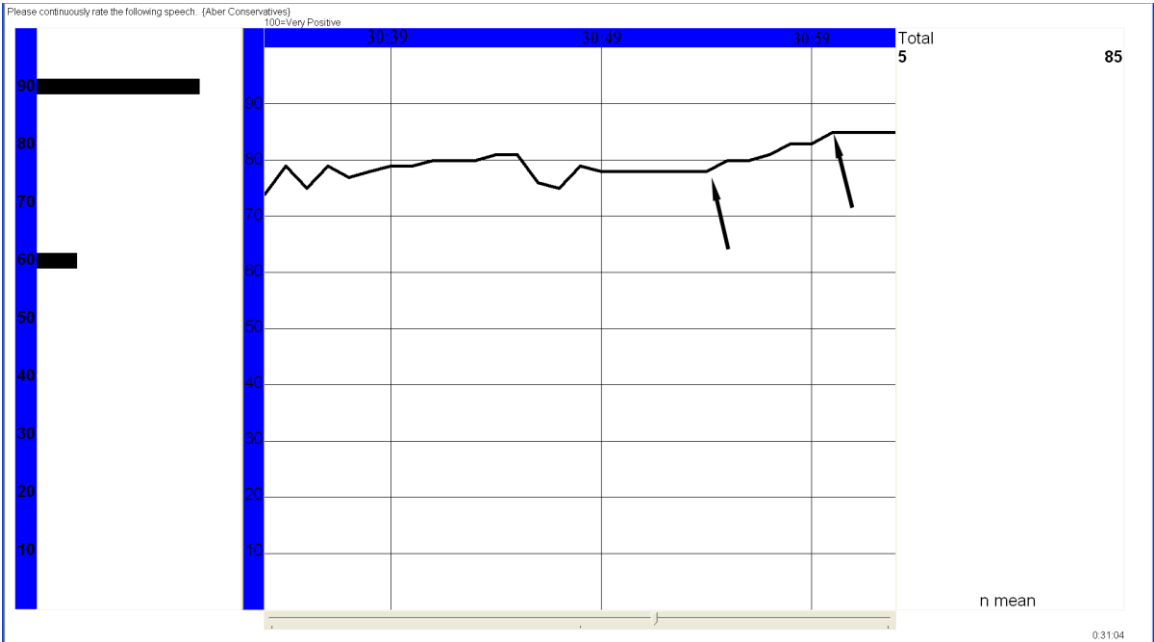
Figure 9.67: Portsmouth Labour Group
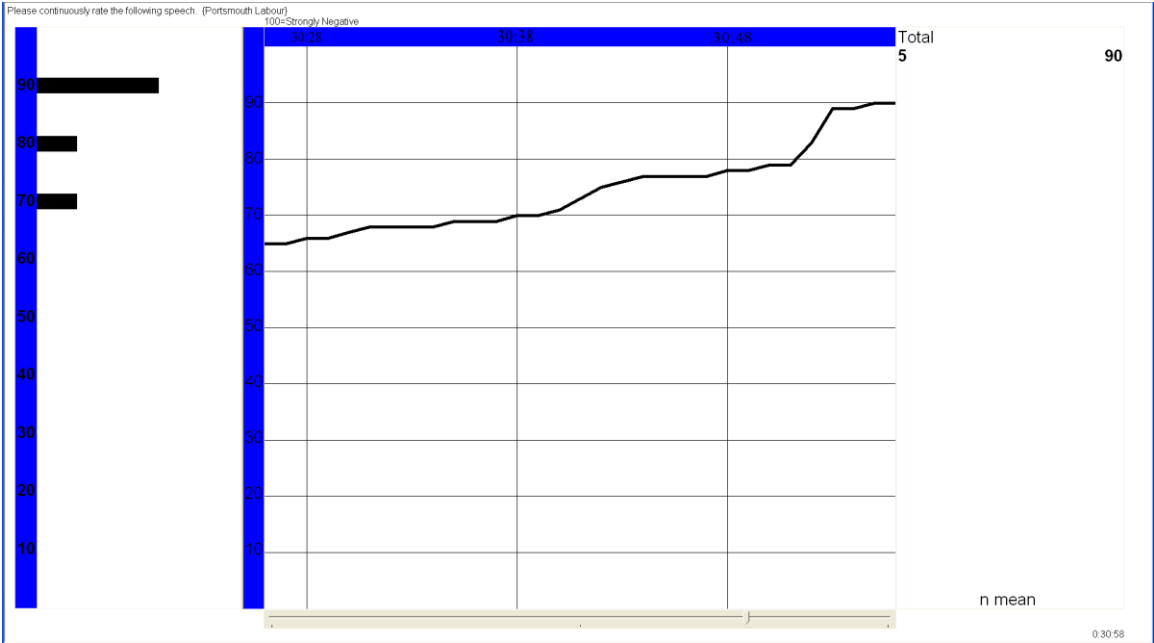
Figure 9.68: Sudanese Group
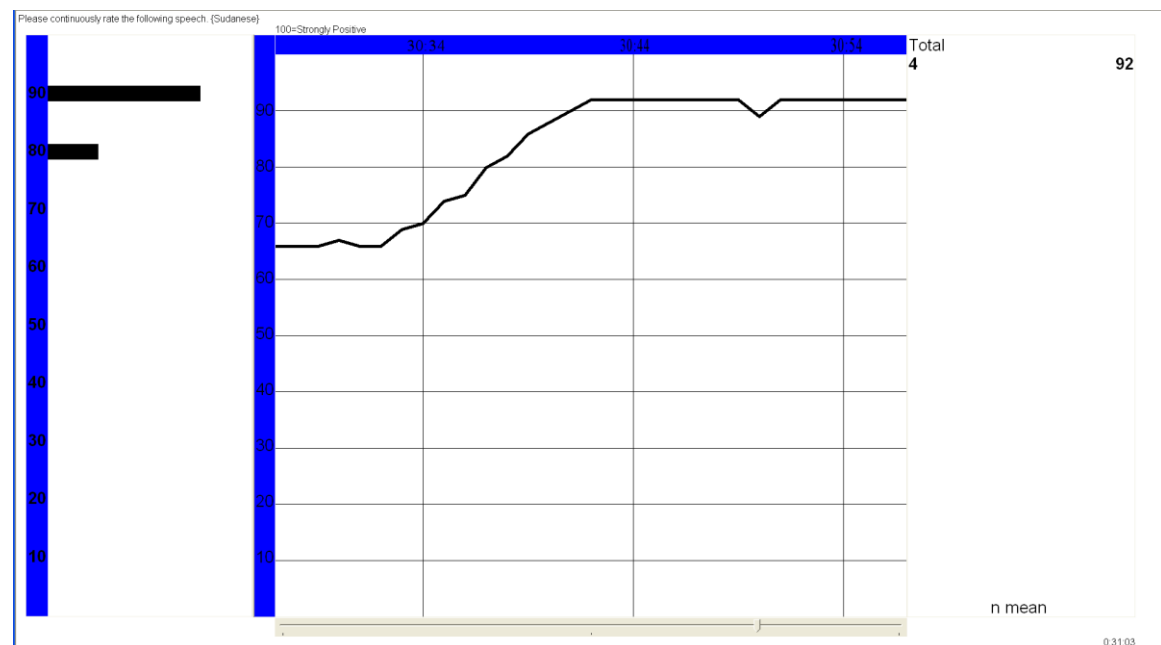
Textually, Obama moves to once again ground his candidacy in his belief through the use of constitutive rhetoric: "I" would not be running if "I" did not believe that this "is what the vast majority of Americans want for this country." As a proposition, it may or may not be true, but by constituting the American people, the second persona, in such a way that coincides with the first persona, Obama's personal conviction, Obama's interests of winning the presidency are identified with the values of the constituted American people. He further constitutes a section of the American public, young people, as "hopeful" and "openness to change," an appeal that saw a PNAR increase with the Aberystwyth Conservative Future group, all young students:

Figure 9.69: Aberyswyth Conservative Future Group
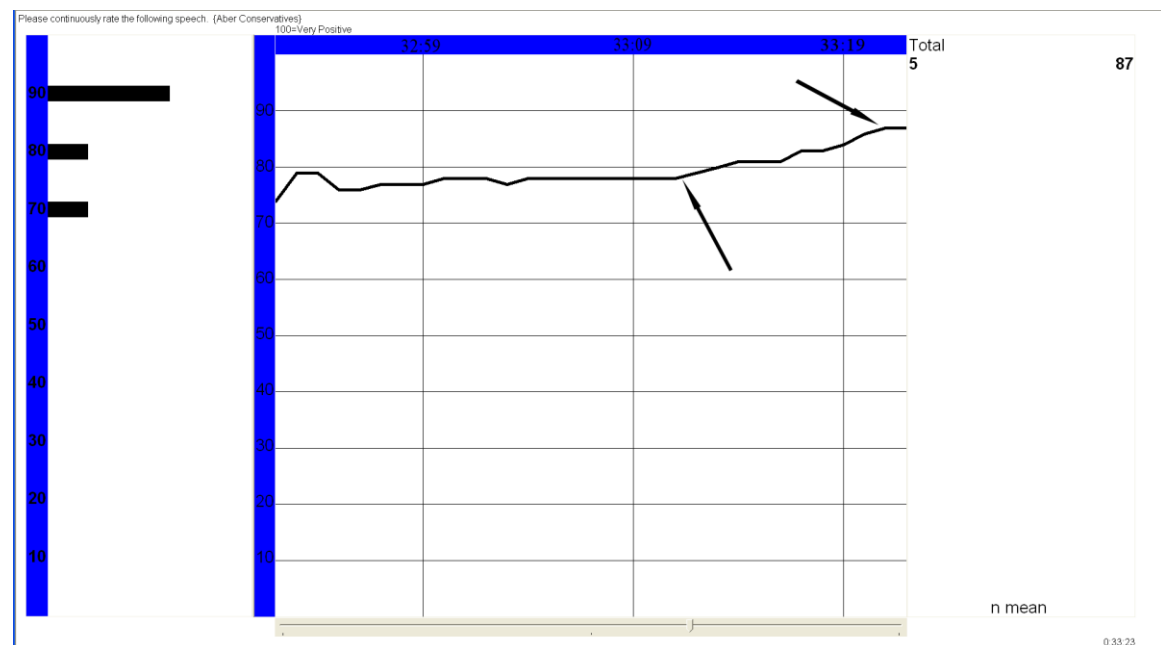
Echoing the earlier bout of skepticism in Obama's idealism, one Sudanese participant felt that these the policies and solutions Obama outlined were insufficient when compared to the challenges Americans faced:

> *Participant 2*: He's a good speaker. And yes the speech was emotional. But I think the negative thing about it is great expectations and at some point I was just thinking he was mentioning all the facts, OK, but will he be able to change all these things? As if it is over-estimating, you know? I don't know how to express it but now I think after what [Participant 4] said, I think yes he touched something inside me but the missing thing was... the negative feeling that I felt is about...and he's talking about all these things but what will you do? And it just kind of mentioned the facts, but...
> *Moderator*: And when you felt this way, you felt negative did you turn the dial down?
> *Participant 2*: Yes. Yes (Sudanese, 2010).

Like many other focus group participants, Obama's appeals to racial unity were labeled as "positive," however, like Participant 2, Participant 4 too felt there was a lack of substantive discussion of forward-moving action:

> *Participant 4*: I felt more positive when he started talking about race and bridging the gaps between the races
> Participant 2: Yeah.
> *Moderator*: So, what was going on there for you when he was talking about bridging the gaps between the races.

Participant 4: As a theory, as a theory.
Moderator: Yeah. What is it about that that you like though?
Participant 4: Well, it's...we're all humans, this is how I feel, and I it doesn't matter whether I'm black or red or white, it's all the same and we still have the same blood in the same veins. But ignorance is one of the problems and to educate people not to discriminate against color [inaudible], that's what I think. What I felt negative about the speech itself was that you're the candidate, you know that there should be introduction, action plans and then conclusion, it wasn't well constructed...
Moderator: So it was a lack of an action plan?
Participant 4: Mmm-hmm.
Moderator: OK. So a lack of concrete action, "here's what we're going to do". OK.
Participant 2: The positive thing, yes, when he focused on minimizing the gaps and giving more opportunities to black people and you know other deprived people and I think he talked about the new generation, the kids and this, if I...I think he talked about this (Sudanese, 2010).

Obama ends with a representative anecdote. In many ways, it is a vivid example (*enargia*) meant to bring everything Obama has been talking about before his auditor's eyes. He is also arguing from the topic of possibility, arguing in principle that what has already happened can happen again. Finally, it also shows how two people from different backgrounds refused to view Obama's candidacy through the "racial lens" and instead identified through a common challenge. Consubstantiality is what Obama is offering his auditor, it is the starting point for social action, and consubstantiality is possible because of the progress his "coalition" has already made. One participant from the Portsmouth Labour group felt dissatisfied with Obama's ending, noting he preferred Obama's appeals to unity rather than focusing on personal stories:

Participant 4: But to me the most interesting parts of the speech were sort of when he got into the less when he focused on personal. On the end bit I don't think he ended as strongly as the section right before when he talked about the visions of blacks, Latinos, and whites all in, all queuing up in you know long waiting lines...
Moderator: So when he was talking about that, that was...
Participant 4: That was more positive to me than focusing on individual stories that...Anabell or whoever it was at the end there, um...
Moderator: You didn't like that...
Participant 4: To me, no...it's somethin' which I'm not too keen on that was done a lot um Nick Clegg in the last elections where everything was specific to someone's story which...
Participant 2: See I thought it was very moving but then that's a very good point, actually.

Participant 4: It might have just been me, maybe he was just trying to...
Moderator: What did everyone else think about the ending of the speech?
Participant 3: Well the ending of the speech is moving, like I said, there's an emotional aspect to...
Participant 7: Bring your emotions into the thought process of what you're listening to...
Moderator: And that's how it worked for you? It brought your emotions into...
Participant 7: Yeah, it brings your emotions closer to the situation
Participant 2: Yeah...
Participant 7: I mean talk about "Ashley" sort of thing I mean, OK, everyone knows an Ashley in someway or another through their own niece, nephew, daughter, whatever, you know, someone's that, you know, had some difficult times is what I'm tryin' to say...um so the emot-, through that personal story it brings your emotions into it, brings you out to passion, of yourself as a human being, to think "yeah, what he's saying it true" or, so I just think the personal touch, I can see what [Participant 4] is sayin' but my, from a speech, a motivational...point of view I think he's done it right, 'cause it does bring people in, people don't always think with they're mind they think with they're heart...[inaudible "yeah's"]
Participant 4: I guess maybe being English, they don't connect as well with the sort of race and sort of slavery issues is a word to sort of bring out an emotional connection to something else. You know, more of an English... (Portsmouth Labour, 2010).

Interestingly, another participant in the Cardiff Council group (who incidentally is of the same political affiliation) related this strategy of personal narrative to not Nick Clegg, but David Cameron:

> *Participant 3*: Um I think again he's a fantastic orator, you can't take away his public speaking ability, it is unquestionably very high. Um I found, in terms of his stories, his stories were good they were very well delivered, um I think he uses stories a lot to emotionally hook people in, which I think is something British politician have started to do a lot more, you know "I met this..." David Cameron was like "I met this child who gave me a pound because she wanted to change..." and I find a lot of David Cameron's style reflects what Obama did very much in terms of pushin' the need for change; they both campaigned along similar lines in that sense. Um, for me there was a big push and in his campaign he was going to have to address the race issue, but for me personally that wouldn't be something that would connect with me because that's not how I perceive the world. So almost, and it's hard to place myself as a white American because I'm not an American (Cardiff Council, 2010).

Later, however, upon being asked to detail her response that "that's not how I perceive the world," the participant took a much different stance:

> *Moderator*: I wanted to ask you one more thing. At the beginning when you said where Cameron had adapted some of his storytelling, how did that

specifically relate to you when Obama was using stories, you said you didn't relate to them or...

Participant 3: No, I did relate to them and I think stories can be very powerful. Um, maybe some cynicism comes back in now looking at this speech because of what Cameron has done and how Cameron has utilized those tools, so now we're almost lookin' back [...].

Moderator: And did you turn the dial up or down, typically, when one of the stories came...

Participant 3: Umm...I turned it up, but I think women in particular, in my experience relate more to emotional stories. And in my experience men tend just to go "oh they're just tryin' to pawn us off with something" (ibid).

I. The Text: Conclusion

In "A More Perfect Union," Barack Obama delivered a speech on race which sought to unify voters under the banner of the Obama Coalition, synecdochally and strategically represented through the transcendent term "Americans," for the 2008 General Election. He identifies his personal story and his presidential campaign with the American experience. Obama constructs the American experience as a process of social action grounded in the normative, but ultimately unfinished status of the United States Constitution. Obama identifies his campaign with the unfinished document by claiming the mantle of social progress. For Obama, social progress has been delayed due to decades of interracial anger, which for Obama is simultaneously justified and unproductive. Obama seeks to redirect interracial anger by constituting audiences previously divided along racial lines as identified through a shared socioeconomic struggle. Obama offers his newly constituted audience new terms of division, namely corporate greed, questionable accounting practices and unfair economic policies, through which to be identified.

J. Audience Response: Conclusion

A close reading of the speech combined with a close reading of the focus group data indicates a range of interpretations and decodings offered up by each focus group. There are inter- and intra-focus group points of convergence and divergence between a focus group's positive or negative interpretation of Barack Obama's "A More Perfect Union." The first and perhaps most obvious point is that many of the rhetorical strategies marshaled by Obama did not always function in the way of the rhetorical analysis, which sought to understand the intentional design of the text as it pertained to a key politically moderate American audience, originally anticipated. Several

participants in the Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group expressed admiration for both George W. Bush and Ronald Reagan; the trope of economic populism and a scapegoating of its antithesis, "trickle down" economics, proved to be an ineffective Othering device for that group. Conversely, Obama's appeals to a sense of consubstantial religious identification through a shared Christian faith were spurned not just by the Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group, but by at least one participant in every group. Another series of polysemic moments occurred when Obama discussed racial tensions in the United States. At least one participant in each group expressed positive sentiment for Obama's attempts to unite previously divided racial audiences, speaking of "togetherness" or "bridging gaps between the races." Placing this interpretation in the context theory is intriguing: identification would not just be a way of gaining favor with an audience, it would also become an inextricable part of the encoder's *ethos* (think George W. Bush's campaign assertion that he was a "uniter, not a divider.") While there was a general consensus about these appeals as "positive" or "emotional," two participants in the Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group (and one in the Sudanese Group) felt that by naming different races Obama was purposefully dividing American audiences. Race was something not to be discussed, and as one participant asserted, his attempts to divide his audiences were "sort of backwards."

The speech also triggered discussions on a wide range of topics. One participant in the Aberystwyth Conservative Future, for example, identified with Obama's attempts to reform the American health care system because he thought "America is a very, very unfair nation." Another participant in the Sudanese Group felt that, no matter the policies put forth by the executive of the United States, a "global power" hindered him or her from making fundamental changes. The use of personal stories, including his own, in Obama's speeches sparked conversations in several groups about the role of the personal in politics. One Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group member felt that Obama's use of personal stories was representative of the American way if doing things, as he said, "America makes a big deal about the personal." Interestingly, this led to a discussion that on the one hand resulted in several participants showing disdain for Obama's use of personal stories and how they don't have a place in politics while simultaneously detailing David Cameron's personal circumstances at great length. In sum, then, the focus groups convened used a set of sometimes

contradictory decoding equipment to interpret the text which saw moments of identification and division from the speech and Obama's professed values, views and policy positions.

X. Speech Analysis: Post-Partisan America and Obama's "The American Promise"

A. Outline

This chapter is a rhetorical analysis of Barack Obama's "American Promise" speech delivered at the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver Colorado. This chapter justifies a *teleological* reading by illuminating the immediate context to the speech, several of the challenges Obama faced and the intrinsic features of the text. This rhetorical analysis is carefully interleafed with focus group and moment-to-moment audience response data to demonstrate not just how the text functions rhetorically but how it is received and interpreted by audiences.

B. Context

It was a warm summer evening in the city that perches a mile above sea level: Denver, Colorado. While the night was still, the city was bustling, and had been for over a week, as delegates of the Democratic Party from all over the nation gathered to finally select their nominee for President of the United States. Earlier in the day, their nominee Barack Obama could be found in his hotel room finishing his campaign address with senior campaign staff. As his biographical video came to an end, the campaign theme music cued and Barack Obama walked on to the stage to address eighty thousand screaming supporters, and tens of millions more across the nation, to accept his party's nomination.

These gatherings, exercised every four years, originated as an assembly of delegates, born out of urgency, to select their nominee for the highest office in the land. For the past several election cycles, this had changed. "Conventions aren't what they used to be," says David Plouffe, campaign manager for Obama's 2008 presidential bid. Dan Balz and Haynes Johnson agree: "by 2008 the national political convention had become a charade, robbed of suspense, its outcome determined well in advance." In the words of Ruth Holloway, conventions have become "highly scripted political rituals, part political rally and part infomercial (2008)." Something about this particular convention, however, seemed different. In the weeks leading up to Obama's speech, something was particularly pressing.

Obama certainly recognized it as such. His campaign manager David Plouffe recalls a conversation in which Obama called the speech "the most important I may ever give," and while every nomination acceptance address should unify the base and draw clear distinctions between parties, this particular occasion called for nothing less than precision; a rhetorical masterpiece addressing a dire situation (Carville and Begala, 2006: 21). The American people seem to have sensed it as well. A few days after the speech, Nielson Ratings would calculate that Obama's acceptance address was the most watched convention acceptance address in recorded history, over thirty eight million viewers nationwide with billions of hits on the DNC website.

In the weeks and months before the speech, during the summer of 2008, Barack Obama faced three rhetorical exigencies. First, a prolonged primary season put millions of Hillary Clinton supporters on the fence about the general election: voters who were either leaning towards Obama, undecided, leaning towards or openly supporting John McCain. The party had to be unified to avoid electoral defeat; the "down ticket strategy" depends on a strong presidential candidate sweeping minor candidates of the same party into office. Second, Obama had to lay out the case to the American voter for why his candidacy was preferable to John McCain and the Republican alternative. Finally, he had to allay the lingering doubts concerning his own candidacy. The remaining contextualization of Obama's acceptance address expands upon these three interconnected rhetorical exigencies.

As the convention approached, many embattled Clinton supporters remained unconvinced of Obama's ability to win the general election. A Gallup poll in the days leading up to the convention found only 47% of former Clinton supporters indicated they would vote for Obama. 16% would switch parties to vote for McCain, while 14% remained undecided. When reports surfaced that Clinton had not even been vetted for the vice-presidential spot on the ticket, many Clinton supporters took it, according to Balz and Johnson, "as the ultimate snub (Balz and Johnson, 2008: 315; Holloway, 2008: 20; Smith, 2008: 48)." In a retrospective account of the election, David Plouffe confirmed these accounts:

> We needed to put the final nail in the coffin of the bloody-primary/fractured-party story line. In both perception and reality, we needed to come roaring out of the   convention a unified, powerful Democratic Party (Plouffe, 2009).

Even as it began, *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd described the underlying emotional tone at the convention as one of "submerged hate (Balz and Johnson, 2008; Dowd, 2008)." Clinton supporters were eighteen million strong, and in an election that for the past two cycles had been razor thin, Obama needed this acceptance address to garner as much support from the fractured Democratic base as possible.

Overcoming a heated primary season that was longer than any in recent memory to unify a diverse coalition of voters would be difficult enough in itself. As if unifying the base were not enough, Barack Obama faced a second exigency: laying out the case against John McCain and the Republican Party. "By the time we wrapped up," recalled David Plouffe, "there could be no doubt in the public mind about the different directions in which these two men would lead the country (2009: 299)." As the convention began, Gallup issued two polls that indicated a statistical dead heat between Obama and McCain (Holloway, 2008:15). Normally candidates see post-convention poll increases, but the Republican National Convention would begin in the Twin Cities in less than a week from the Democratic Convention and John McCain was set to announce his vice-presidential pick the day after the Democratic National Convention. National conventions offer candidates a chance to mold their message for the remainder of the campaign, so whatever Obama said that night needed to be effective and resonate for the duration of the general election.

The third challenge Obama faced on the night of August 28, 2008 was the need to address his audience about himself as a candidate. A Washington Post/ABC poll showed that only 50% of respondents felt Obama had enough experience to serve as President (Holloway, 2008: 19; Balz and Johnson, 2008: 321). David Plouffe recalls that they "needed to introduce Barack's personal story to millions of Americans who still did not know it—his humble beginnings, strong values, and deep love for [the] country (2009)." While this would be an overarching theme of the convention, Obama's speech needed to "build on what Michelle and some other speakers had done that week by talking about his family and values, and to a lesser extent his experience. This would make his motivation and commitment to help the middle class more authentic and believable—he and Michelle had walked in those shoes almost their entire lives (ibid, 2000)." The source of this unease with Obama as a

candidate is wide-ranging. Barack Obama needed to place his story and candidacy in a context that made leaning and independent voters comfortable: his Muslim father, strange name, ethnicity, and international upbringing were anything but typical of a presidential candidate. This initial deviation from *doxa* was amplified by a series of controversies that occurred during the primaries but had not yet receded from the public sphere, and were presumed to continue through the general election. Each fed an emerging narrative crafted by his political opponents that "he" is not one of "us".

First, a photograph emerged during the primaries of Obama's visit to Africa in which he customarily adorned the local tribal dress. The photograph, taken on Obama's trip to Kenya in 2006, broke on the *Drudge Report* in late February 2008, just days before the Texas and Ohio primaries (BBC, 2008). Clinton staffers reportedly circulated the photograph, and though the campaign denied having anything to do with the photograph, one can see from a strictly electoral perspective how the photograph could reinforce the "otherness" associated with Obama and prove helpful to the Clinton campaign, especially in states like Pennsylvania and West Virginia with lower middle-class Democratic 'values voters,' many of whom had voted for Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush.

Second, Obama's patriotism was called into question when he refused to wear a flag lapel pin during public appearances. Third, there was the decontextualized soundbite by Michelle Obama in which she was recorded saying "for the first time in my adult lifetime, I am really proud of my country," and, according to a *Times* article, "[had] been invoked by Republicans in an effort to portray Mr. Obama as culturally unlike the people he is asking to vote for him, a historically potent line of attack (Nagourney, 2008). Fourth, one of Obama's economic advisers, though not on the pay roll, had reportedly met with Canadian diplomats to assuage concern over Obama's anti-NAFTA rhetoric during the campaign, assuring them it was more political positioning than reality (Plouffe, 2009: 195).

Fifth, there were two characters out of step with the American cultural values political opponents tried to associate with Obama. Tony Rezco, a high-powered Chicago fundraiser had during the course of the primary been indicted on counts of fraud. Clinton alleged Obama worked for Rezco earlier in his career. A character who would

surface during the general election was William Ayers, co-founder of The Weather Underground, a violent splinter group of Students for a Democratic Society who engaged in domestic terrorism during the 1960's. Ayers hosted a meet-and-greet for Barack Obama early in his political career as well as served on various non-profit committees with Obama in the Greater Chicago area. While Obama had nothing to do with either of their encounters with the law, guilt by association can often be just as electorally damaging.

Sixth, there was the Jeremiah Wright controversy, which had surfaced earlier in the primaries but burst back into the spotlight on March 14th, 2008 and continued with several public appearances by Reverend Wright. What is important here is how the Jeremiah Wright controversy fed into the otherness of Obama's candidacy. After the election, Obama would recall that the controversy brought on "a very volatile clash of visions," one "that may be more acceptable in some circles in the African-American community but is never acceptable in mainstream America (Balz and Johnson, 2008: 201-206)." According to David Plouffe, the Wright controversy "threatened to undermine the profile we had spent fifteen months building: Obama was someone who sought to and would bridge divides, a man of deep faith, a steady leader and pragmatic problem solver (2009: 208)."

As if this was not enough, days later the infamous "Bittergate" controversy emerged; taped audio of Obama at a private fundraising event in San Francisco in which he was recorded as saying:

> "You go into some of these small towns in Pennsylvania, and like a lot of small towns in the Midwest, the jobs have been gone now for twenty years and nothing's replaced them," […] Each successive administration has said that somehow these communities are gonna regenerate and they have not. So it's not surprising that when they get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or antitrade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations (ibid)."

Plouffe knew how the recording would play out: "standing in front of a room full of wealthy donors in San Francisco—to much of the country a culturally extreme and elitist city with far-out-views speaking in anthropological terms about the middle of the country; describing the setting, it really couldn't sound much worse (2009: 216)."

The controversy "gave critics fresh evidence that he was out of touch with the real America," say Balz and Johnson, and "[since] Ohio, Hillary had argued that she was the real champion of the beleaguered middle class, while Obama was the darling of the latte-drinkers. Now they had a vivid example and were determined to push it (2008: 206; Zeleny, 2008)." As a result of these two scandals, Balz and Johnson maintain, "doubts about his values and his patriotism had grown, adding to concerns about whether he could win the general election (2008: 211)." At the time the tape emerged, Clinton made just that argument, saying that his comments were "not reflective of the values and beliefs of Americans (Seelye, K and Zeleny, J, 2008)." The remarks could offer an opening to the McCain campaign as well with "Reagan Democrats, whose economic condition would seem to make them likely Democratic voters but whose social values align with a more conservative agenda (ibid)."

The presumptive nominee, McCain and his campaign had already commenced their barrage: "It shows an elitism and condescension toward hard-working Americans that is nothing short of breathtaking," said Steve Schmidt, a senior adviser to Senator McCain. "It is hard to imagine someone running for president who is more out of touch with average Americans (Zeleny, 2008)." Andrew Kohut, director of the Pew Research Center, saw in many polls that "[race] is intertwined with a broader notion that [Obama] is not one of us," and that "[voters] react negatively to people who are seen as different (Nagourney, A, 2008)."

This series of controversies seemed to only exacerbate unease with Obama as an untraditional candidate, as an outsider. Amid the "bittergate" controversy, senior political adviser to Obama David Axelrod could only acknowledge Obama's perceived position as outside of what up to that point had been expected in presidential candidates:

> "I'm sure there is some of that, and I think there is a general inclination on the part of the older voters to vote for what is more familiar." He added: "Here's a guy named Barack Obama, an African-American guy, relatively new. That's a lot of change (Nagourney, 2008)."

Anita Dunn, Obama's communication director, echoed Axelrod's admission: "It was much more that he had an exotic name, a different background. It was a proxy for

'He's weird,' for 'otherness' (Balz and Johnson, 2008: 304)." When it came to the Republican strategy of patriotism and identifying what is American and non-American, Obama's campaign could not afford for the dominant narrative to place him outside the cultural values, opinions, attitudes, and beliefs of the American voter.

By the time Wright and the "bittergate" scandal ruptured, the fourteen-month primary campaign was drawing to a close. By June 4, 2008 Obama secured enough delegates to end the Democratic primaries, becoming the first presumptive African-American presidential nominee. Still, two and a half months later in late August, each of these controversies lingered with the number of undecided voters dwindling daily and the race at a statistical dead heat. Moreover, while Obama sought to lay these ghosts to rest during and immediately after the primary in now famous speeches such as his speech on patriotism in Independence, Missouri on June 30th or his "More Perfect Union" speech on race and the Wright controversy, it was reasonable to assume that if "the Wright, Rezko, Ayers, "bittergate" and flag-pin firestorms" had even a sliver of lasting resonance with unhappy Clinton supporters or independent voters, they would most assuredly "be revived by the opposition come fall (Rich, 2008c)."

With the need to unify the Democratic Party, present a strong case against the Republican Party, and reassure voters about his own candidacy in full view, we can approach the text *teleologically*, with identification in mind. There is a clear parallel structure between Kenneth Burke's theory of identification and the immediate exigencies of Obama's 2008 Democratic National Convention acceptance address. While Kenneth Burke talks about antithesis as a route of identification, "we *are* what we *are not*," Obama lays out a strong case against John McCain, associating him with George W. Bush and ingratiating the American voter by defining what is best about his or her country through the failures of the past eight years. In other words, "America is, what it has not been" since the Republicans took office. Such a maneuver goads Democrats who might have voted for McCain because Obama is not "one of us" to think again.

Finally, Burke speaks about the simplest case of identification consisting of "shared speech, tonality, gesture, and idea," while Obama creates a powerful communicative relationship between his candidacy, his story, and his construction of the larger

American experience. The movement of Obama's speech builds on itself, and in the process each appeal of identification feeds into the other. With purpose and immediate context in mind, we can now approach the speech as it progressed in real time to influence the world around it. In sum, reading Obama's convention speech *teleologically* with identification as a guide is justified through the call for identification and division in Burke's philosophy of human relations in general, the convention acceptance address genre, and the immediate context running up to the address in particular (Carville and Begala, 2005; Burke, 1962).

C. The Text: Rhetoric of the Date of the Speech

Before a word was spoken on the convention floor, there was a conscious decision made by the Democratic Party to hold the nominee's acceptance speech on the 50th year anniversary of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington D.C. at the Lincoln Memorial. This association takes on a life of its own in the speech, but the same date of the two addresses provides immediate reinforcement of Obama's attempts to place his candidacy in a larger American narrative. The association gains electoral force for any voters unconvinced of Obama but who venerate Dr. King. This too is a site of potential symbolic identification between the speaker and auditor/viewer before the speech even begins; there is a rhetorically constructed continuity between King and Obama before Obama even speaks, and Obama uses the speech text to remind his audience of this continuity.

D. The Text: Length & Structure

Most versions of this speech accessible via YouTube have Obama's convention speech at approximately forty minutes in length. The overarching structure of the speech fits neatly with the evidence presented of the exigencies that needed to be addressed. First, Obama places his personal story and presidential candidacy in the context of a larger American narrative, what he calls the "American Promise." He defines that promise, indicates that the country has strayed from that promise, and that this deviation is a result of Republican governance. He then offers a parallel antithesis of what the Democratic Party stands for, associates once again the party and his own personal narrative with America's promise, and proceeds to lay out his vision of Change which will halt the nation's deviation and return the nation to its promise. Obama then subdivides his vision of the American Promise by continuing the

antithesis between himself and John McCain in the area of foreign policy. Barack Obama proceeds to disable McCain's previous attempts at antithesis by ending on a note of universal American patriotism, and in doing so Obama moves to finish his speech by calling for a "new politics" that bridges Washington divides and associates his abilities as a transcendent candidate with the American Promise. After refuting several anticipated arguments that might be made against his candidacy, Obama ends as he began with defining the American Promise and placing his candidacy in the historical context of the American people and their role in social movements. Fitting with the occasion, Obama ends with a direct comparison with his campaign, King's "I Have a Dream" speech, and the American Promise. This, in short, is a textual description of the overall structure of the speech: like the contextualization suggests, Obama moves from associating himself and the Democratic Party with his vision of the larger American historical narrative while pushing the Republicans, and George W. Bush and John McCain in particular, firmly outside the American Promise. Yet a close textual analysis reveals a subtle, more intricate pattern of identification that begins and ends on a note of consubstantiality. It begins with a constitutive identification of the self and a constitutive identification of the American people so that the self can be identified with the American people.

E. The Reception: Key Numbers and Aggregate Interpretation

For the purposes of this research, four focus groups were organized for participants to watch and discuss this speech along with more general themes such as the election and Barack Obama. In addition to discussion, participants used dial-testing to measure their positive and negative sentiment towards the speech on a second-by-second basis. The aggregate reading at any given second is called the Positive/Negative Aggregate Response (PNAR). A total of 23 respondents attended focus group sessions in Aberystwyth and Cardiff. Due to hardware failure, 21 out of 23 participants were able to offer moment-to-moment audience response data. Another hardware malfunction led to a failure to record for the Cardiff Labour group and the Welsh Lib Dem group the last 5 minutes of the speech. All 23 participants were recorded verbally, however, and the speech generated over 30,000 words of focus group transcripts. Participants were recruited from the Cardiff University Labour Society (Cardiff Labour Group), the International Politics Society at Aberystwyth University (Interpol Group), political professionals working at the National Assembly for the Welsh Liberal

Democrats (Welsh Lib Dem Group) and finally Americans studying at Cardiff University (American Group).

Out of the 23 participants, most were under the age of 24, overwhelmingly white, three-quarters male, at least somewhat favorable to Barack Obama, unreligious, typically unwaged but probably only because of their status as students. In terms of the *interpretation* of the speech via dial-testing, the Welsh Liberal Democrats responded with the highest PNAR, followed by the American group, then Interpol and lastly the Cardiff Labour group as illustrated in Figure 10.1, Figure 10.2, Figure 10.3 and Figure 10.4 with the mean score in the top right hand corner of the figure:

Figure 10.1: Welsh Lib Dem Group
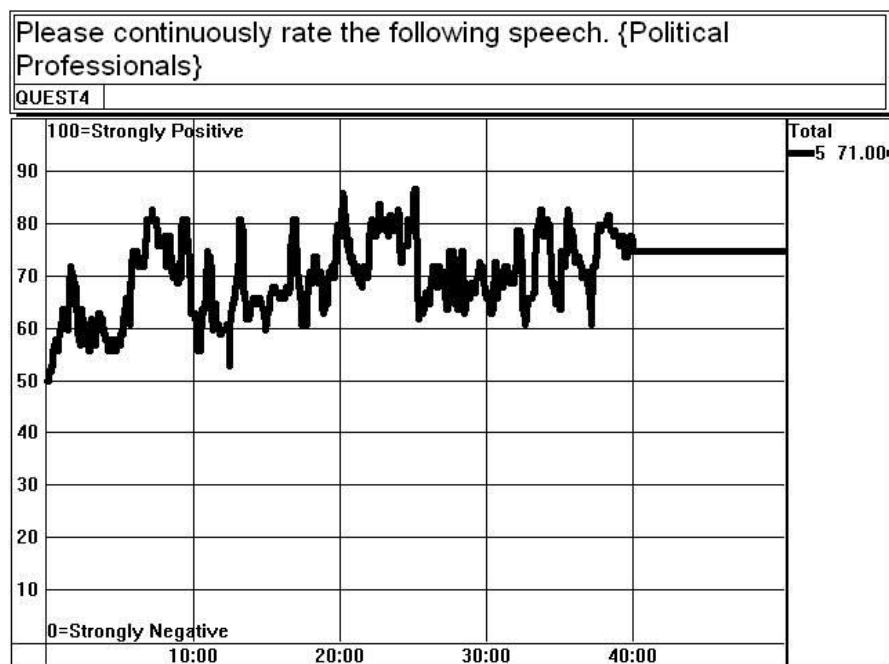
Figure 10.2: American Group

Please continuously rate the following speech. {Group 1}
QUEST9
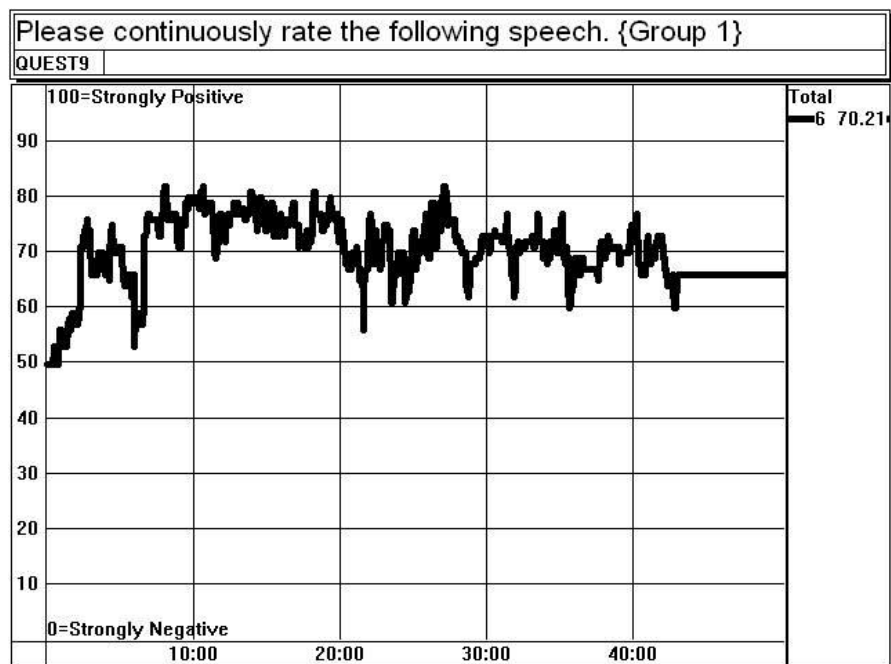
Figure 10.3: Interpol Group

Please continuously rate the following speech. {Group 1}
QUEST7
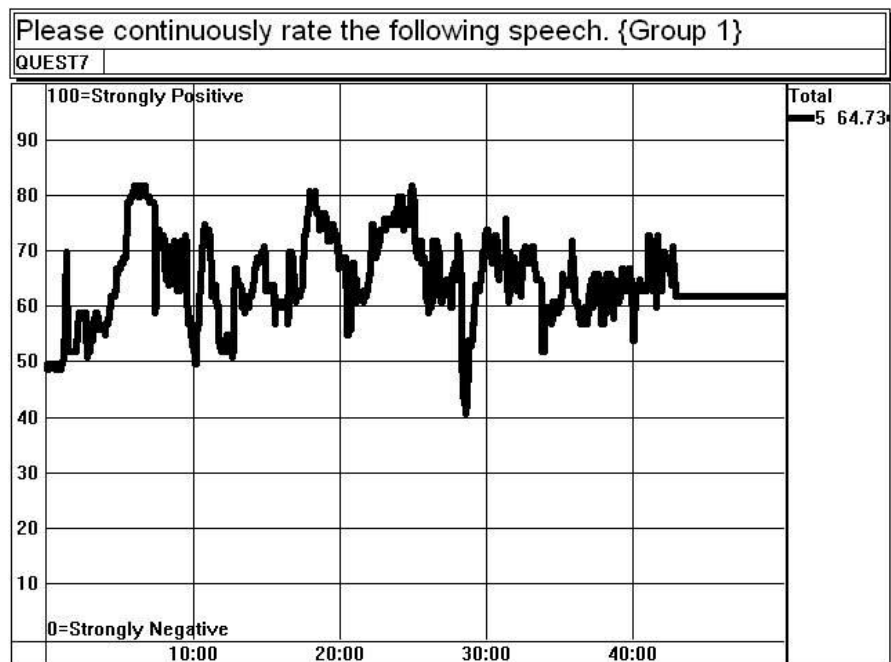
Figure 10.4: Cardiff Labour Group

Please continuously rate the following speech. {Group 1}
QUEST

100=Very Positive — Total ■0 53.09

0=Very Negative
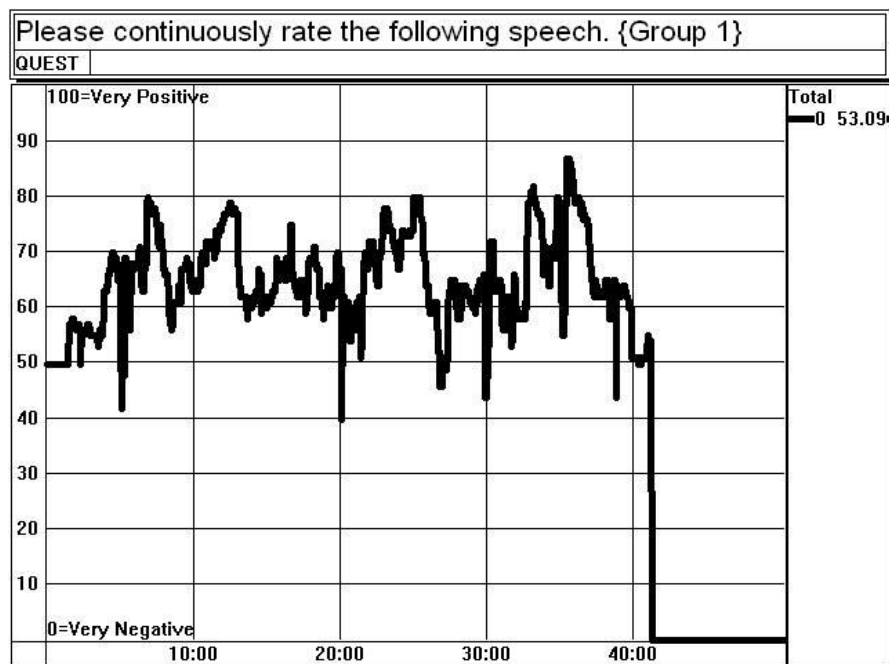
As these figures show, different points in the speech led to volatile and sometimes unpredictable readings within and between groups. While these graphs may look jumbled or confusing, the rest of the chapter is dedicated to unpacking the audience's verbal and dial-tested interpretation of the speech as well as a close rhetorical reading of how the devices Obama employs function on an intentional, persuasive level.

F. The Text: Internal Movement of "America's Promise"
i. Defining an Audience; Defining a Candidacy

Obama begins his speech by fulfilling the most pressing and immediate purpose: accepting his party's nomination. Even with something as banal as declaring an acceptance that was completely expected, Obama begins constructing the first and second persona. He, like his audience, is a fellow citizen of a great nation. He accepts the nomination "with profound gratitude," and "great humility," two qualities that describe how he performs the action "accepting." The first persona Obama has already begun to build is thickened for anyone who admires the qualities of gratitude and humility. As Figure 10.5, Figure 10.6, Figure 10.7 and Figure 10.8 show, the PNAR of each dial-testing group increased (Cardiff Labour, +7 to 57; Interpol, +15 to 70; Welsh Lib Dems, +12 to 72; Americans, +5 to 58) in positive feelings towards the

speech, while Interpol quickly decreased in PNAR (-18 to 52) during the applause after the acceptance:

Figure 10.5: Cardiff Labour Group
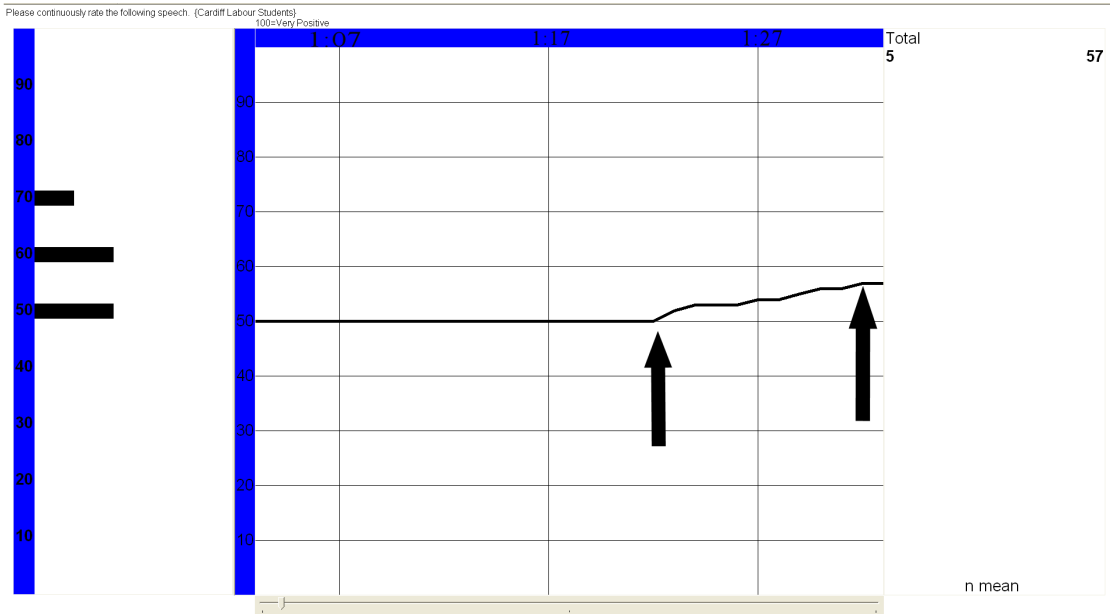
Figure 10.6: Interpol Group
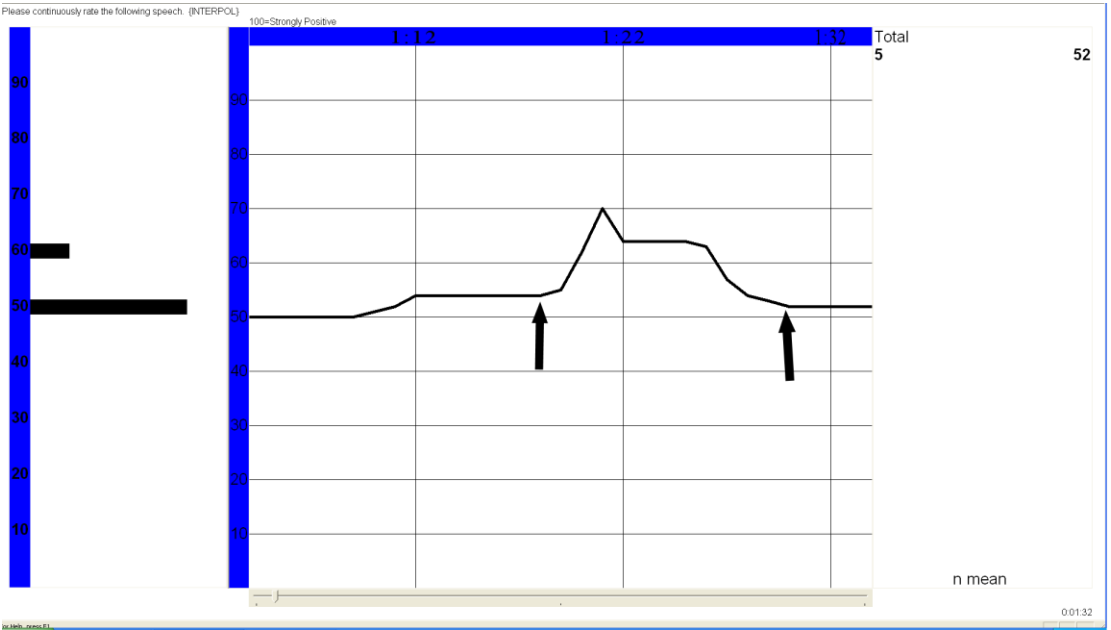
Figure 10.7: Welsh Lib Dem Group
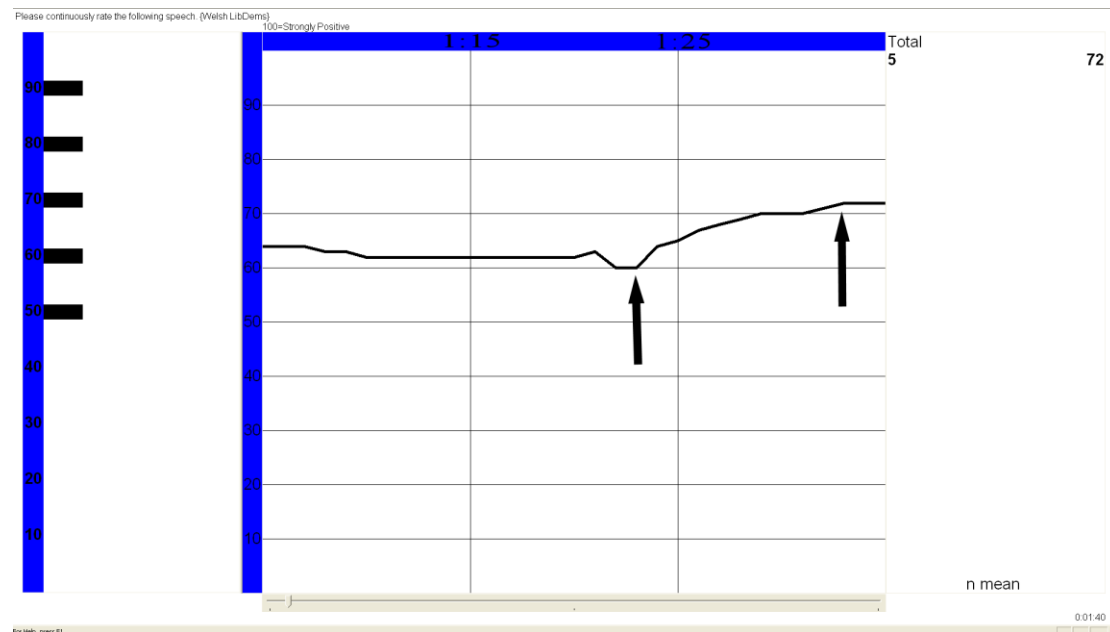
Figure 10.8: American Group
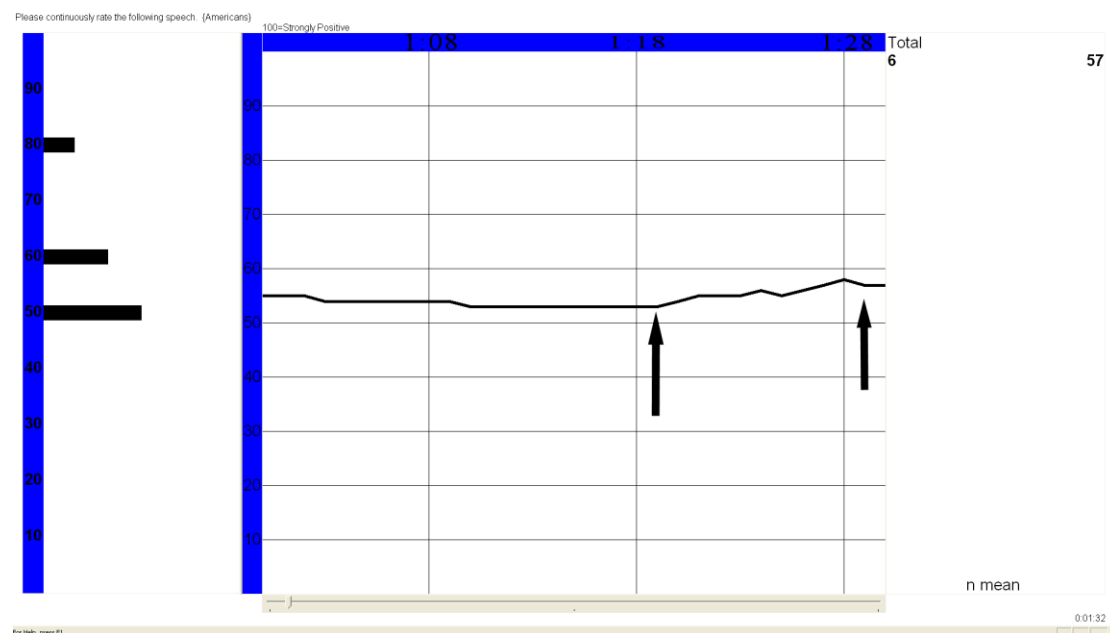
After accepting the nomination, Obama thanks "the historic slate of candidates," and in particular Hillary Clinton, Bill Clinton, Edward Kennedy, and his vice-presidential choice, Joe Biden. On the surface, it is completely appropriate to thank these fellow Democrats: they attended the convention, gave speeches on his behalf, and each had committed their lives to the Democratic Party. But, as Westen and Lakoff have been at pains to uncover, by invoking each of their names Obama would identify himself

with the audience's conscious and subconscious networks of associations of feelings with each politician (Westen, 2007; Lakoff, 2004).

When Obama says he wants to thank these people, he moves to praise them. When he praises Biden, he is vicariously boasting about the Obama/Biden ticket. When he praises other Democrats who so happen support his candidacy, he bolsters his own case. It would be a breach of decorum to criticize Hillary Clinton as was done during the primaries; it is now time to praise her and in doing so provides Clinton supporters an avenue to transcend an intra-party conflict and move towards an inter-party conflict. Among the aspects of Aristotle's treatise on rhetoric which Burke drew upon to build his theory of identification, one is particularly indicative of this opening sequence of praise. To praise Clinton is to praise Clinton supporters. They can still feel justified in their initial choice and feel good about switching from Clinton to Obama for the general election because of the ingratiating praise. Praising Democratic leadership is praising oneself but also the audience because they are associated with, and identified with, one another. One participant in the Interpol group described this initial section as his favorite part of the speech:

> "Most positively...probably the start, when he was kind of thanking everyone in his campaign [...] It was just, it was the fact that he's...rather than being the traditional American candidate of 'it's just me, love me' it was acknowledging the fact that it wasn't just him, he's going to have a cabinet, and he's going to have all these people who are going to help him out and to keep them on side, it was a good move (Interpol, 2010)."

Hillary Clinton generally received an increase in dial status (Americans, +11 to 71; Welsh Lib Dems, +7 to 64; Interpol, +7 to 59; Cardiff Labour, -3 to 54). As Figure 10.9 shows, Cardiff Labour participants initially dropped six aggregate points due to one participant, a self-identified socialist who registered a "very unfavourable" score with feelings towards Obama in the pre-test questionnaire who moved the dial from a score of 48 to 10. The aggregate quickly rebounded during the applause given after Obama thanked Clinton with modest increases from other focus group participants resulting in the -3 aggregate drop:

Figure 10.9: Cardiff Labour Group
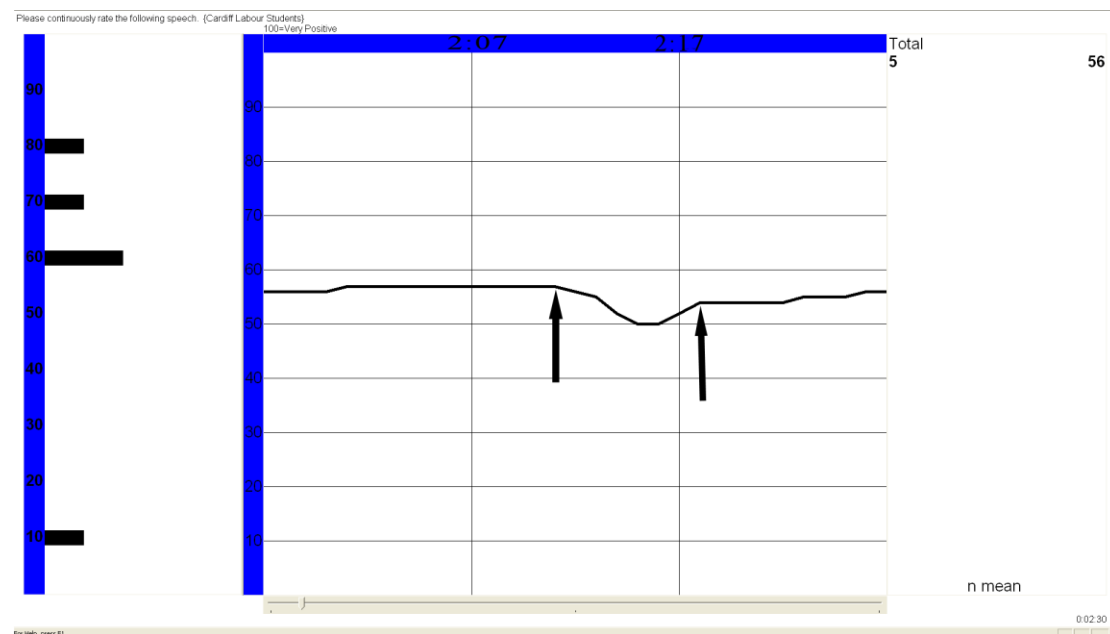
Obama's reference to President Bill Clinton received less fluctuation, with modest increases in dial status from the American group (+4) and a decrease in PNAR from the Welsh Liberal Democrat group (-6 to 58). One participant in the Interpol group interpreted Obama's simultaneous call for change and association with President Clinton: "I was surprised when he um referenced...when he was talking about President Clinton because his campaign is about change, so he was attacking like the past policies of Bush, and then he went back again to Clinton where he...his campaign is about the future, so...it didn't really add much to what he was trying to say but I just thought it was a bit um irrelevant to the rest of his speech (Interpol, 2010)." Finally, Obama's initial thanking of Biden produced mixed results from focus group participants (Americans, -8 to 66; Interpol: -8 to 51; Welsh Lib Dems, +6 to 62). The International Politics group would rebound by +5 in PNAR towards the speech as Obama elaborated his praise for Biden as one of the "finest statesmen of our time." Once Obama surrounds himself with his choice of heavy-hitting political figures, Obama shifts from praising fellow politicians to praising his family. The very mention of family in campaign oratory has become platitudinous in western late-industrial democracies; still, it certainly leaves rhetorical space to signify a valuing of his wife and two daughters, Michelle, Malia and Sasha. Or, at the very least, shows his desire to appear so. Through invoking the family, the speech becomes personal and intimate. It also serves as another avenue of identification for those that hold "the family man"

in high regard. Each focus group PNAR increased at the reference of either Michelle Obama (Interpol, +5 to 59; Welsh Lib Dems, +6 to 63; Americans, +4) or Malia and Sasha Obama (Cardiff Labour, +8 to 63). Despite this modest increase, at least one focus group participant felt negatively towards Obama discussing family: "I don't know if everyone else feels the same but I don't really care about politicians' families, I particularly think putting your daughters on television isn't a good idea (Welsh Lib Dems, 2010)." Still, one of the participants in the focus groups felt more positively towards Obama talking about his family while another was more skeptical:

> *Participant* 2: I liked his stories about his family but I think that's another obligatory thing along with the "God bless America" is everybody has to talk about their families. You know, they have to thank their wife, to thank their kids.
> *Participant 4*: It's marketing, that's all it is...
> *Participant 2*: And I think in his case I think he comes across as very genuine in that thanks, which is part of his appeal, but at the same time it is like even if he was faking it he'd have to do it so it does sort of diminish it (Americans, 2010).

After dedicating his speech and fulfilling the most immediate exigency, Obama continues establishing his persona through the next phase of his speech. He takes his audience back to the 2004 Democratic National Convention. There is a purpose behind this recollection, however, and it is to firmly establish a "communicative relationship," in Leff's words or in Burke's "consubstantiality" between himself and his audience. He repeats the narrative of his parents, who "weren't well off but shared a belief that in America, their son could achieve whatever he put his mind to." While there would be disagreement about the place of the personal in politics, there was a definite polysemic moment in the American group concerning this section of the speech:

> *Participant* 4: I just think that's a tactic that's been used before by presidents, and that really bothers me, and it's like um, who was it, Jimmy Carter who was uh a rocket scientist that said he was a peanut farmer? Because he wanted to get the American vote of like the people's people, he didn't want to be seen as an intelligent, you know, academic. He wanted to be seen as one of them, so he told everyone he came from a peanut farm in, I think it was Illinois or something, just, it's just, it's an easy tactic to use, I feel (Americans, 2010).

Another participant in the American group disagreed, however, and countered that "I felt like what [Obama] was saying that 'I've come from nothing,' which he has, I

don't think he's ever made, tried to hide it like Carter has, he's an educated individual, he's never said 'aw I didn't go to Harvard or Columbia' like he's made it clear, but he also makes it clear that 'I've gotten there from pretty destitute circumstances' (ibid)."

Rhetorically, Obama defines, expands upon and subdivides this belief. First, it is not a belief, but a "promise," and this promise is what "sets this country apart." Obama defines America as a country through this promise; America is defined through the Other that is not set apart, non-America does not hold this same promise in this text. America, and its vicarious inhabitants, are exceptional. The promise is subdivided into two separate categories: "through hard work and sacrifice, each of us can pursue our individual dreams but still come together as one American family, to ensure that the next generation can pursue their dreams as well." Obama's subdivision of the promise into these two concerns is the first attempt to create an image of bridging divides and reaching out to multiple ideologies. In fact, this is the first of many attempts in this speech to take the middle ground, and we later find that Obama views this transcendence too is a part of America's promise too. Focus group participants remained relatively stable during the moment-to-moment dial-testing. The Welsh Lib Dems, for example, oscillated between a score of 56 and 59, Interpol increased 5 aggregate points during the portion of Obama's speech discussing the ability to "pursue our individual dreams" through "hard-work and sacrifice" but to "still come together as one American family to ensure the next generation can pursue their dreams as well." Figure 10.10 shows the Cardiff University Labour society rose slowly from a score of 63 to 70 from 3:58 in the speech to 4:25:

Figure 10.10: Cardiff Labour Group
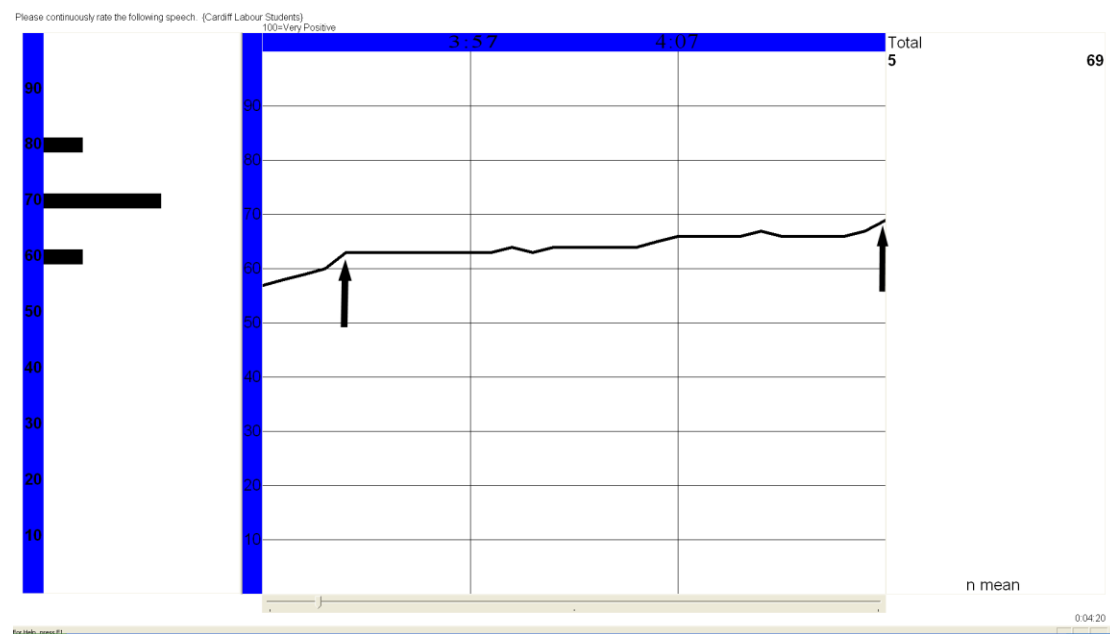
Finally, in terms of the audience reception to this portion of the text, Figure 10.11 shows with the American group a slow buildup and a sudden but smaller drop-off (-5 to 70) during "still come together as one American family":

Figure 10.11: American Group
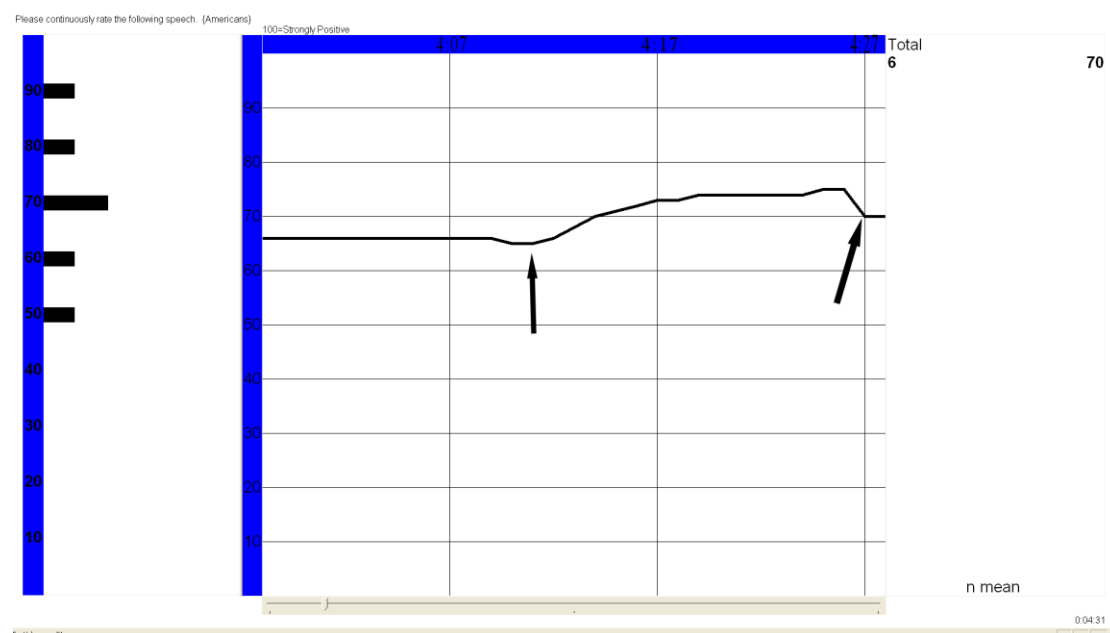
Rhetorically, it is worth briefly exploring the importance of the lexical choice of the "promise." What Obama had described, an individual pursuit of dreams through hard

work and sacrifice is a classic description of the American dream. But why not use the word "dream"? First, the "dream" previous Republican administrations had used as a concept to justify limited government intervention into the economy, in Obama's view, had failed many Americans. Second, a "dream" can be seen as thoroughly idealistic and inspirational. In one sense, this idealistic rhetoric had carried Obama through the primaries, especially among younger voters, but as the economy worsened and a need to convince a proportion of older, independent voters to support him, more concrete, contractual language was needed. Such a shift in language can be seen from Obama using "Change We Can Believe In" during the primaries to "Change We Need" during the general election. While a dream is something to believe in as an aspiration, a promise indicates a "deceleration or assurance that one will do a particular thing or that guarantees that a particular thing will happen (Oxford American Dictionary, 2005)." A dream is a normative ideal, a promise contains more force; it is contractual. Individuals pursue dreams in Obama's America, but this is only possible because of something larger at work: the promise is what makes the individual and collective pursuit of dreams possible. But how does this American Promise translate to focus group participants living in the UK? Consider the following conversation from the Interpol Group. While some participants are initially critical of the concept, other participants interpret the American Dream through their own experience:

> *Participant 1*: Is that the American Dream?
> *Moderator*: Yeah, something like that. What did you think was going on there?
> *Participant 2*: It's been said before
> *Participant 1*: [laughter]
> *Participant 2*: By lots of people
> *Participant 4*: And [inaudible]
> *Moderator*: Who do you mean by lots of people?
> *Participant 2*: It' been said by every politician in an effort to stand in the States...
> *Participant 1*: John McCain was saying it...
> *Participant 4*: It's a bit like "oh we want to appear to appeal to people, let's throw in the American Dream card" it's almost like they're...structured and overused whereas over here it's like very different...in the States it's like "this will help achieve the American dream" so I was expecting it to come up at some point.
> *Participant 2*: It's like the get out clause, really, because to win over an audience all you really have to do is say the American Dream and everyone's like "better houses, better cars" every year, whereas over here you have to

justify why the policy is important rather than...I mean if we talked about a "British Dream" no one would take us seriously. [laughter]
Participant 4: They would criticize people for being barking mad...
Participant 3: Yeah, "The Big Society"...
Participant 4: Yeah..
Participant 3: It's kind of that idea though...
Moderator: Do you think it's the same thing?
Participant 3: I think that's what he was trying to get at.
Participant 2: I don't think Cameron is trying to create a "British Dream" precisely, I think he's just trying to work with the resources he has available, which is virtually nothing.
Participant 3: I mean it's a bit of both, but he is trying to tap into an idea of l like collective identity....not obviously to the same extent as the American Dream, but he's trying to use that (Interpol, 2010).

Even while Participant 3 is seemingly able to be as critical of the Big Society as he is of the American Dream as a symbolic structure, what is important is that the American Dream, at least in this group, may not have the potential for the same ingratiating constitutive appeal as it does for an American audience. That said, one American went out of her way to note that "but um I don't like the concept of the American Dream that's sort of like "you can come...you can become something from nothing!" because um to me that idea just seems sort of like an opiate or it just doesn't seem...(Americans, 2010)." This criticism of the American Dream was echoed by several participants in the Cardiff Labour Group:

Participant 3: And when he was talking about the American promise and the American spirit, that doesn't really mean, I don't think it actually means that much, it's just words really, it seems that way, anyway...
Moderator: And why do you think he says that?
Participant 3: They had all their flags and it all seemed really nationalist. I suppose they were like they were cheerin' anytime he said somethin' about America, so, um, sure it would get like a popular vote, you know [inaudible]...
Participant 1: I think it's very alien to us...
Participant 3: Yeah...
Participant 1: Not just as British but as Europeans, just the whole over-the-top patriotism, I think. Also he...
Participant 4: I kind of quite like that, though...(Cardiff Labour, 2010).

Structurally, this contractual and constitutive "promise" invoked by Obama pervades the rest of the speech. It is the driving force behind the internal movement as Obama creates an antithesis between himself, the Democratic party, the American people, and the promise and lobbyists, Washington, the Republican Party, George W. Bush, and John McCain. The promise is to be defined at greater length later in the speech, but

what is most important in terms of identification is that the rest of the speech depends on how Obama constitutes himself, the American people, and this promise. It is the standard by which he asks voters to support him and the standard by which he judges the actions of the Republicans, George W. Bush, and John McCain as outside America's normative, historical, and circumstantial progression. The promise, he tells us, "is why I stand here tonight." Thus far, Obama has defined the promise, and associated his own story with it, and he now moves to contextualize an otherwise abstract idea in an American historical narrative. Obama establishes a firm sense of historical time, he stands before his audience because "for two hundred and thirty two years, at each moment when that promise was in jeopardy, ordinary men and women - students and soldiers, farmers and teachers, nurses and janitors - found the courage to keep it alive." Here, Obama begins intricately weaving associations between himself, the promise, and the "extraordinary ordinary American (Hall-Jameson, 1988)." He is associated with the promise, the promise has been present in America's history, and it exists only because ordinary Americans have defended it.

After the phrase "ordinary men and women," Obama uses a one-two rhetorical maneuver of identification through form and content. First, identification takes place on a purely formal level due to the repetition of a parallel structure. What results is a sort of amplification through synonym, repetition and *polysyndeton*: "ordinary men and women, students and soldiers, farmers and teachers, nurses and janitors." In terms of content, Obama invokes the ordinary American as a way that his auditor might identify with them. By the third or fourth example, we are able to grasp Obama's argument; the premise need not be stated. We can, in Aristotle's words, recognize the universal ordinariness in each particular example he cites: these "ordinary" societal statuses are sources of identification *en masse*. Moreover, he equips these ordinary Americans with an extraordinary task: upholding the promise, which is what sets America apart and "makes this country great." Thus, this line is crucial to the process of ingratiation: we swing along with the formal *polysyndeton* and on either side of the "and" we recognize the similarities between each word, and as a clause we feel the universal nature of the extraordinary ordinary American in each particular trade and profession. We identify with the form, and with the everyday roles Obama invokes, and then we feel great about those roles because he assigns to them the historical and important task of upholding America's promise. While other groups remained

relatively stable, this particular portion of the speech, from "for two hundred and thirty-two years" to "found the courage to keep it alive" resulted in a +5 aggregate swing to 62 in the Interpol group. As one participant from the Interpol group said:

> *Participant 3*: Um...there was that list at the start where he [was] calling off all the different professions. It's almost as if he' tryin' to talk to everyone and say...
> *Moderator*: Everyone? And what did you think about that?
> *Participant 3*: Um...well you can't talk to everyone. It works, it clearly works, but I think perhaps that links into the problems he's having now. He worked so much trying to appeal to everyone...
> *Participant 4*: Yeah...
> *Participant 3*: That he can't satisfy..
> *Moderator*: Yeah...
> *Participant 3*:...that's probably part of his problem.
> *Moderator*: So did you feel that he was talking to you when he was listing these people or did you feel he was outside of that or...
> *Participant 3*: Well because...I'm not American, but you can see the why...
> *Participant 4*: Yeah...
> *Participant 3*:...it resonates with people. So it does make a connection.
> *Moderator*: But it didn't make a connection with you?
> *Participant 3*: To a certain extent it did, yeah.

Rhetorically, this survey of the role of the ordinary American is not strictly a history lesson in itself as Obama is actively contextualizing his candidacy and brings us back to current time: "We meet at one of those defining moments - a moment when our nation is at war, our economy is in turmoil, and the American promise has been threatened once more." This begins to address the exigency of Obama's "otherness," that his campaign is outside historical circumstances. He alludes to a continuation of the previous successes of ordinary Americans to uphold America's promise. As we shall see, these two factors, a nation at war and an economy in turmoil, present the substantial threat to America's promise. After separating the components of the promise and its threats, he expands upon the economic part of the threat to the promise by further subdividing the economic element of the threat into smaller issues that Americans were facing as he spoke in Denver. By offering a laundry list of economic woes facing the nation, from tuition to credit cards to monthly bills, we might say, however small, Obama is showing an interest in addressing the economic interests of those who face these economic challenges; similar interests are indeed a rhetorically constructed route of identification. In a clear instance of polysemy, these economic issues affecting Americans during the 2008 election were responded to in a

number of different ways by different focus groups. First, the American group resulted in a -7 aggregate drop to 64, while the Welsh Liberal Democrats felt increasingly positive, as shown by Figure 10.12 (Americans) and 10.13 (Welsh Lib Dems):

Figure 10.12: American Group
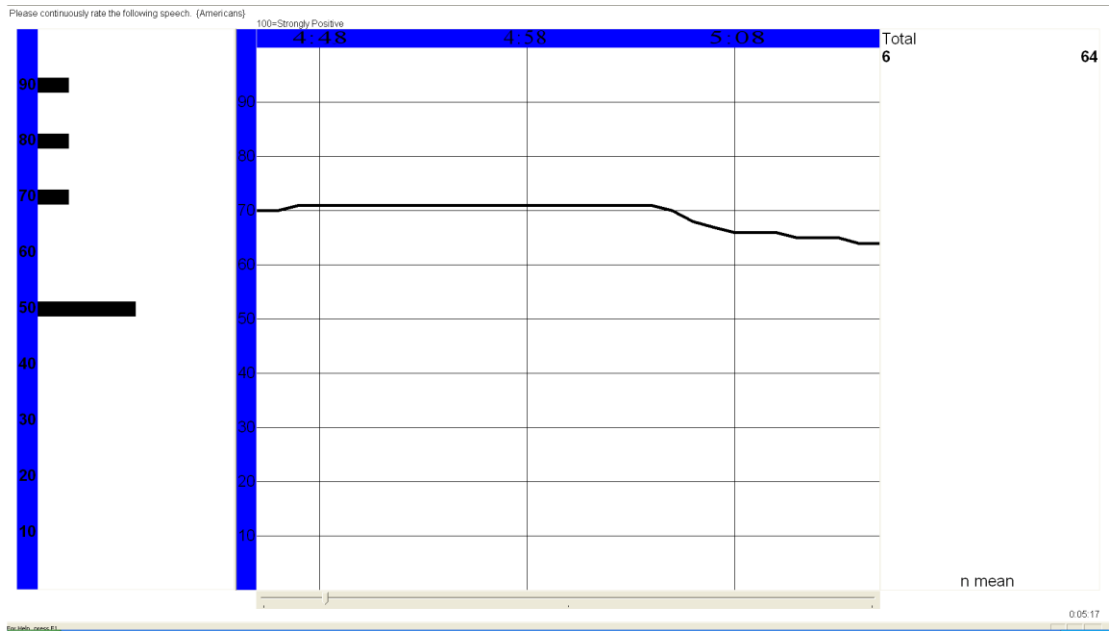
Figure 10.13: Welsh Lib Dem Group
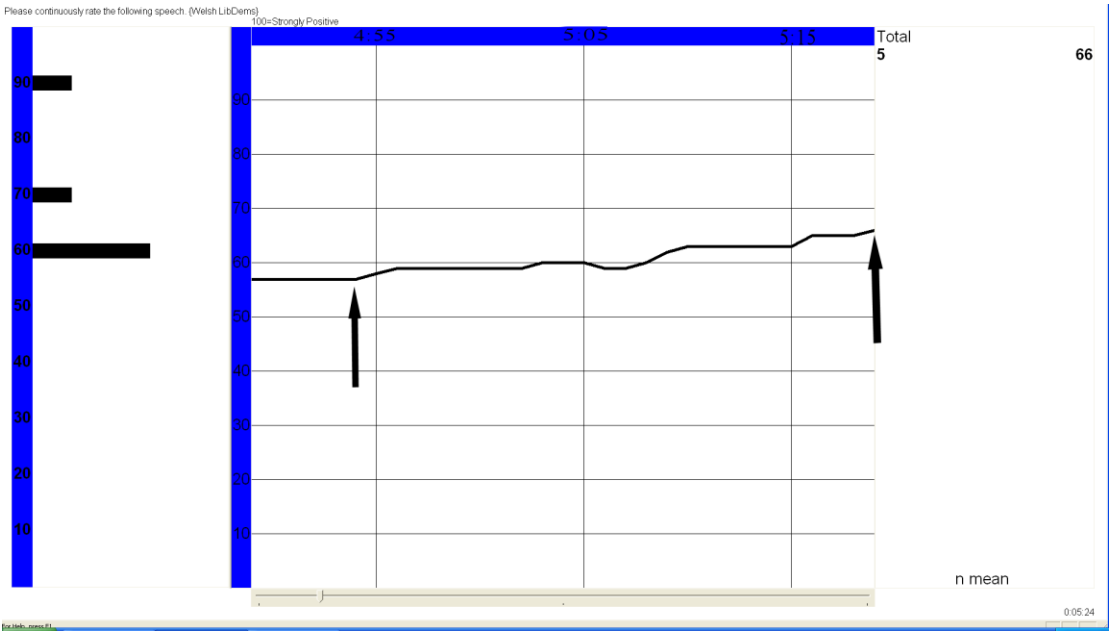
And while the Interpol group remained relatively stable (+2), there was a considerable amount of fluctuation in the Cardiff University Labour Group:

Figure 10.14: Cardiff Labour Group
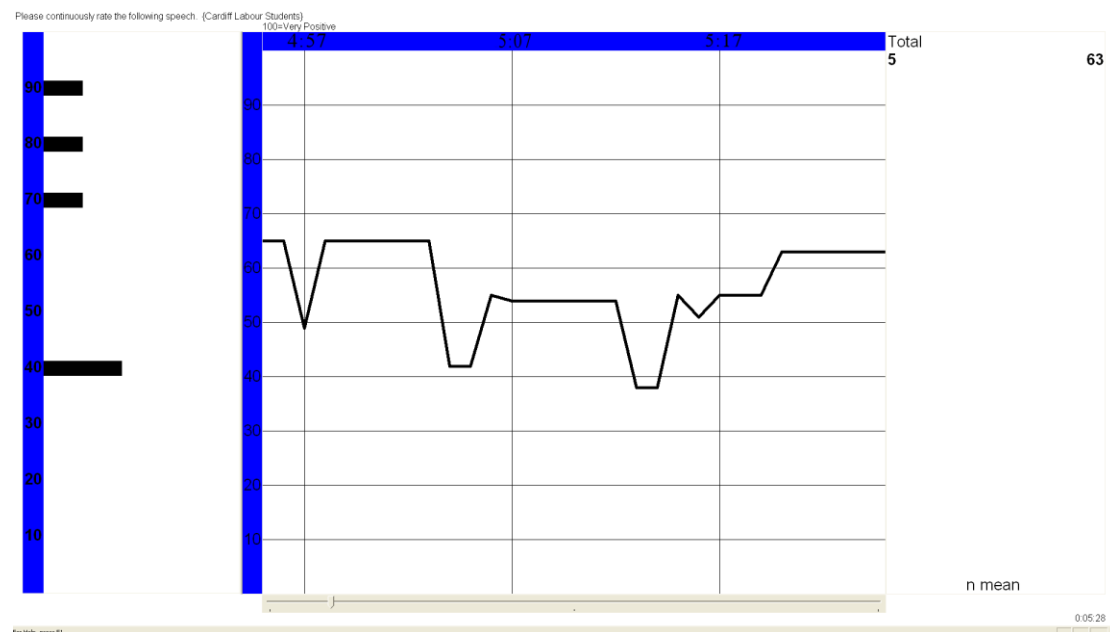
With his vision of the economic threat to the promise laid out, Obama importantly seeks to place blame for these consequences. For the first time in his speech, Obama finds an antagonist: "a broken politics in Washington" and "the failed policies of George W. Bush." As a premise, broken politics in Washington and failed policies of George W. Bush as a cause of the current state of affairs are vague enough: which failed policies? What does "broken politics" even mean? These polysemic antagonists become sources of viewer projection, thus potential sources of identification and division. As with many of the terms Obama uses (hope, change), "broken politics" is an empty vessel to be filled by the preexisting ideas and opinions of the auditor. Identification through the *enthymeme* is what we have here, a sort of "fill in the blank" language that is a powerful source of identification not between rhetorician and auditor so much as the auditor with him or herself. The qualifier that Obama offers at the beginning of this section serves an important function. Obama tells us that the current ills are "not all of government's making, but…" This is a rhetorically constructed avenue which Obama keeps available so that he can use government as a catalyst for change in his administration, and perhaps more importantly, an avenue that needs to be kept open for later in his speech when he details what "change"

means. Most of all, it keeps open the avenue of identification between himself and the liberal wing of his party that emphasizes more government intervention into the economy and social issues. It is a fine line Obama is walking. We can slightly alter Aristotle's classic argumentative topic to see Obama anticipating a possible Republican counterargument: "If the government did it, repair it by less government," an argument put forth by Reagan, who so many voted for, in the 1980's with his famous maxim: "government is not the solution, government is the problem." This qualifier is important to detail because it is the second of many and feeds into Obama's constructed image as the transcendent, post-partisan candidate. This segment of the speech saw two groups increasing their PNAR status towards the speech as Figure 10.15 (Interpol, +10 to 79) and 10.16 (Welsh Lib Dems, +14 to 75) show:

Figure 10.15: Interpol Group
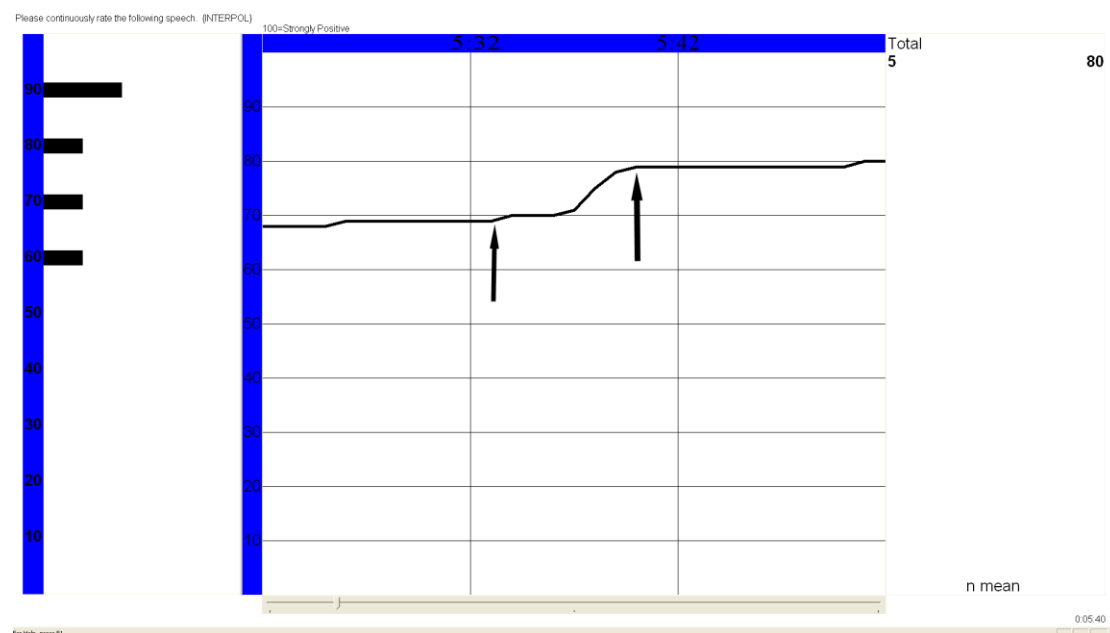
Figure 10.16: Welsh Lib Dem Group
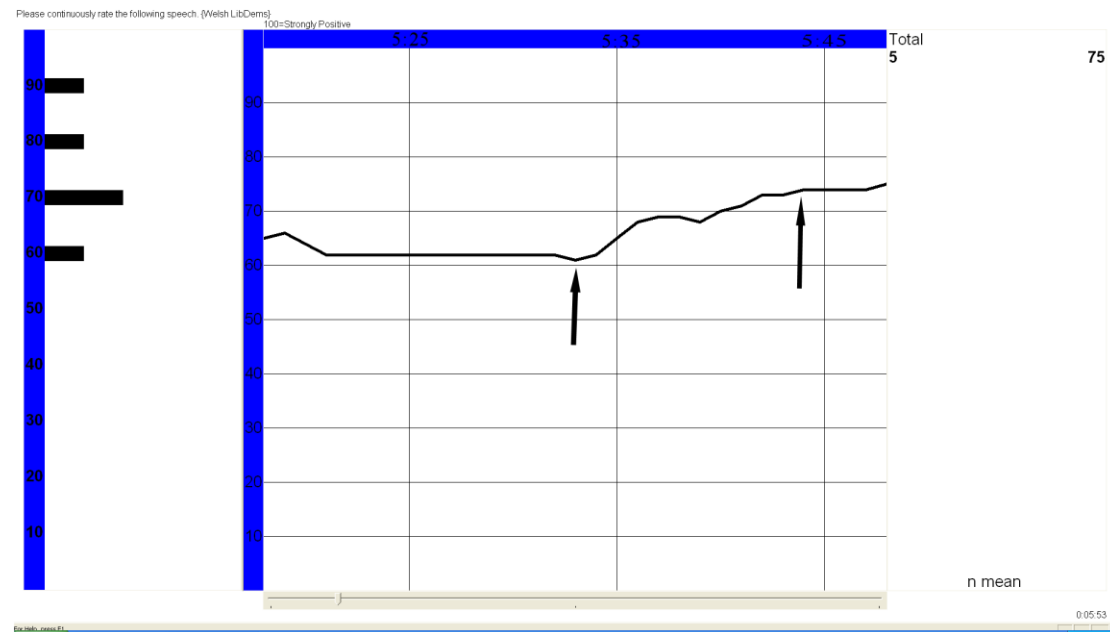
As Figure 10.17 shows, the Cardiff University Labour group interestingly decreased 7 aggregate points to 56 immediately after Obama's qualifier that "these challenges are not all of government's making," however, the aggregate score rose a total of 12 points to 66 once the blame was assigned to "the failed policies of George W. Bush":

Figure 10.17: Cardiff Labour Group

The promise has thus far been defined, subdivided, expanded upon, historically contextualized, and found to be under threat from Obama's antagonists. Obama now returns to the promise, though not by name, as a normative standard by which he judges the current administration's deviation. He addresses "America" directly, and tells the country "we are better than these past eight years." The promise is under threat by recent failures, but the "fundamental decency" of the American people remains. He supports this premise by heaping on a series of examples that are parallel in form and content, finding proof in the experiences of ordinary Americans. The promise once again serves the function of ingratiation: "we," Obama says "are better than these past eight years[…] this country is more decent, […] this country is more generous, […] we are more compassionate." One participant in the Cardiff Labour group who was largely negative towards the speech felt positively towards this section in principle but using hindsight was unsure about Obama's intentions: "it all sounded very good, and if I'd been watching it all back at the time I would have agreed with most of it. But I agree it was all very vague and like I said earlier there was a lot of the right rhetoric I agreed with. When he was talking about, you know, we are a better country than a country that lets people sleep, sort of die in poverty, and you know, we're a better country than. [...] So that's what, I mean, I felt that he was saying a lot of really good things but he didn't mean it (Cardiff Labor, 2010)."

The American group remained relatively stable in their dial-status in the high 50's to low 60's until the line about America being a better country than "letting veterans sleep on our streets," which as Figure 10.18 shows, resulted in a +14 to 73 increase along with a more modest increase for Obama's reference of Hurricane Katrina immediately after:

Figure 10.18: American Group

The Welsh Lib Dem group, on the other hand, began a much more stable climb in PNAR at the same time as the American group but a +9 increase from 72 to 81 as Figure 10.19 shows:

Figure 10.19: Welsh Lib Dem Group
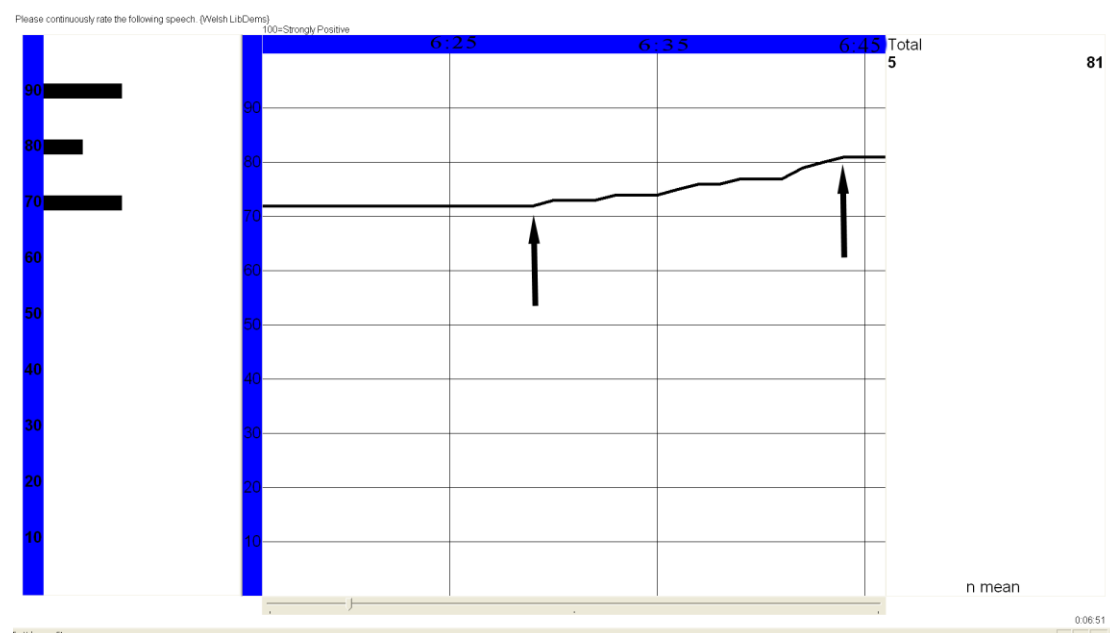
Finally, the Cardiff Labour group responded positively to the first half of the story Obama told about the man who "had to pack up the equipment that he's worked on

for twenty years" but negatively (-8 to 63) to the second half where he watched "as it's shipped off to China" as Figure 10.20 shows:

Figure 10.20: Cardiff Labour Group
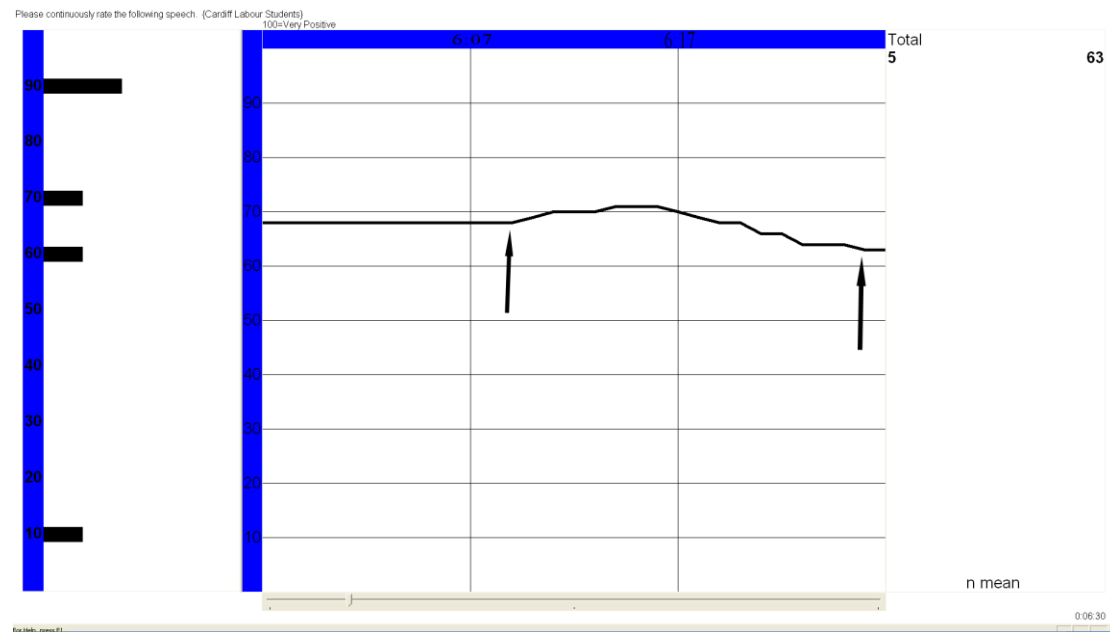
The Cardiff Labour group responded positively (+5) to Obama's line about "letting families slide into poverty" and a +9 increase in PNAR during the applause after Obama's reference to Hurricane Katrina. During this time the Cardiff Labour group rose a total of +17 to 80:

Figure 10.21: Cardiff Labour Group
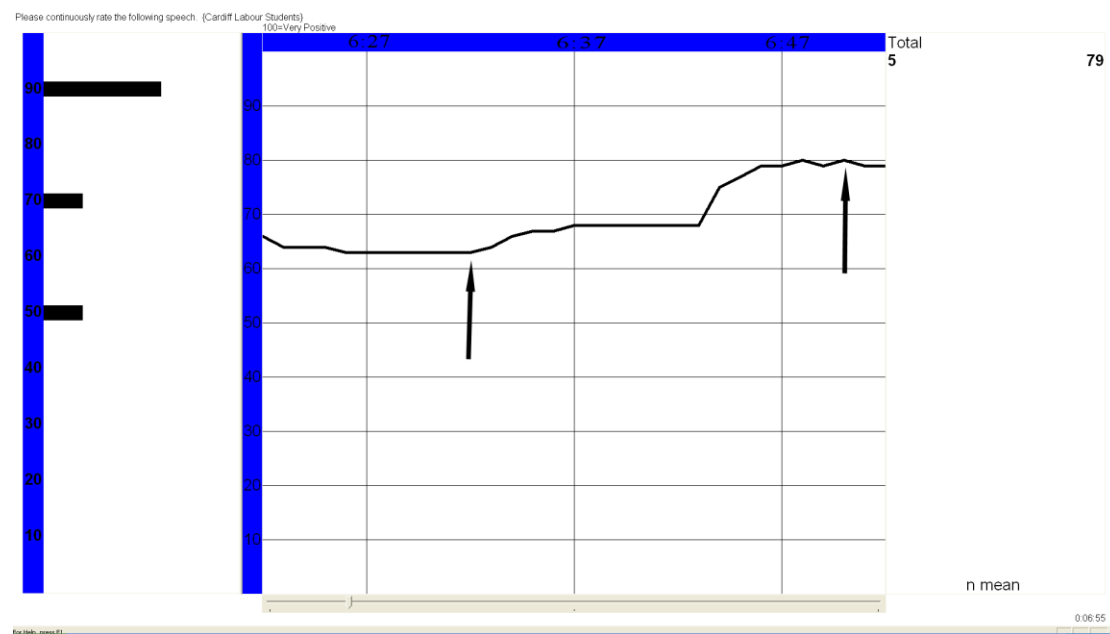
How are we to read these PNAR increases towards the speech? Rhetorically, the function of the previous section can be seen as serving to arouse anger for George W. Bush and Washington for breaking America's promise. In the present section pity would be aroused for the Americans who are feeling the effects of the deviation from the promise and pride would be stirred through ingratiating the auditor as being better than their present circumstances; a symbolic purging of guilt offers the auditor a potential moment of *catharsis* by providing a scapegoat for which to lay the nation's current economic ills (Burke, 1962). After recalling the recent past, Obama brings his audience back to the immediate present, this time using *polysyndeton* to emphasize his transcendence of traditional party partisanship by addressing "Republicans and Democrats and Independents." His audience, comprised of these different parties, can be found "across this great land." Obama then exclaims: "enough!" and explicitly states that his candidacy is "our chance to keep, in the 21st century, the American promise alive." At this point, there is now little doubt about the kinds of associations Obama is building between himself, the ordinary American, and the American promise.

Thus far, the movement of the speech has built on itself and reinforces a series of antithetical associations. An initial association with Democratic leadership and family, followed by a personal association with America's promise. Once the promise

is defined, it is subdivided into individual and communitarian concerns. Once it is subdivided, it is historically contextualized, and Obama associates his candidacy as a historical continuation of the struggles of ordinary Americans to keep the promise alive. After the promise is contextualized as a historical struggle to stave off threats, Obama defines and subdivides the current threat into economic concerns and concerns of war. After the threat is defined, blame is laid with, however paradoxically, a broken politics in Washington, government inaction, and the failed policies of George W. Bush. Obama has moved from American history, to the more recent past, and now moves to the present. He addresses all parties in America, and firmly associates his candidacy once again with America's promise. While Obama expands upon these points at various times through the rest of the speech, he has now laid the most essential ground work for directly addressing his opponent, Senator John McCain, a candidate who had built his campaign image as being a "maverick," a Senator who would vote in the best interests of the country, not his party. Now that Senator Obama has constructed the world in which he sees it, he moves to place McCain on the continuum between himself, the American people, and the American promise on the one hand and George W. Bush and Washington on the other.

Obama's candidacy, he says, is "our" chance to keep the American promise alive, using the word "because" as a warrant for the premise he has just made, "next week, in Minnesota, the same party that brought you two terms of George Bush and Dick Cheney will ask this country for a third. And we are here because we love this country too much to let the next four years look like the last eight. On November 4th, on November 4th we must stand up and say: "Eight is enough." One Interpol group participant turned his dial down at this point: "I think when he was talking about like how many years Bush had been in and uh that um he wanted to change...just change because he'd been in so long and I kind of tuned it down because he just wanted change for the sake of it, so...that was the only time I turned it down when he was talking about Bush (Interpol, 2010)."

While Obama has not yet mentioned John McCain directly, the party that has been in power for two terms is now asking for a third. Bush is not asking for a third term, but the party is, and the party will continue to deviate from America's promise, as it has for the past four years. McCain and Bush are divided insofar as they are two different

people but in Obama's world they are identified insofar as they share the same corporate body, the Republican Party. With Bush and the Republican Party unified, Obama moves to identify McCain with this association. This section of the speech largely resulted in PNAR decreases from focus group participants. The Cardiff Labour group dropped an initial 6 aggregate points during this section, and while there was no significant movement in the American group during the initial sentences, the Welsh Lib Dems dropped a total of 6 points to 76 and the Interpol group fell 20 aggregate points to 59 as shown in Figure 10.22:

Figure 10.22: Interpol Group
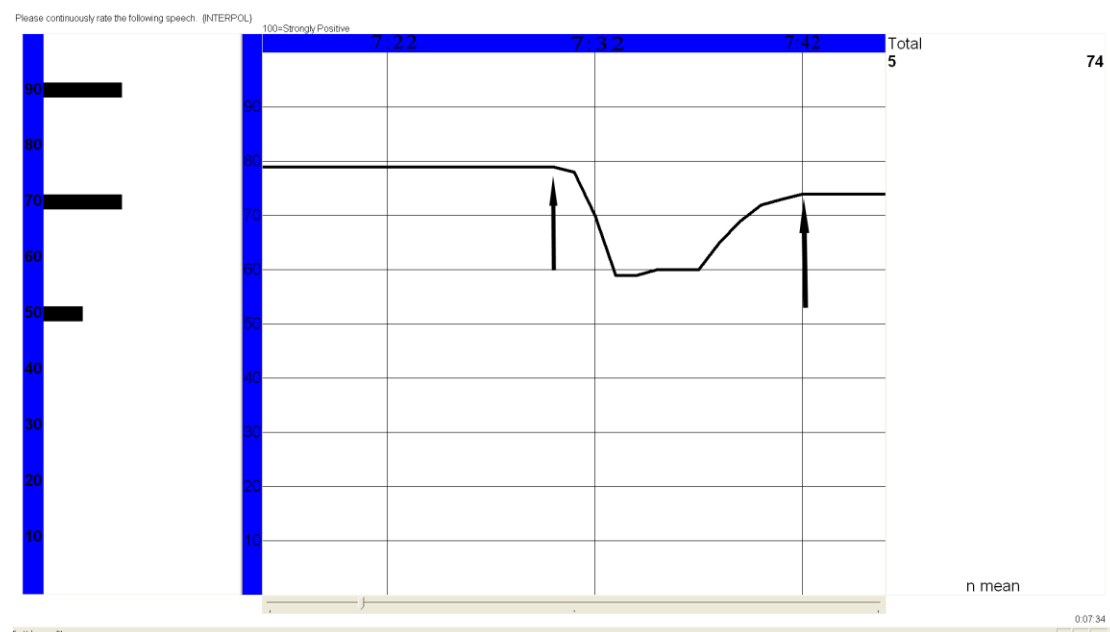
As Figure 10.22 also shows, the Interpol group along with the Cardiff Labour group (+4), and the American group (+9 to 82) quickly regained positive aggregate points (+15 to 74) during Obama's assertion that "we are here because we love this country too much to let the next four years look just like the last eight." For each of the British groups, however, the aggregate score dropped as the crowd began to boo the Republican Party and chanted "eight is enough!" as Figure 10.23 (Cardiff Labour, -6 to 57), Figure 10.24 (Interpol, -8 to 65) and Figure 10.25 (Welsh Lib Dems, -8 to 71) demonstrate:

Figure 10.23: Cardiff Labour Group
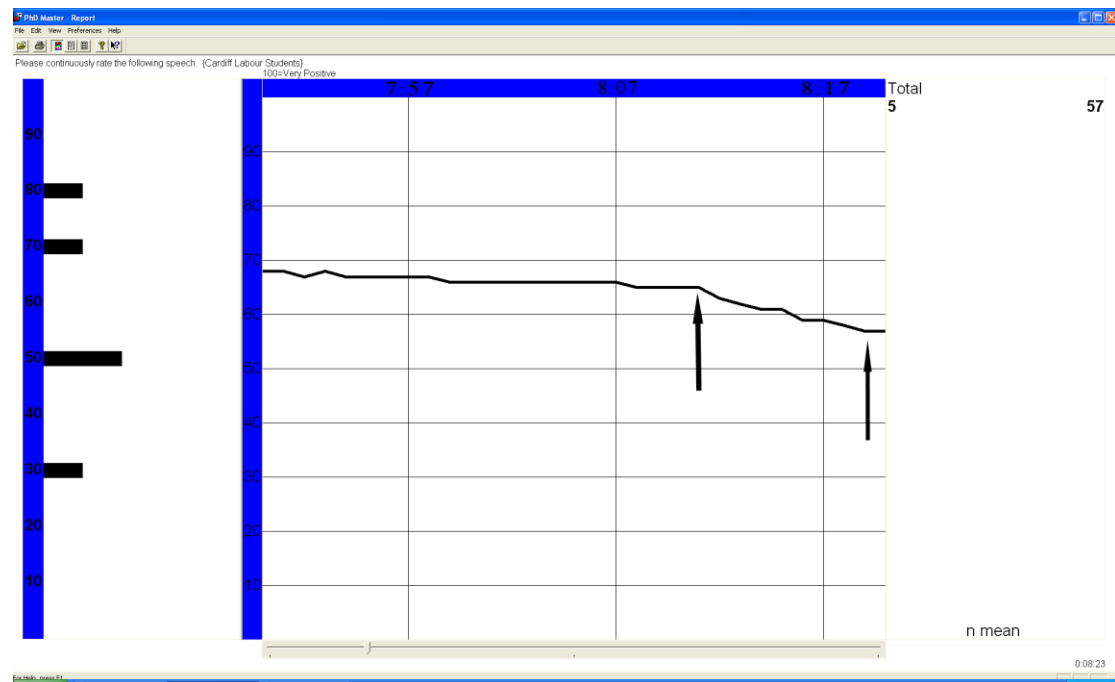
Figure 10.24: Interpol Group
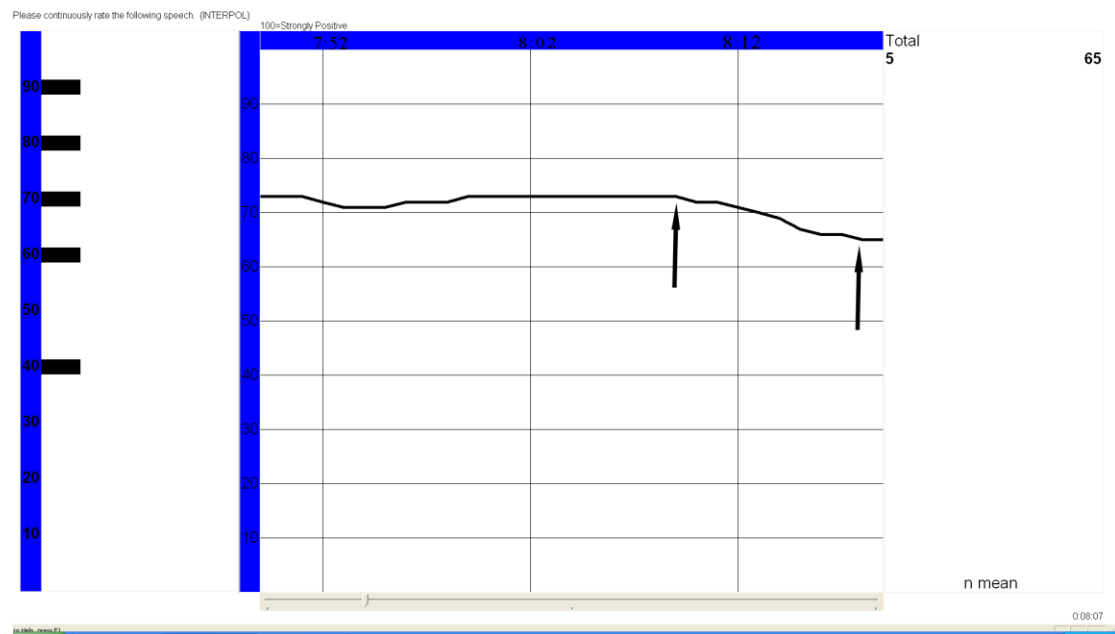
Figure 10.25: Welsh Lib Dem Group
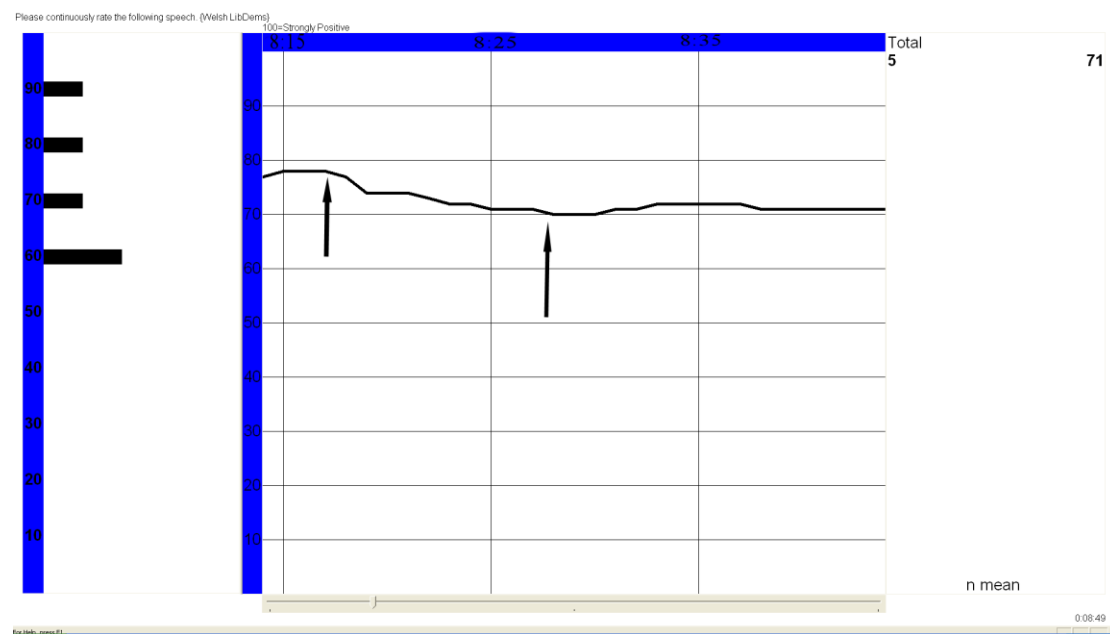
ii. Defining the "Us" through "John McCain": The New "Other"

He begins his first direct mention of Senator McCain by praising him for "wearing the uniform of our country with bravery and distinction, and for that we owe him our gratitude and respect." The Welsh Liberal Democrat Group responded negatively (-8 to 71) to Obama's praise of McCain while the Cardiff Labour Group responded positively (+5 to 61). In terms of the argumentative structure, Obama begins with a qualifier, he is in essence demarcating the scope of his critique of Senator McCain. Obama then anticipates the argumentative theme of the upcoming Republican National Convention: "And next week, we'll also hear about those occasions when he's broken with his party as evidence that he can deliver the change that we need." After anticipating McCain's 'maverick argument,' Obama immediately refutes it by finding fault with the statement and Obama's *ad hominem* begins. Obama's first direct association of George W. Bush and Senator John McCain is made through the only hard statistic that is used in the speech: "but the record is clear: John McCain has voted with George Bush 90% of the time," a line that reduced the American Group's PNAR by 6 aggregate points to 71, the Interpol Group by 9 aggregate points to 63 and raised the aggregate score of the Cardiff Labour Group by 5 points to 66 with the Welsh Lib Dems fluctuating by initially responding positively by +11 to 81 and then dropping 6 aggregate points to 75 as shown in Figure 10.26:

Figure 10.26: Welsh Lib Dem Group
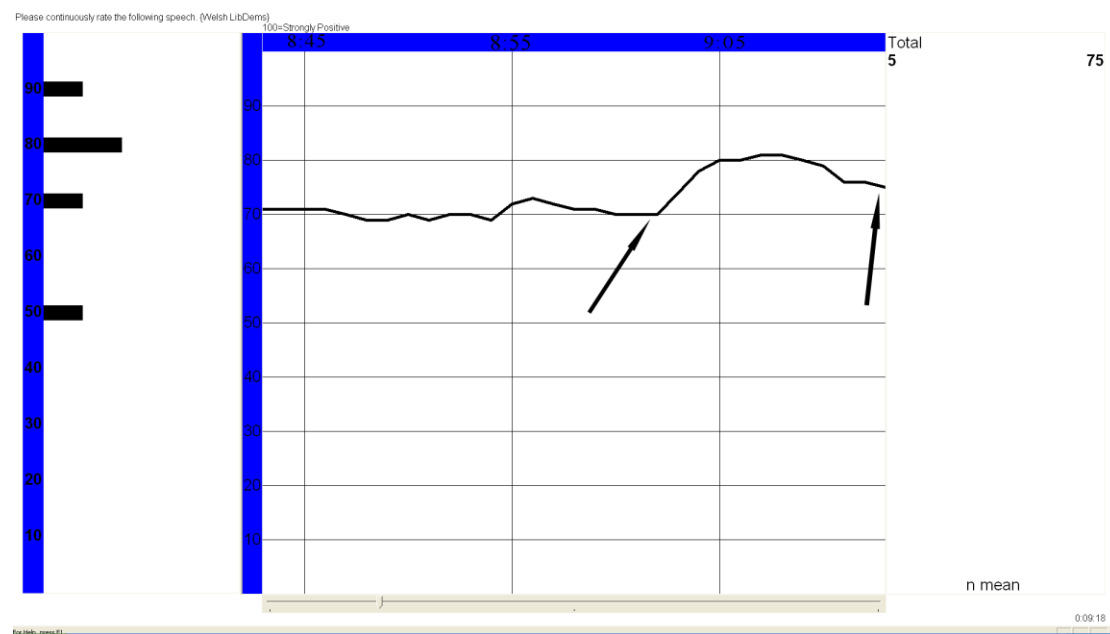
Obama's unwillingness to take a "10% chance on change" resulted in the Interpol Group's PNAR rising 9 points to 72, the Welsh Lib Dem Group by 5 points to 81 and the American Group by 4 points. He continues to associate Bush with McCain, but this time he amplifies it through personalizing it for the audience: "on issue after issue that would make a difference in your life," and then by placing this association in what Obama considers the most pressing issues of the day: "on health care, education, and the economy". To support these contentions, Obama invokes a series of three statements formally set up as an *anaphora* to drive the point home: "He said our economy has made great progress, […] he said the fundamentals of our economy are strong, […] he said that we were just suffering form a mental recession, and we've become, and I quote "a nation of whiners" […]." By the second of the three sentences, focus Group participants responded overwhelmingly negative. The Welsh Lib Dem Group decreased 18 aggregate points to 63, the Interpol Group fell 16 points to 57 and the Cardiff Labour Group fell 5 points to 63 as is illustrated in Figures 10.27 (Cardiff Labour), 10.28 (Interpol) and 10.29 (Welsh Lib Dems):

Figure 10.27: Cardiff Labour Group
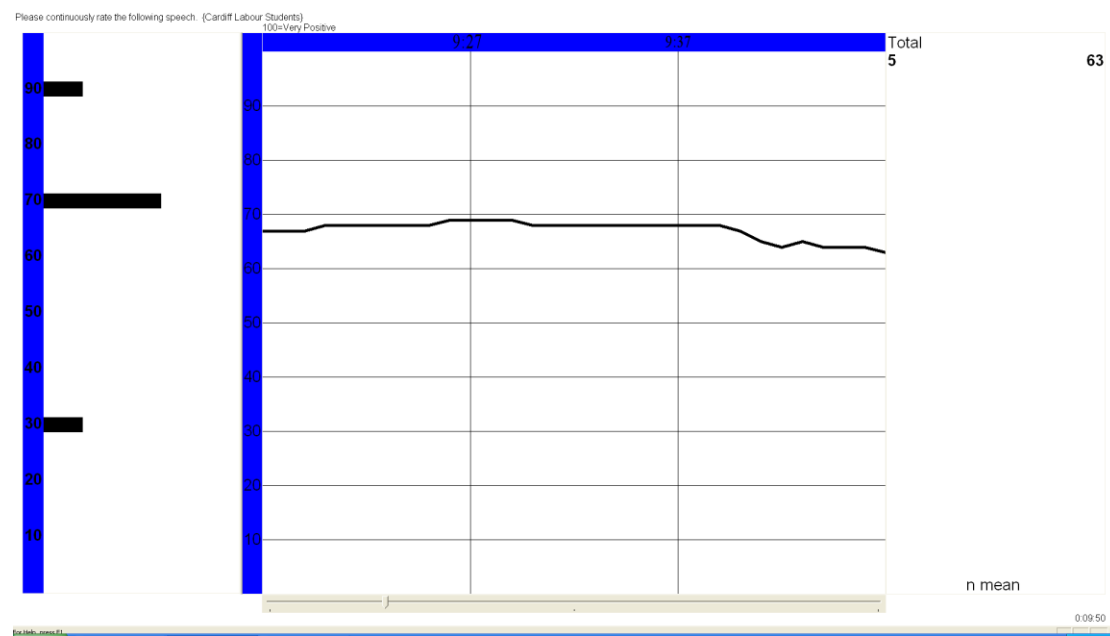
Figure 10.28: Interpol Group
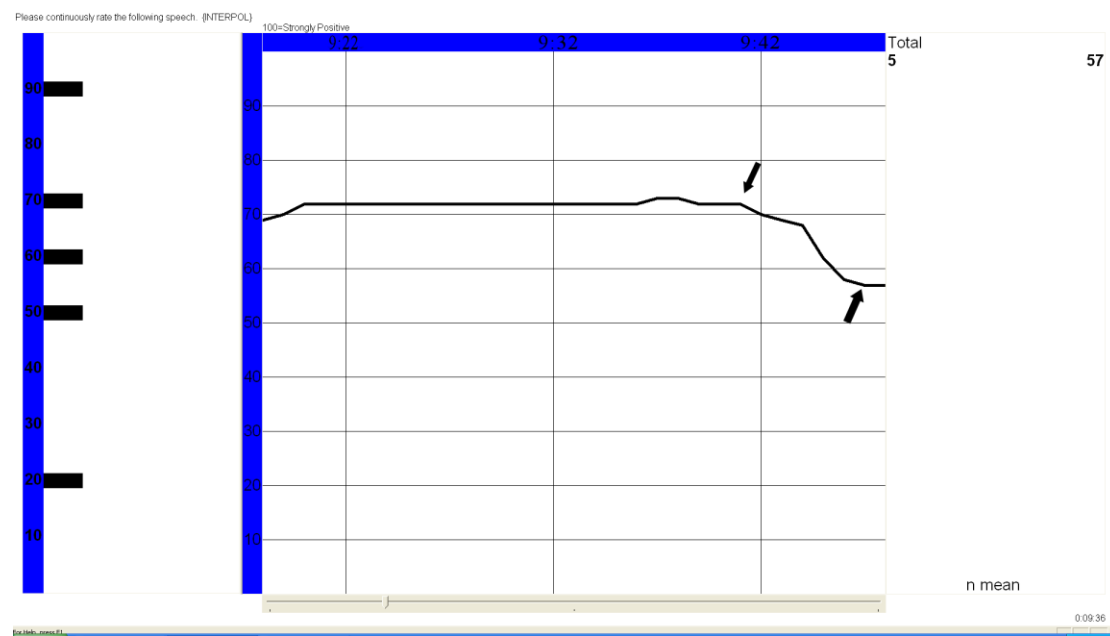
Figure 10.29: Welsh Lib Dem Group

Rhetorically, Obama can be seen as creating an antithetical emotional connection between John McCain, those he associates with, and the American people. Obama frames McCain's economic advisor as insulting to the audience, what Aristotle would call "insolent" towards the audience at the expense of any association McCain would make between himself and the ordinary voter. Focus Group reception, however, illuminates another way of reading these dips in PNAR from each focus Group. Each Group contained at least one participant who expressed negative sentiment towards Obama's criticisms of McCain. Consider the Interpol Group:

> *Participant 4*: Um I found it quite low that bit when he just spent five minutes basically slaggin' off McCain and comparing him to Bush. Because I just really don't like politicians attacking someone...I mean as I said before light criticism, I don't mind, or criticizing their policies, in a constructive manner, but when it's just like "they're wrong" sayin' on character, I really don't like that.
>
> *Moderator*: And so at what point, 'cause you were saying light criticism, at what point do you think that Obama crossed the line? From light criticism to...
>
> *Participant 4*: Um...when he started sayin' about McCain record siding with Bush, it was like sayin' he opposed his policies, but because he's associated with Bush, let's use that as a way to attack him. And I just didn't like the association just because he sided with Bush makes him a bad candidate...
>
> *Participant 3*: I think the whole point was that his campaign was change, wasn't it?
>
> *Participant 4*: Mmm..
>
> *Participant 3*: So he made the point that a vote for McCain wasn't a vote for change because they're the same, which I think is a fair point...

> *Participant 4*: I do think he could have done it in a way that was less aggressive towards McCain and like...just sayin' "you are Bush, therefore you're wrong (Interpol, 2010)"

In what is a clear instance of polysemy, Participant 3 would more adamantly disagree with Participant 4 about Obama's criticism of McCain: "see I thought Obama was...consciously made the point that, like you say, 'I respect McCain, it's his policies' he made a conscious effort not to personally attack McCain (ibid)." Two participants in the Cardiff Labour Group also agreed that Obama's discussion of McCain was excessive:

> *Participant 3*: I didn't like the bits where he kept talking about McCain all the time 'cause I thought "he's the candidate now, he's asking people to vote for what he'd do not what [John McCain's] not gonna do"...
> Participant 3: Yeah...
> *Participant 4*: [inaudible] I didn't like that very much...

Participant 3 from the American Group had similar disagreements about the role of Obama's criticism of McCain in his speech: from the American Group: "I don't like it when politicians sledge other politicians to try to win the vote and I think he's good, he makes it believable, he's enough candidate already without having to take the piss out of McCain, it's already...the points where he did bring him up that's when I tended to turn it down (Americans, 2010)." Participant 7, however, disagreed. She liked Obama's attack on McCain because she agreed, and told the moderator that "I didn't want the last eight years to repeat (ibid)." In each Group, the moderator sought to understand the process that led to a participant changing their dial status. It was this question that gave rise to the most detailed discussion of McCain's role in this speech with the Welsh Lib Dem Group, quoted at length because of the transcript's qualitative richness:

> *Moderator*: Well let's um...I want to sort of know the process you guys went through, 'cause I was actually at pains not to give too much instruction on when to turn it up or when to turn it down about positive and negative feelings. Were you turning it down when you didn't like what Obama was saying? Or...step me   through the process, there.
> *Participant 5*: [inaudible]. Personally I thought at some point he was...especially that speech it was supposed to be more about selling him and telling what he was....rather than McCain bashing
> *Participant 6*: I turned it down for McCain bashing
> *Participant 5*: I turned it down for McCain bashing
> *Participant 3*: I...

Moderator: Was that because you didn't like him talking about McCain?

Participant 2: No because I didn't necessarily turn it down for McCain bashing, I turned it down when I thought it was personal.

Participant 6: Yeah

Participant 2: And there were personal bits in that you know about McCain being out of...that's the bit, you know I don't mind him attacking his record, it's not particularly going to spur me into voting for him, but like you know you sort of hover about at the same point. But I never turned it down when he attacked Bush.

Participant 3: No...

Moderator: But when he attacked McCain you thought he stepped over a line or...too personal or...

Participant 2: A point...yeah, yeah, I don't think it was vindictive

Participant 6: I thought it was unnecessary

Participant 5: Yeah, especially for the speech that it was, it's there to sell, I mean yes he's already got the nomination

Participant 2: Well exactly he needs to appeal to people who are thinking of voting for McCain.

Participant 3: For me, when he was talking about McCain and you know the opposition generally, it depended. I went up if he said it passionately and was shouting.

Participant 6: Yeah...

Participant 3: Because, or if it was funny, because I thought he actually believed it. And I thought "well actually he really cares about this" and up, but when he's on the calm, quiet bit and he's laying into McCain...

Participant 6: ...yeah....

Participant 2: I think well actually...

Participant 6: Only once I went into the negative and I went down to about 38 and that was when he had a series of attacks on McCain and I just thought "aw, it's getting tiresome now"

Participant 7: I didn't turn it down for the McCain basing really because I don't know I just kind of thought it was par for the course, really.

Moderator: Yeah...

Participant 6: But…(Welsh Lib Dems, 2010).

These statements should be placed in context and taken with healthy skepticism. At the very least, it should be noted that, as we shall see, Obama's "McCain bashing" also saw increased PNAR towards the speech. We can take these criticisms of Obama at face value as "truthful" while simultaneously recognizing the rhetorical function these statements serve for a participant seeking to impress his peers as intelligent, cerebral and thinking on a level beyond "petty partisanship." Regardless of how these British participants feel about his criticisms, Obama once again faults statements made by McCain's economic advisor, refuting his claims by countering with vivid examples of situations where everyday Americans are not whiners. These examples would serve the ends of ingratiation if an everyday auditor recognizes himself or

herself in the everyday example through the term "American," and Obama insists that "they work hard, they give back and keep going back without complaint, these are the Americans I know." The Welsh Lib Dem Group voluntarily discussed this section of the speech in relatively positive terms. Participant 3 in the Welsh Lib Dem Group saw that each example Obama invoked "relates to a mass of people, and you know it's not one man it's a hundred thousand men (Welsh Lib Dems, 2010)" to which Participant 6 agreed. Participant 2 was especially enthusiastic:

> *Participant 2*: I think I was more, I don't know if the worm bears it out or anything, but I think it was more when he was going on about individuals but not specific individuals. I like the whole rhetoric, it's not just this speech, but the rhetoric of "the car worker in Minnesota who goes to work because people depend on him"
> *Participant 6*: I like that...
> *Participant 5*: Yeah...(ibid).

Participant 1 from the Interpol Group felt similarly:

> *Participant 1*: Uh when he was talkin' about the factory workers, helpin' each other out, taking their own hours down at the risk of pay to help their friends, things like that put it into context..that was good.
> *Moderator*: So it made you feel positive
> *Participant 1*: Yeah (Interpol, 2010).

Interestingly, the Interpol Group saw this rhetorical maneuver as a direct export to the British General Election of 2010:

> *Participant 3*: I think there's a lot of things in that that came into the British campaign this year...
> *Moderator*: Like what, for example?
> *Participant 3*: The uh talking directly to uh...saying "I spoke to person X from plant X" saw that in the debates this year, um the idea of change, the Conservative slogan...there's an awful lot of [inaudible]
> *Moderator*: So do you think those are directly imported from the 2008 election?
> *Participant 3*: Yeah...
> *Participant 4*: Yeah...
> *Moderator*: You do too...OK. [Participant X is] nodding your head. OK.
> *Participant 1*: Uhh maybe, maybe not.
> *Moderator*: Maybe...OK.
> *Participant 2*: There's a definite online element that came from 2008 because parties start using Facebook, Twitter a lot more. WebCameron...
> *Participant 3*: Yeah...
> *Participant 1*: Ughhh... [laughter] (ibid).

Three focus Groups followed this sequence with an increase in PNAR as shown in Figures 10.30 (Interpol, +25 to 75), 13.31 (Welsh LibDems, +19 to 75) and 10.32 (Cardiff Labour, +6 to 70):

Figure 10.30: Interpol Group
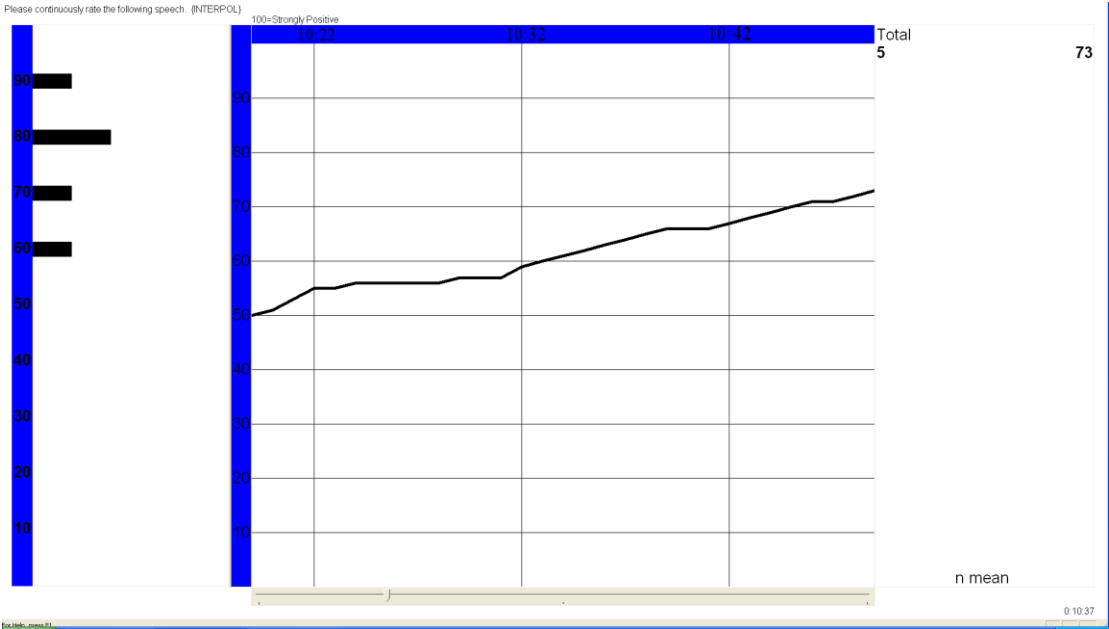
Figure 10.31: Welsh Lib Dem Group
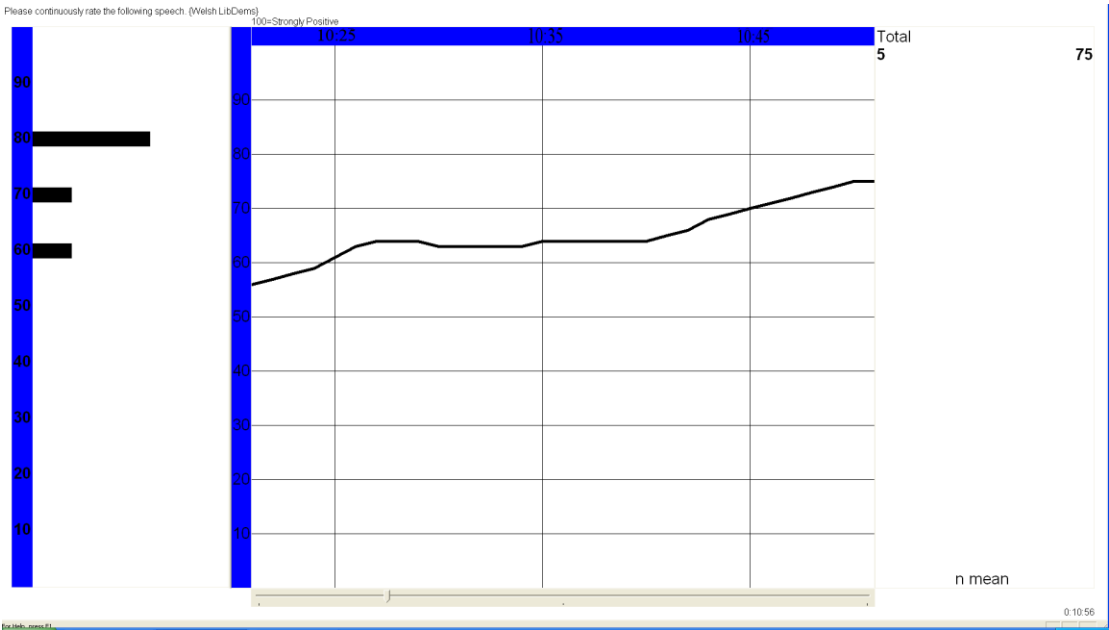
Figure 10.32: Cardiff Labour Group
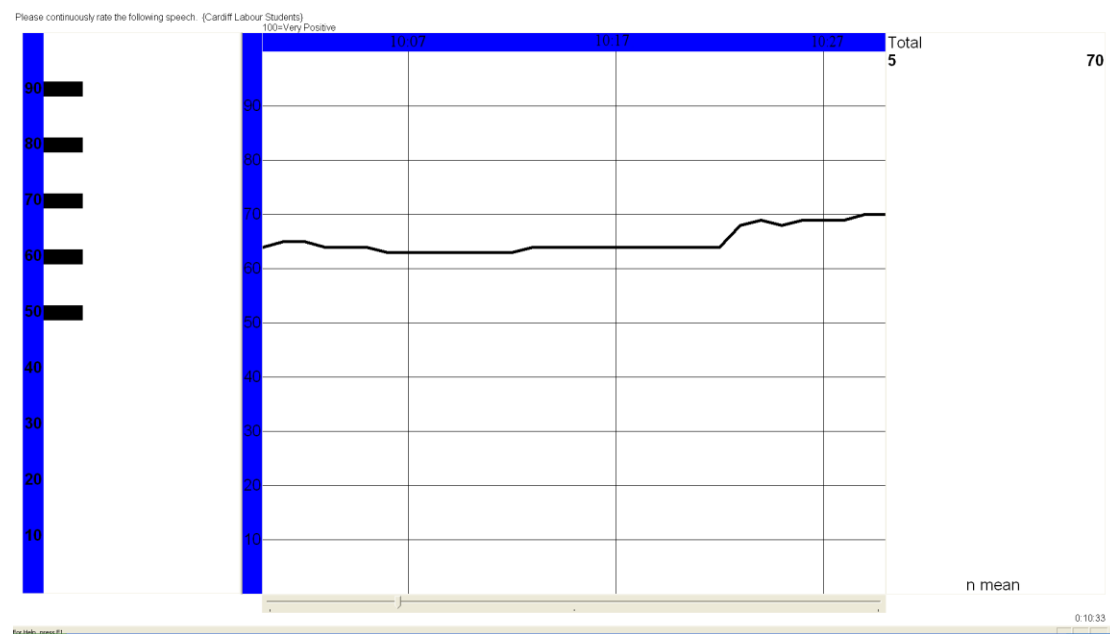
Obama once again demarcates his *ad hominem* attack with another qualifier: "Now, I don't believe that Senator McCain doesn't care what's going on in the lives of Americans. I just think he doesn't know," a statement that preceded a sharp decline (-14 to 60) in PNAR from the Welsh Lib Dem Group. Obama supports this contention with a series of rhetorical questions, which occurred simultaneously with a significant drop in PNAR from the Interpol Group, a 10 point drop to 69 in PNAR from the American Group and a 14 point increase in PNAR to 78 from the Cardiff Labour Group beginning with Obama's interrogation of McCain's definition of middle class as someone who is "making under five million dollars a year" and continuing a steady rise through the *anaphora*. The American Group, while initially dropping in their aggregate score at the critique of McCain as out of touch, rebounded as Obama continued the anaphoric series of questions, as illustrated in Figure 10.33:

Figure 10.33: American Group
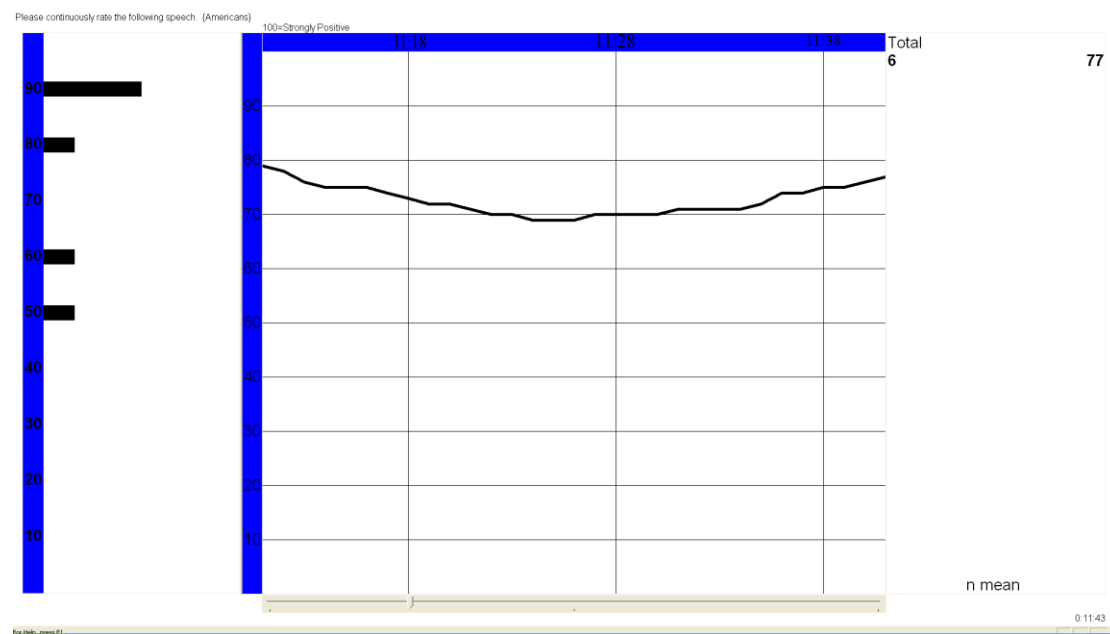
After the supporting rhetorical questions, Obama proceeds to restate his conclusion in a slightly different way (*symploce*): "It's not because John McCain doesn't care. It's because John McCain doesn't get it." The *symploce* adds to Obama's assertion that McCain is out of touch with America, which is another way of saying he is divided from or not identified with it. They lack similar substance, and thus cannot be consubstantial.

Obama extends this philosophy he has placed as "out of touch" to a larger Republican way of governing the economy, what we might call 'Reaganomics,' tax-cuts for wealthier Americans "in the hope that prosperity trickles down." Obama says "they" call this "the ownership society," and plays on the two senses of the word (*paranomasia*) by stating "but what it really means is, you're on your own." Obama follows with a series of rhetorical questions he answers (*hypophora*) in the voice of Republican doctrine. In Obama's logic, we can easily make these questions and answers into a series of "if...then" statements. If you fit this description ("Out of work? [...] No health care? [...] Born into poverty?") then this is what the Republicans will give you ("Tough luck, your on your own. [...] The market will fix it, you're on your own. [...] Pull yourself up by your own bootstraps - even if you don't have boots. You're on your own."). This strengthens the antithesis between John McCain, now firmly associated with Republican dogma, and the American people. In

a case of polyvalence, the Welsh Lib Dems discussed the concept of the ownership society within the context of a larger discussion about the American Dream:

> *Participant 3*: Yeah and it's like "oh, it's the American Dream!" I think it's just a way of justifying minimal state like Republicanism.
> *Participant 2*: Well see, but a lot of that speech, I don't think anyone would classify that at minimal governmentalism. My interpretation is that Barack Obama is probably the most interventionist president since probably Kennedy and a lot of that were in terms of claiming the American Dream and...
> *Participant 3*; Yeah and the difference, it's the same thing though, yeah, the idea that you can still, he was just saying the government won't leave you to rot if you don't, if you aren't a product of the American Dream.
> *Participant 6*: Yes, what was that line about the government leaving you, there was a good play on words in that. There was a whole section...
> *Participant 3*: Um, about ownership. Own...
> *Participant 6*: You're on your own
> *Participant 3*: You're on your own.
> *Participant 2*: Yeah. Ownership society, you're on your own, yeah (Welsh Lib Dem, 2010).

Having already played upon the different senses of the word of ("ownership" versus "you're on your own,") Obama now takes the Republican prescriptive premise as a standard for governance and turns it against itself: "Well, it's time for them to own their failure, it's time for us to change America, and that's why I'm running for President of the United States." This portion of the speech generated a fluctuation of acute aggregate movement with focus Group participants as shown in Figure 10.34 (Cardiff Labour, -16 to 62), Figure 10.35 (Interpol, +16 to 67) and Figure 10.36 (Welsh Lib Dems, +28 to 81):

Figure 10.34: Cardiff Labour Group
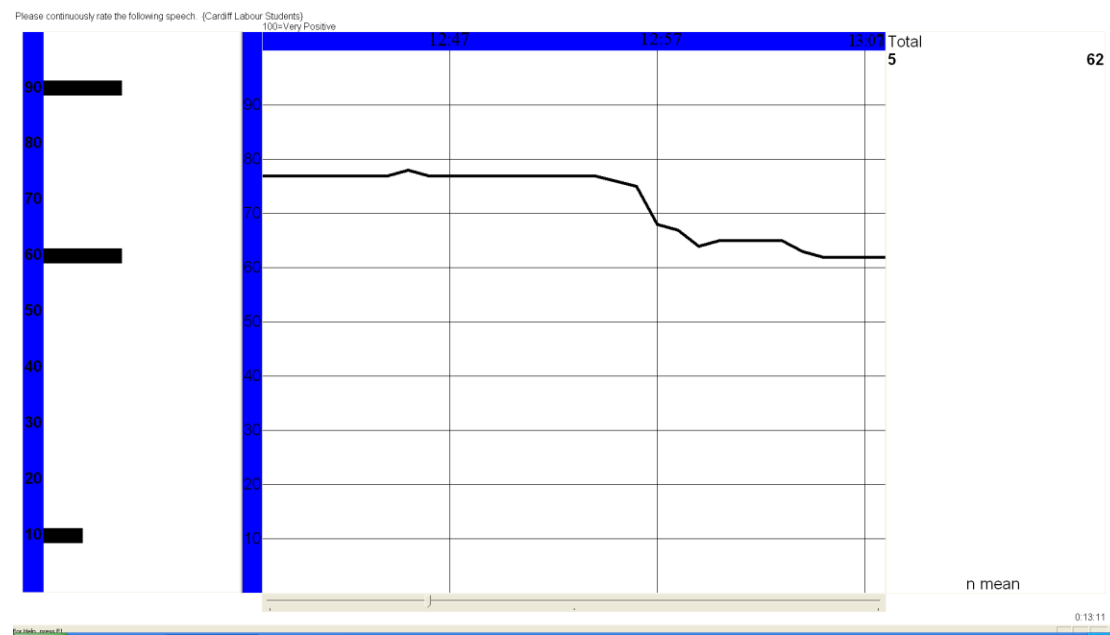
Figure 10.35: Interpol Group
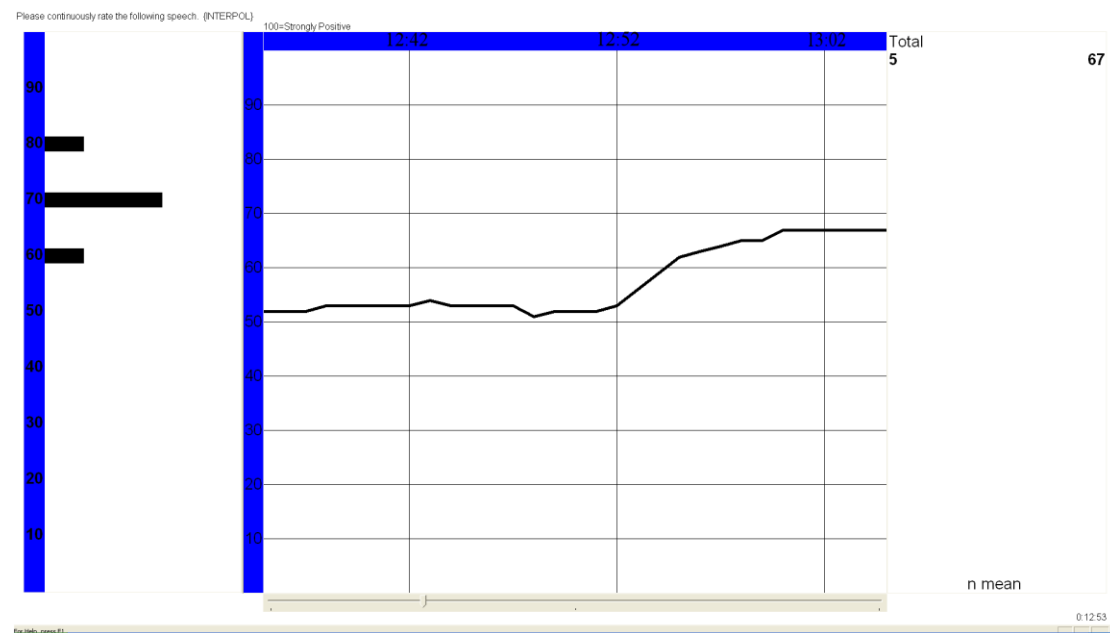
Figure 10.36: Welsh Lib Dem Group
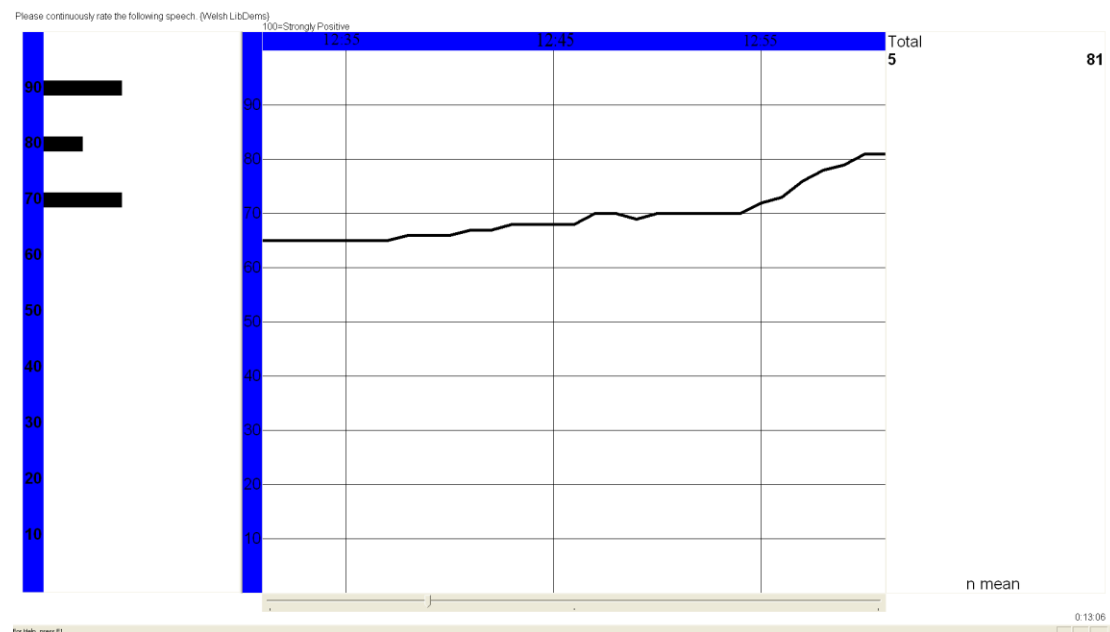
Obama has now completed half of his antithesis. But to stop now could be seen as complaining and merely reactive, and so he moves to offer an alternative Democratic vision that is in stark contrast to the series of associations Obama has created with the Republican Party. He praises the Democrats, but in the process participates in what Burke calls vicarious boasting. "[We] Democrats have a very different measure of what constitutes progress in this country." Obama then drives this point home by using a series of three parallel sub points, formally set up as an *anaphora*, which reinforce the original contention but in more vivid, explicit, and realistic wording. Obama repeats his party's association with the ordinary American, and repeats the antithesis between the values of the Democratic and Republican parties. Crucially, the promise Obama alluded to in the opening sequences of the speech resurfaces as a standard that aids his judgment of the two parties: "The fundamentals we use to measure economic strength are whether we are living up to that fundamental promise that has made this country great - a promise that is the only reason I am standing here tonight." Here, Obama contends that his party values whether they are "living up to that fundamental promise," the promise, he tells us, has "made our country great," providing an ingratiating mechanism for the auditor. Obama uses the 'fundamentals' argument against McCain to strengthen the antithesis: according to their fundamentals the economy is strong, but "we" measure the fundamentals differently. Finally, he

expands upon the "communicative relationship" between his personal narrative and the promise. In fact, the promise "is the only reason that [he] is standing here tonight." Immediately after "made this country great", the Cardiff Labour Group dropped 7 aggregate points to 59:

Figure 10.37: Cardiff Labour Group
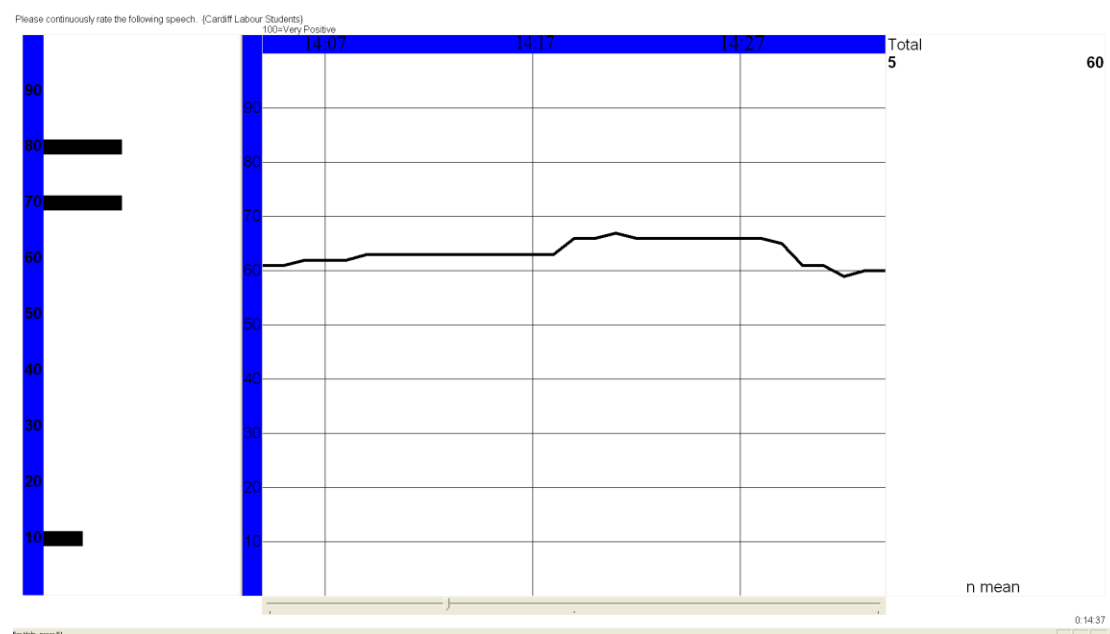
What follows is perhaps the best, most explicit example of creating consubstantiality between speaker and audience. In the "faces of the veterans" who come back from conflicts, Obama sees his grandfather. In the "face of that young student," Obama tells us he "thinks about [his] mom." When he "listens to another worker who tells [him] his factory is shutting down," he remembers the people from when he served as a community organizer. He literally sees his own story when he sees, hears, and listens to the American people. The sequence is simultaneously biographical and constitutive of the second persona. It is personal and it is emotive. It is at this point that any praise of the American people is vicarious boasting for his own candidacy, and when he touts his own story, he invites the American people to see an idealized vision of themselves in his personal narrative. With his own family and the ordinary American now consubstantial, Obama uses "theirs" in a way that can be interchangeable: it means he will win the election on behalf both his grandmother, mother, and grandfather as well as the ordinary American. There is no longer any distinguishing between them. In terms of the reception of this rhetorical maneuver,

there seems to be a limit, at least with two participants in the Welsh Lib Dem Group, to how far Obama can boost his own credentials (which may inform his rhetorical choices to participate in vicarious boasting):

> *Participant 2*: I prefer that more than the [inaudible] because I had a great education, partly because I'm thinking "well, it's a bit bragging" and I don't know what...
> *Participant 7*: Yeah I turned mine slightly down when he was saying that...(Welsh   Lib Dems, 2010).

There is also a contradiction between the dial readings and the verbal responses to this section. Two participants in the Interpol Group, for example, were critical of Obama's use of personal stories:

> *Participant 1*: I didn't like all the personal stuff. I didn't mind a bit of personal history, that's good to have about, in a future president and that...
> *Participant 3*: Yeah, yeah
> *Participant 1*:...but going on about his grandma and things, I couldn't be that bothered (Interpol, 2010).

The Welsh Lib Dem Group agreed, as Participant 6 notes that he "turned it down when he was talking about his family and people he knew and he was doing all the sugary things" and Participant 3 agreed that "it was getting a bit mushy (Welsh Lib Dems, 2010)." That said, the Welsh Lib Dem Group increased 7 aggregate points to 67 during Obama's invocation of his grandfather "marching in Patton's army" and his mother's resilience in the face of challenge. The Welsh Liberal Democrat Group increased an additional 14 points to 81 during the crescendo of this sequence which resulted in an applause: "I don't know what kind of lives John McCain thinks celebrities lead. But this has been mine. These are my heroes. These are the stories that have shaped my life and it is on behalf of them that I intend to become President of the United States."

Figure 10.38: Welsh Lib Dem Group
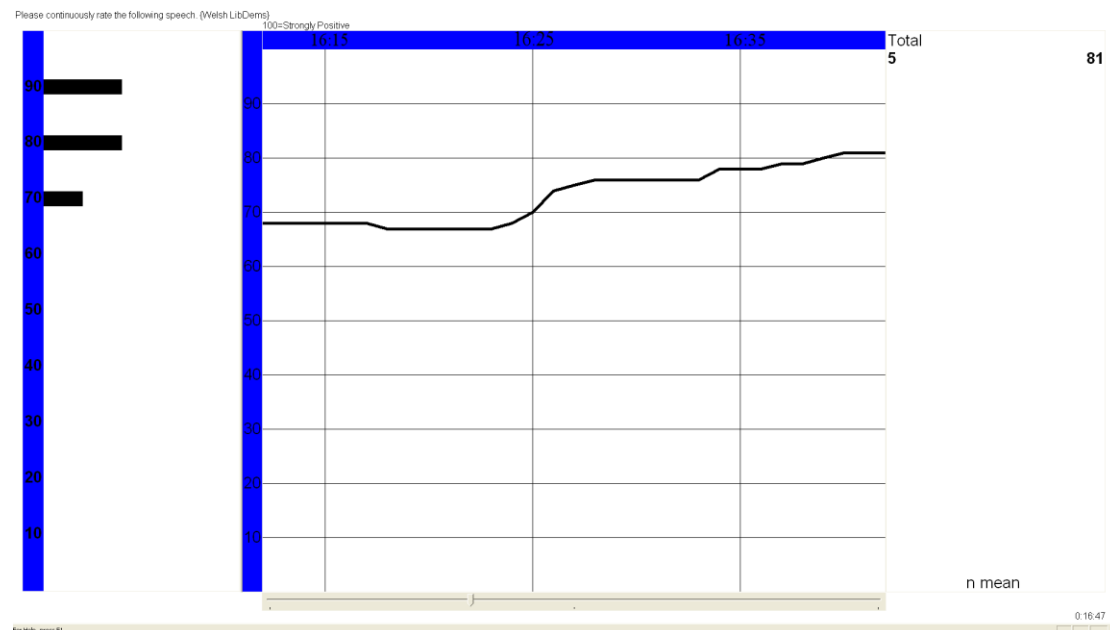
This crescendo brought both increased PNAR and fluctuation from other focus Group participants. The Cardiff Labour Group, for example experienced an initial increase of 9 to 75 followed by a sharp and then steady decline of 12 to 63:

Figure 10.39: Cardiff Labour Group
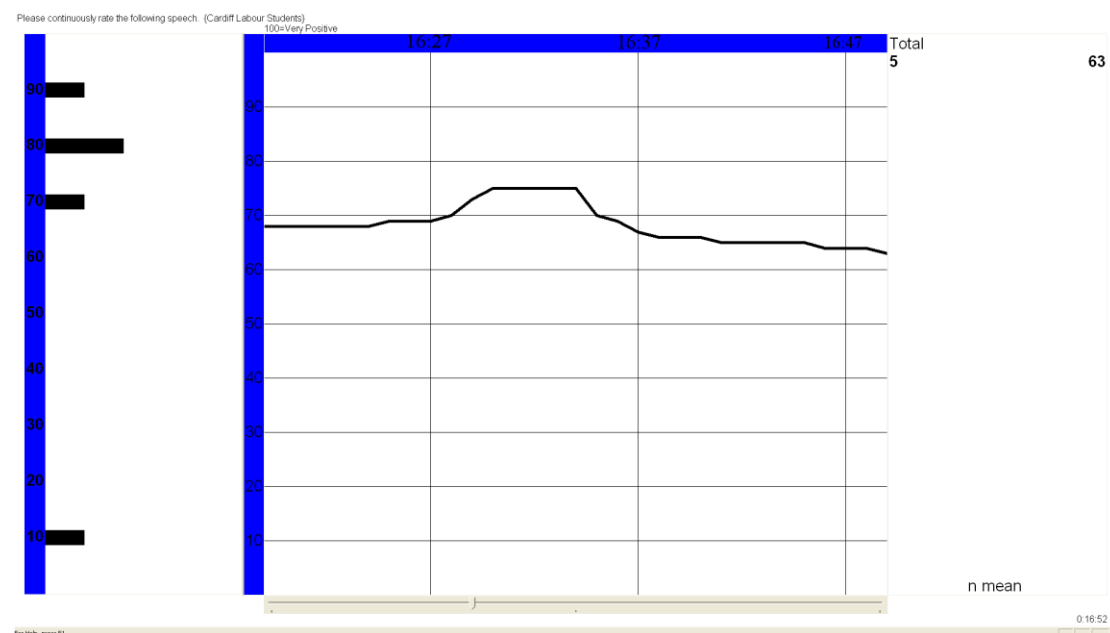
This movement is in direct inversion to the Interpol Group, which initially dropped in PNAR towards the speech, dropping an initial 5 points to 57 but then climbing 13 points to 70:

Figure 10.40: Interpol Group
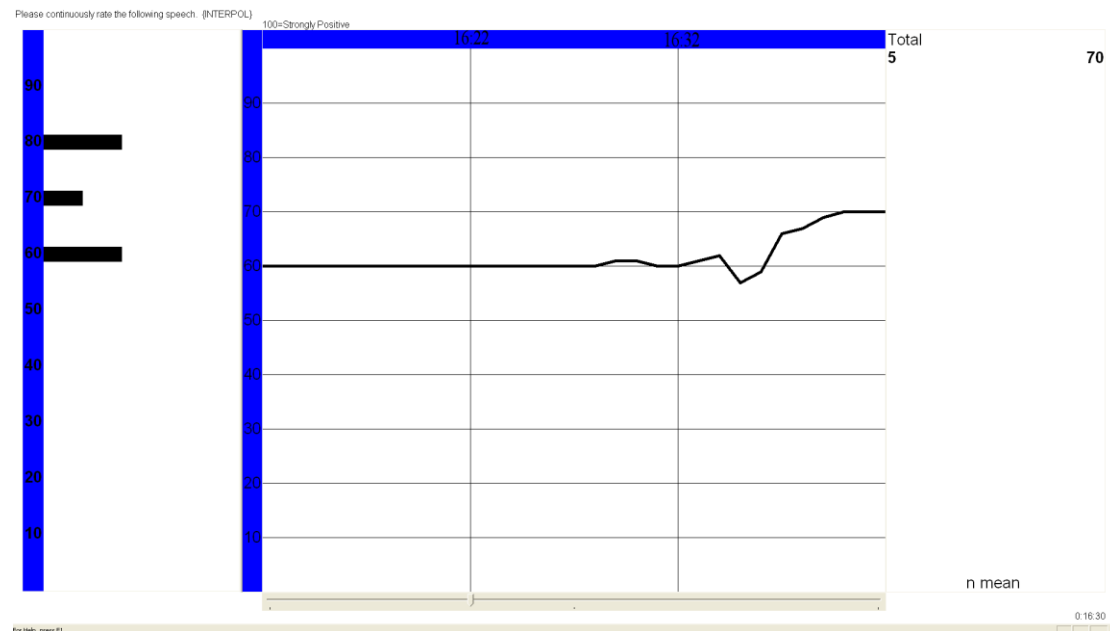
Rhetorically, it should be noted that by stressing these humble connections, Obama uses them as examples to neutralize John McCain's assertion of Obama's elitism that had appeared in a television ad tying Obama to Paris Hilton and Britney Spears as an elite celebrity. This response would break McCain's attempt to draw a distinction between himself and Obama: the latter is a high-flying elitist, and McCain thus becomes the more "down to Earth" candidate, more "identified" with the voting public. If Obama's refutation was successful, McCain would have to search for an alternative way of defining his own candidacy, it could no longer be the candidate who isn't a celebrity elite. Finally, Obama once again references the promise: by winning the election Obama will keep the promise alive, just as the ordinary American had done in generations past.

"What is that American promise?" Obama asks. Continuing his constitutive rhetoric, Obama uses the word "American promise." To use the word American is to demarcate the promise, it is uniquely American; the promise is not international. This is not a rhetorical question to be pondered by the audience, however, as Obama

moves hypothetically to answer the question by dissecting the promise into its various parts. We learn in detail of Obama's interpretation of the American experience and the normative role of government in American's lives. Crucially, Obama embraces the seemingly contradictory ideologies of individual and communitarian concerns. Obama defines the promise through a series of parallel, qualified propositions that swing between individual and mutual responsibility; the role of the citizen, of business and of government. After the series of qualifiers is presented, he sets this vision in a series of clauses that swing back and forth between what government should and should not do. Previously, Obama laid out his clauses of the promise in "both/and" statements, but now, the form is "this/not that." One participant in the Cardiff Labour Group who identified closely with Tony Blair and the New Labour project commented twice on this section: "[1] I quite liked the realistic line that he took on opportunity as well. He kind of realized that not everyone is going to end life equally in terms of capital but if everyone has the same opportunity they make of it what they will, which was quite nice. [...2] Yeah...He recognized the private sector played a huge role in creating jobs and that if everyone paid their way that they'd get benefits from it at the end of the day. I liked the fact that he kind of structured it in a nice way he sort of made a point, backed it up with how he was going to fund it, which was good... (Cardiff Labour, 2010)." The Welsh Lib Dems were also generally receptive to Obama's balancing act:

> *Participant 7*: I generally liked the road he was going down which was that government should be something that helps people live the way they want to live. As opposed to tell them what they should do.
> *Participant 6*: Yeah, it helps them to, what's he say "helps you get the things you can't get for yourself" or something like that.
> *Participant 7*: Yeah, I like that message.
> *Participant 4*: That the role of government that's in power is not to prescribe.
> *Participant 6*: Yeah, I agree (Welsh Lib Dems, 2010).

From the beginning of this constitutive appeal to the discussion of the market, the Welsh Lib Dem Group saw a steady decrease of 20 points to 61 along with a smaller decrease from the Interpol Group of 8 points to 61 also. However, when it came to the discussion of the role of government in society, from "government cannot solve all our problems" to "every American who's willing to work" there was unanimous aggregate increases in PNAR for each focus Group, as Figure 13.41 (Cardiff Labour,

+10 to 69), Figure 13.42 (Interpol, +15 to 78), Figure 13.43 (Welsh Lib Dems, +10 to 67) and Figure 13.44 (Americans, +9 to 81) show:
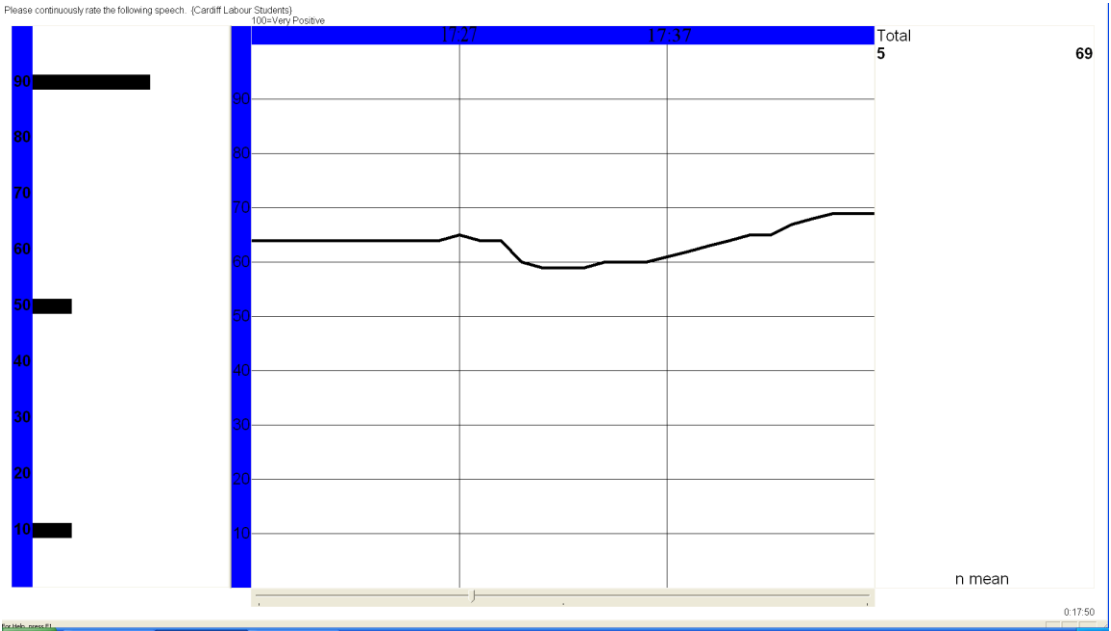
Figure 10.41: Cardiff Labour Group
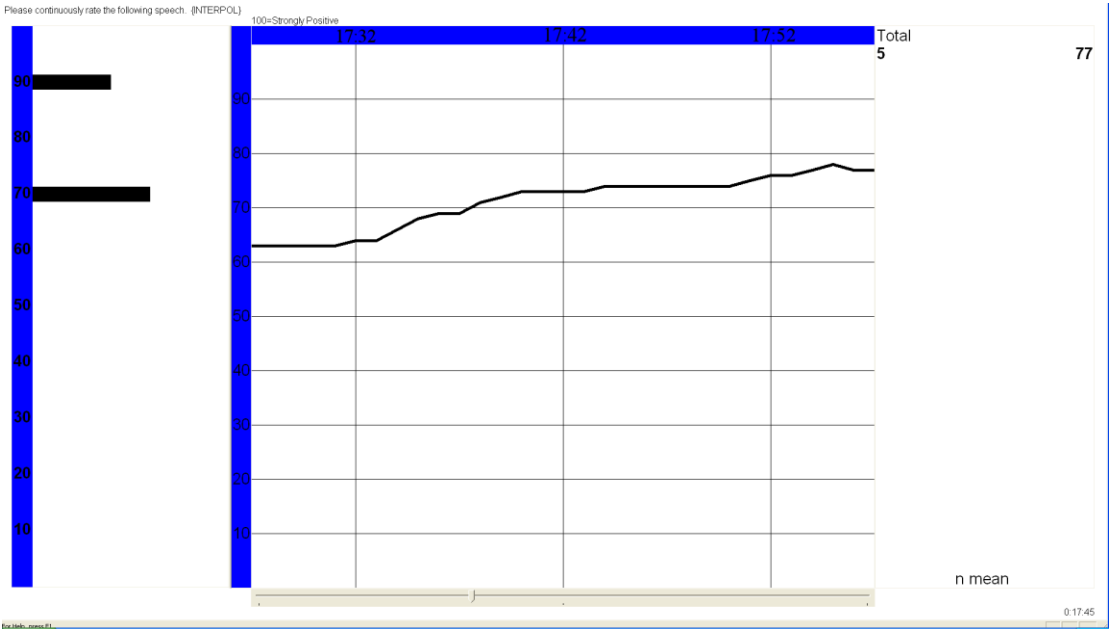

Figure 10.42: Interpol Group

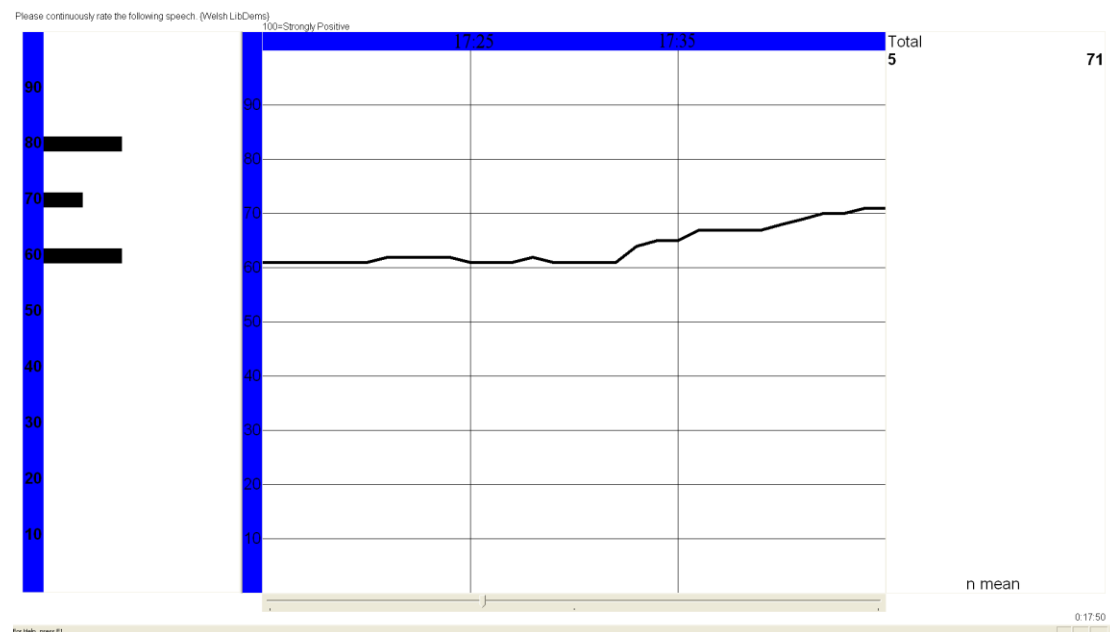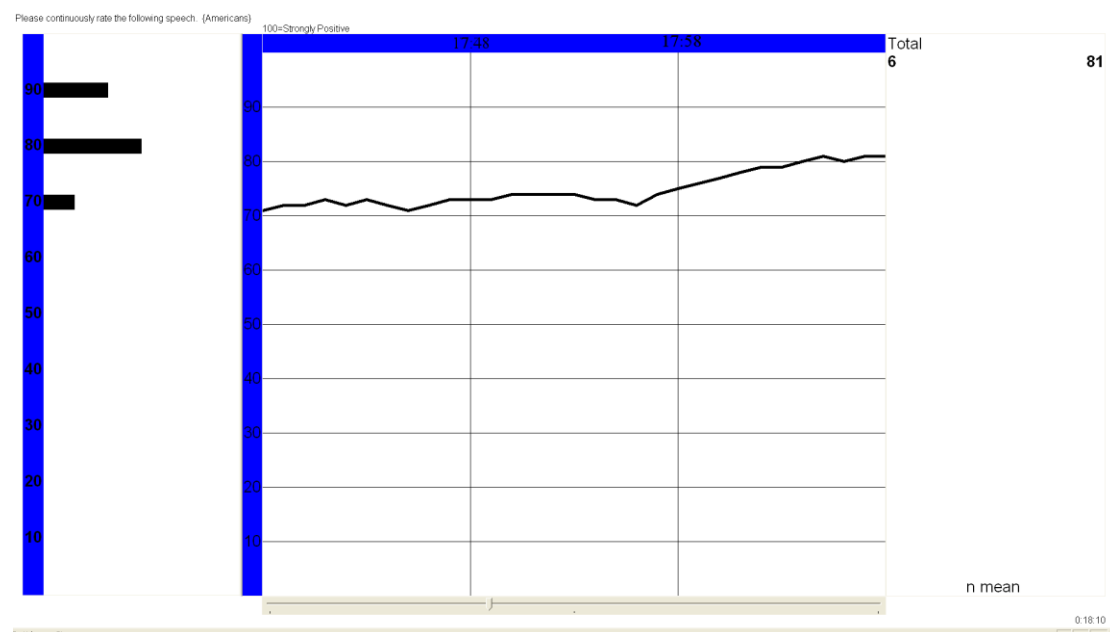**Figure 10.43: Welsh Lib Dem Group**

Figure 10.44: American Group

Having expanded upon his vision of the American promise, he associates it with his primary campaign slogan stem: change. For Obama in this address, change is the vehicle by which he will return America to its promise. Obama now moves to "spell out exactly what that change would mean" if he were to be elected president.

Throughout the campaign, Obama had been criticized for the vagueness surrounding the word "change." As a word, it is the ultimate polysemic *enthymeme*, an empty container that the auditors are able to fill with their own ideas about what change would entail. It is a word that is higher up on the ladder of terminology from which to be consubstantial, though it can become quickly unraveled if any explanation is requested to detail the similar substance of two people wanting "change." During the Texas primary, for example, Clinton had criticized Obama for being "all hat and no cattle," and McCain would regularly dismiss Obama as "eloquent but empty (Claiborne, 2008; Spillius, 2008)." Now, with the economy worsening and the increased likelihood of Obama becoming President of the United States, he needed to offer up specific policy proposals. Obama could no longer motivate voters on strictly idealistic grounds; leaning and independent voters would now need to be motivated on shared interests of substance. Here, policy initiatives are given new life through the use of rhetorical devices. Each policy that fits under Obama's "change" can be seen as an extension of Obama's preexisting narrative. In Obama's "change," there is a departure point, a goal, protagonists and antagonists. "Change means a tax code that doesn't reward the lobbyists who wrote it, but the American workers and small businesses who deserve it," Obama tells us. This clear distinction is used by Obama to associate McCain with companies that "ship jobs overseas." Conversely, Obama will "will start giving them to companies that create good jobs right here in America." This sentence saw an increase in the PNAR score by 5 to 70 with the Cardiff Labour Group and a similar, albeit more oscillating score with the Welsh Lib Dem Group; the latter saw an additional 6 point increase to 71 during the applause after "create jobs right here in America":

Figure 10.45: Welsh Lib Dem Group
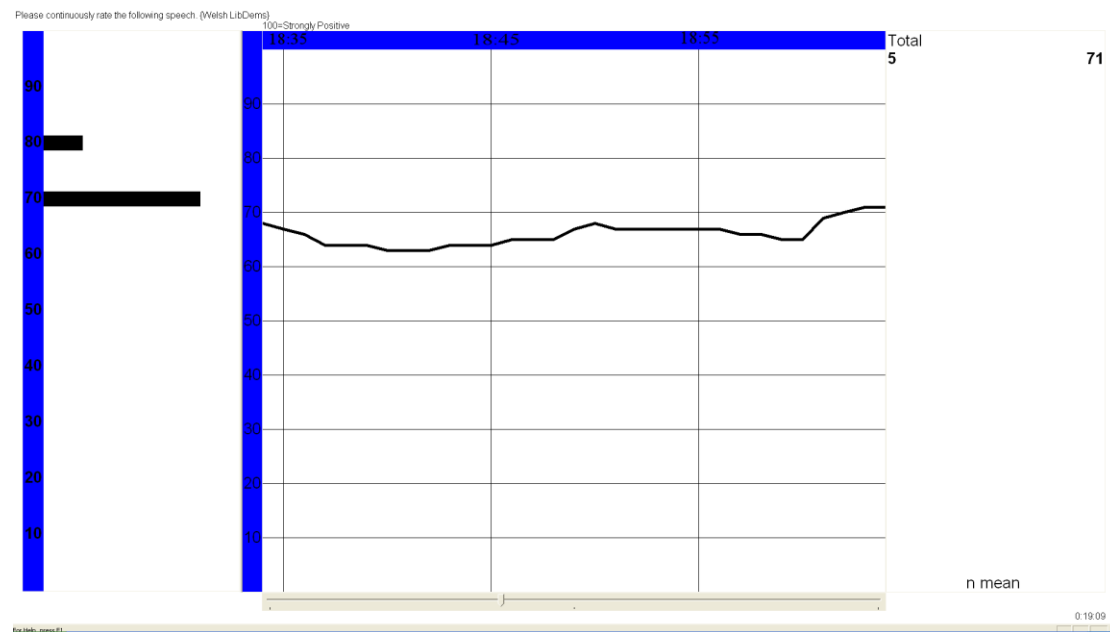
This contrast is between what corporations, John McCain, Washington, and lobbyists have done with what Obama will do by siding with the middle class by cutting taxes for "95% of all working families" and creating new "high tech, high wage" jobs is continued throughout this section. Obama's refusal to "raise taxes on the middle class" and the ensuing applause occurred simultaneously with an aggregate increase of 10 points with the Welsh Lib Dem Group and an 8 point increase with the Cardiff Labour Group. Focus Groups participants discussing the speech identified with a range of these policies, some naming them when they felt most positive. As one participant in the Cardiff Labour Group stated:

> *Participant 3*: I liked the bits where he talked about um, sort of hitting, um not doing economic policies which would hit poorer people rather than richer people and that he would cut taxes for people on middle and lower incomes rather than cutting taxes for larger corporations. And I liked the talk on reducing the dependence on oil and actually on the environment
> *Moderator*: And these are things you would like to be seen done in the UK...
> *Participant 3*: Yeah...but it helps if it's also happenin' in America. Because one of the issues is taxes on high earners is the issue of the brain drain and so it needs... we really need action world-wide. And there's no point putting a cap on emissions in Britain if America, China of India are making it significantly worse, so we do need action...
> *Participant 1*: I liked the bit about, you know, helping poorer families I think that's a part of himself shining through from all the other political rhetoric you get which every politician would stand up there and say. And he did, I think he does fight for the poorest in America so, but he hasn't done enough, by a long

way, but he has been hampered by, you know, the economic situation. Um and that's probably my favorite bit when it's actually him almost sounding socialist in terms of, you know, let's hit the big earners hardest and, you know, make life a bit easier for the poorest in society (Cardiff Labour, 2010).

Some members of the Interpol Group concurred, though two leveled criticisms of vagueness in the policy prescriptions:

> *Participant 3*: Uh health care, social welfare, economic governance, that sort of thing, that's probably when it was the highest...
> *Participant 4*: Yeah when he was actually goin' on, around the [inaudible] when he started talkin' about proper policies, when he started listing all the stuff he'd do and why he'd do it, etc.
> *Participant 3*: I mean I could see what he was doing but it wasn't very descriptive, was it?
> Participant 4: No...
> *Participant 3*: A better education, an affordable education, but it wasn't real policy...
> *Participant 4*: Yeah, but it was the headline policies, when it moved away from the personal stuff into the political stuff, listing why I should vote for him [that was most positive] (Interpol, 2010).

One American, who declared her support for Obama, turned the dial down during this section using hindsight, but, would probably have turned it up if hearing this in the moment. As she explained:

> *Participant 6*: [When] he was like "oh, we should give our students education" I was like "turn the dial down" [laughter], health care, turn the dial down, like [...]Equal rights for everyone, and I was like turn the dial down, I was like "ohhh, I like him, and I voted for him and I still like him and I still believe in him but I just kept thinking you know things like the letter I got, the week after I graduated was like "your health care has been cut off" like in August, "you're going to be done" and you're like "I should get all my exams done now while I still can" and you know when I came here for postgrad, you know you apply to like, obviously the US government for scholarships and things like that, and they were immediately saying "you get no money" and being like "right, so...". [...]Right, it's definitely, it's BS this was like two years ago, I would have thought something would have happened by now...Nothing... (Americans, 2010).

After listing several policy initiatives, Obama moves to associate McCain with Washington in vivid and explicit terminology. He associates McCain and Washington's inaction and gridlock on chronological and geographical grounds and supports this claim by laying down a series of accusations against McCain and his record on energy. Obama will "set a clear goal as president" to "end our dependence

on oil from the Middle East" a solution in direct response to a challenge that has existed during John McCain' time in Washington. Formally, the *anaphora* of "he said no" results in what Quintillion calls *accumulatio*, or a "heaping up" of accusations for effect to emphasize a particular point; it works toward pushing McCain into the Washington/Lobbyist/Republican nexus of antagonists. Obama's proclamation of ending "our dependence on oil from the Middle East" generated both aggregate score fluctuation and conversation with focus Group participants. The most dramatic fluctuation occurred with the Cardiff Labour Group, as Figure 10.46 demonstrates:

Figure 10.46: Cardiff Labour Group
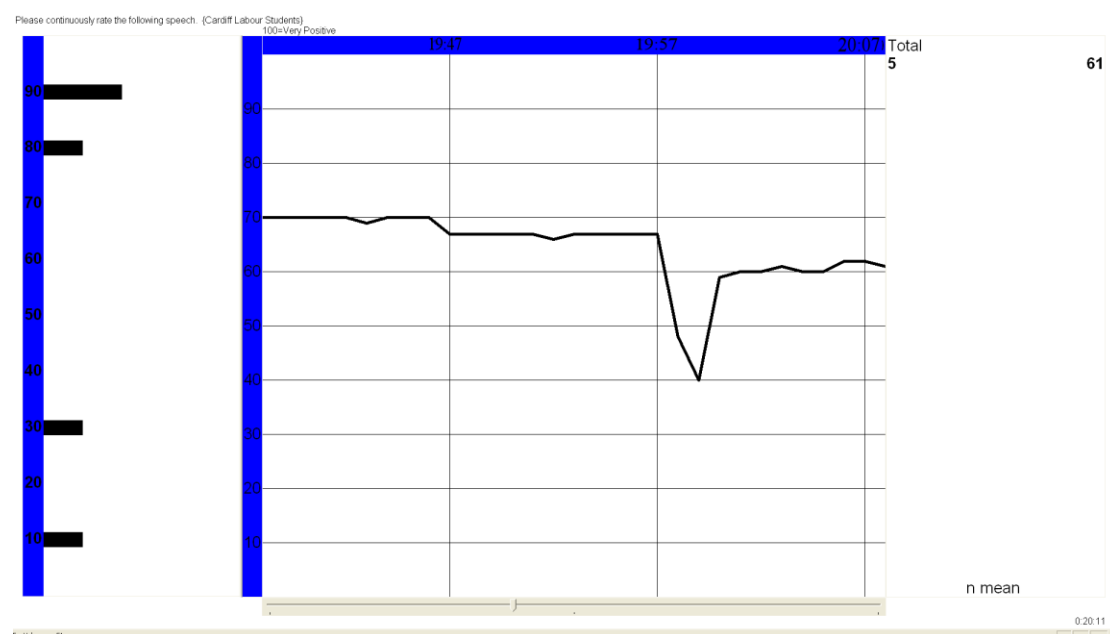
Here, the aggregate score dropped 27 points to 40 before rebounding slightly by 12 points to 59. One participant had reservations about Obama's intentions to end America's dependence on oil because they were "putting a lot of pressure on Iran" while another said "if he said 'end our dependence on oil [as opposed to 'oil from the Middle East'], then yeah that's great but it's like he's almost going back into isolation [inaudible] these 'crazy Middle-Easterners' (Cardiff Labour, 2010)." In a clear instance of polyvalence, two participants in the Cardiff Labour Group disagreed about the link between oil, the environment and security:

> *Participant 4*: I don't think he was just saying it on the environmental line as well, it's an element of security.
> *Participant 1*: That's what I mean I thought he was arguing the security line

about these "mad Middle-Easterners" have control over our supply of oil...

Participant 4: Well they do, to be fair...

Participant 1: They do but he's got more fundamental issues that he, if he had tackled it more from an environmental aspect I would have turned my dial up but he's keen to sort of mix the two together like security and the environment and I think that environment takes a head in uh importance in, I think environment is more important than American national security.

Participant 4: Aren't they inextric.... inextricably linked? The environment and security?

Conversely, the Welsh Lib Dem Group responded with an initial increase (+8 to 86) and then along with the American Group a larger, more drawn out decrease that came with Obama's elaboration of the energy problems the nation faces in Figure 10.47 (Welsh Lib Dem, -11 to 75) and 10.48 (American, -9 to 67):

Figure 10.47: Welsh Lib Dem Group
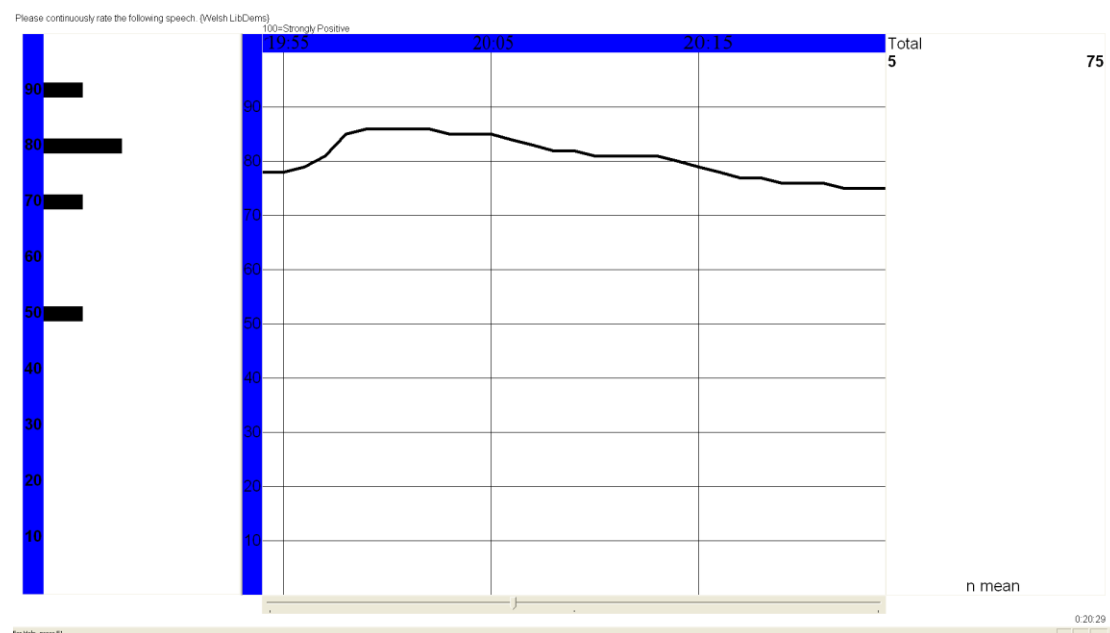
Figure 10.48: American Group
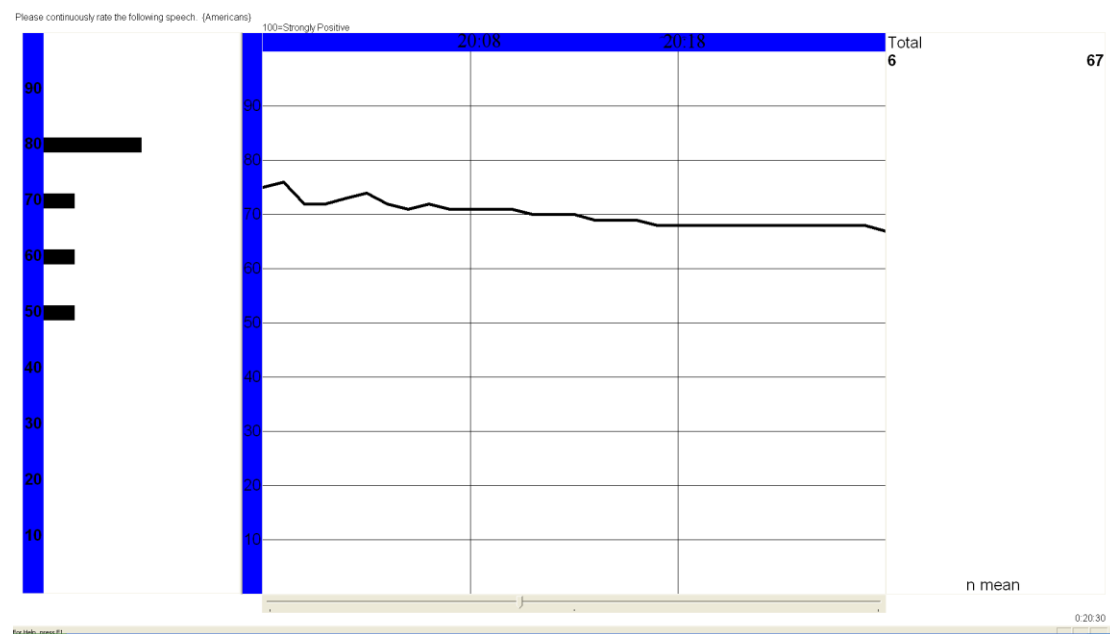
The moderator spotted this fluctuation during the stimulus and brought it up as a topic for discussion with the Welsh Lib Dem Group:

> *Moderator*: There was a lot of fluctuation, I noticed, when he said "I'm going to set a firm deadline within ten years we're finally going to end our addiction to oil from the Middle East". Some went up, some went down.
> *Participant 6*: I loved that, I...
> *Participant 7*: I turned that down because I just didn't think that was realistic. I didn't think it was a realistic promise to make so I...
> Participant 5: No...
> *Participant 7*: I turned it down.
> *Participant 2*: I think I turned it up for most of that section, but turned it down when the word "addiction" appeared.
> Moderator: You didn't like that word?
> *Participant 2*: I didn't like the word, no. I'm not sure I can explain why but [inaudible] (Welsh Lib Dems, 2010).

Rhetorically, the antithesis between McCain et al. and Obama et al. is continued from the realm of energy to what Obama will do to help small businesses and the American people. In fact, Obama repeats the phrase "I will" nine times from when he begins "spelling out" what change means to how he plans to pay for his policies; he repeats the variant "I'll" an additional seven times. Even if there is disagreement on what policies Obama will put into place, the formal repetition that he will do something leaves little ground for opponent's to call him "eloquent but empty" on policy initiative. The concrete repetition that Obama will do something also feeds into the

first persona: he is prepared, he has a plan, and he is ready to address America's challenges. Here, Obama is also creating a communicative relationship between himself and those that find this kind of attitude towards the presidency as admirable; he can be seen as identifying himself and his candidacy with challenges and creates consubstantiality with those that share similar concerns about the nature of these challenges and Obama's prescriptive solutions. With each new policy proposal, Obama identifies with any voter who would use that issue as a criterion for voting. In the first section of policy proposals, Obama outlines his intention to address energy challenges, including the affordability of domestically produced fuel-efficient cars and ties to creating jobs "that can't be outsourced." Both the American Group and the Cardiff Labour Group decreased slightly in aggregate score during Obama's initial contention that he would tap America's natural gas reserves, invest in clean coal technology and "safely harness nuclear power." Immediately after this, as Obama began to discuss creating fuel efficient cars in America and the crowd applauded, the Cardiff Labour Group saw a remarkable 19 point increase in PNAR to 70 as shown by Figure 10.49:

Figure 10.49: Cardiff Labour Group
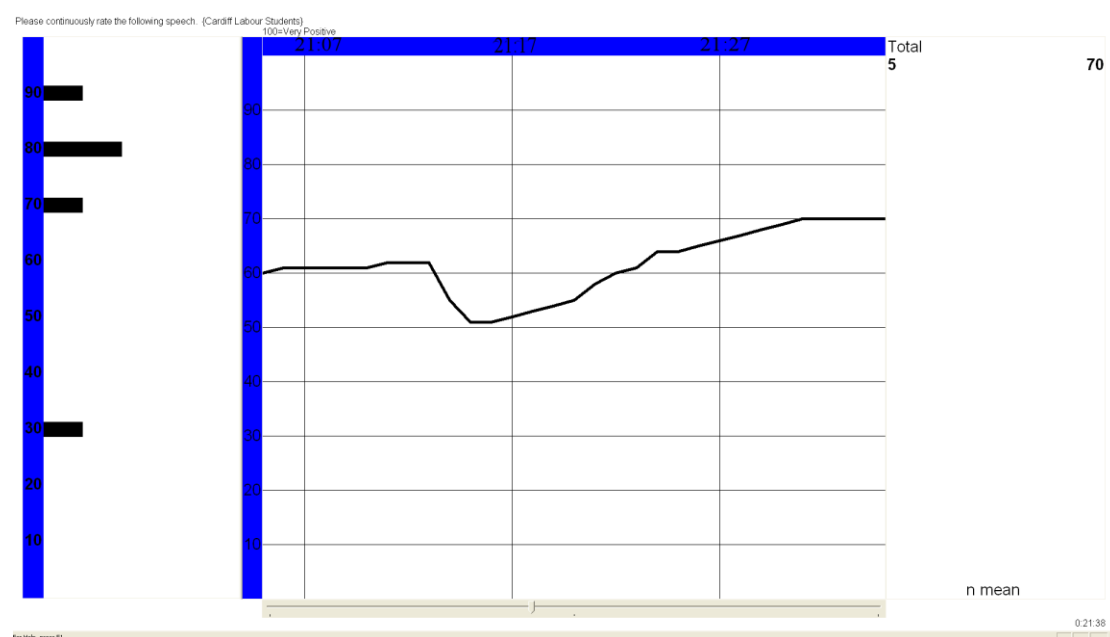
This increase in PNAR continued not only for the Cardiff Labour Group but for every other focus Group, especially the Welsh Lib Dems and the Americans as Obama

declared his intent to invest in alternative energy as shown in Figure 10.50 (Welsh Lib Dem, +11 to 81) and Figure 10.51 (Americans, +10 to 77):
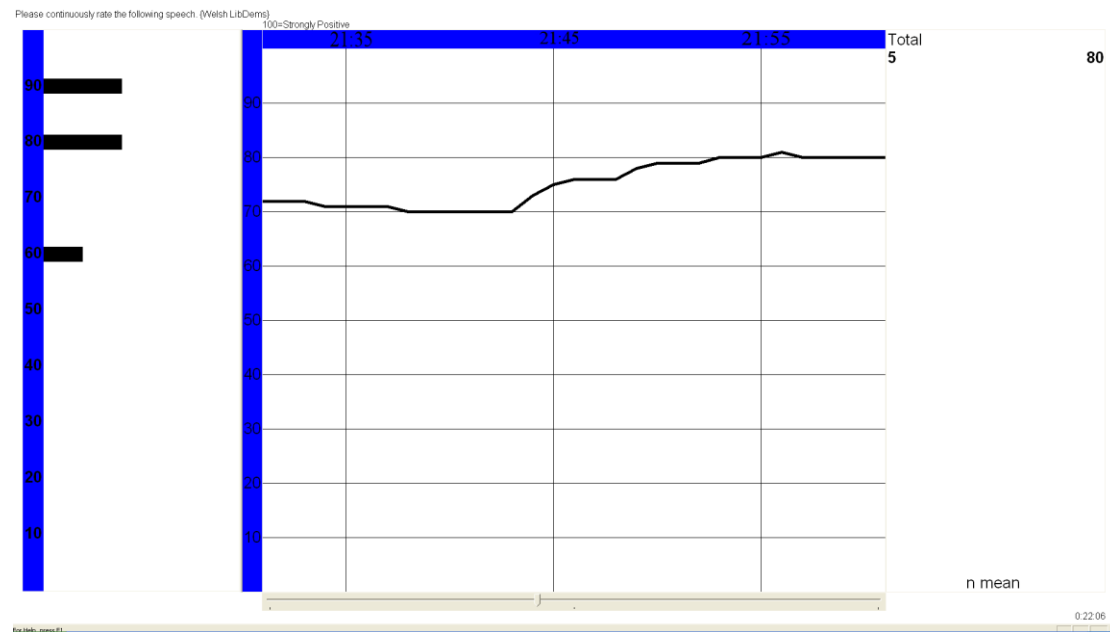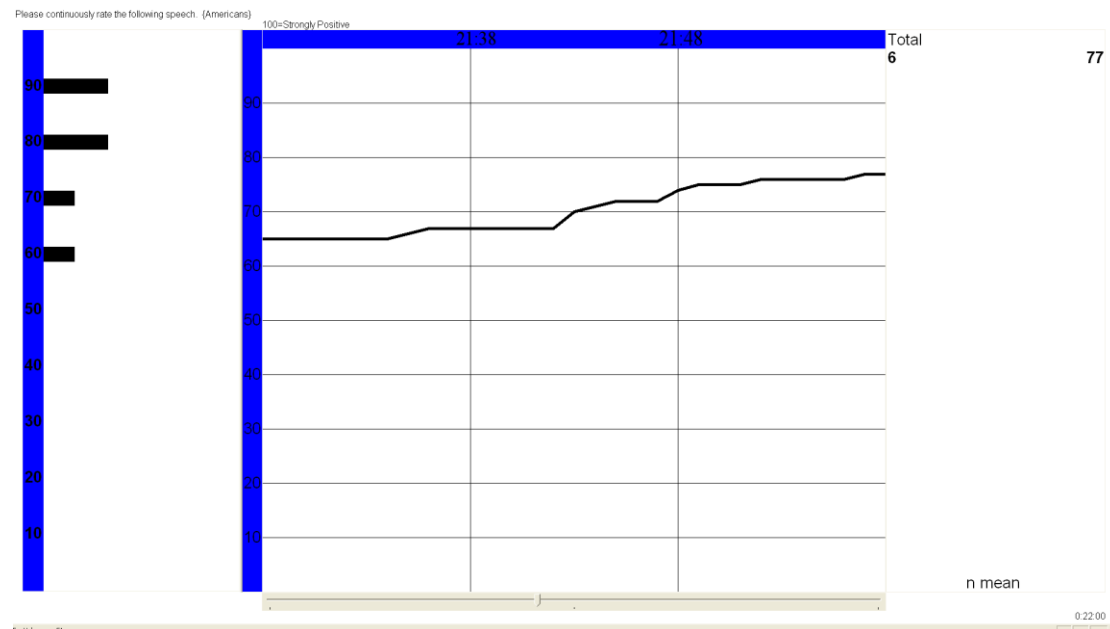
Figure 10.50: Welsh Lib Dem Group

Figure 10.51: American Group

Obama continues his list of policy initiative into the realm of education: Obama's very *ethos*, his ability to run for office, is bound up in his education, and he "will not settle for an America where some kids don't have that chance." While the focus

Groups largely fluctuated positively and negatively towards the speech, the applause that occurred after "where some kids don't have that chance" saw an increase PNAR with the Cardiff Labour Group and the Welsh Lib Dem Group and a 6-point decrease from the Interpol Group. While the Welsh Lib Dem Group leveled off and decreased slightly after the applause, the former, Cardiff Labour along with the American Group continued to increase through Obama's solutions to giving America's children a "world-class education" as shown in Figure 10.52 (Cardiff Labour, +14 to 78). It is also worth mentioning, as shown in Figure 10.53 that while the American Group increased in PNAR during this phase of the speech, it decreased sharply by 13 points to 61 when Obama discussed giving tuition assistance to those who serve "our country or our community":

**Figure 10.52: Cardiff Labour Group**

231
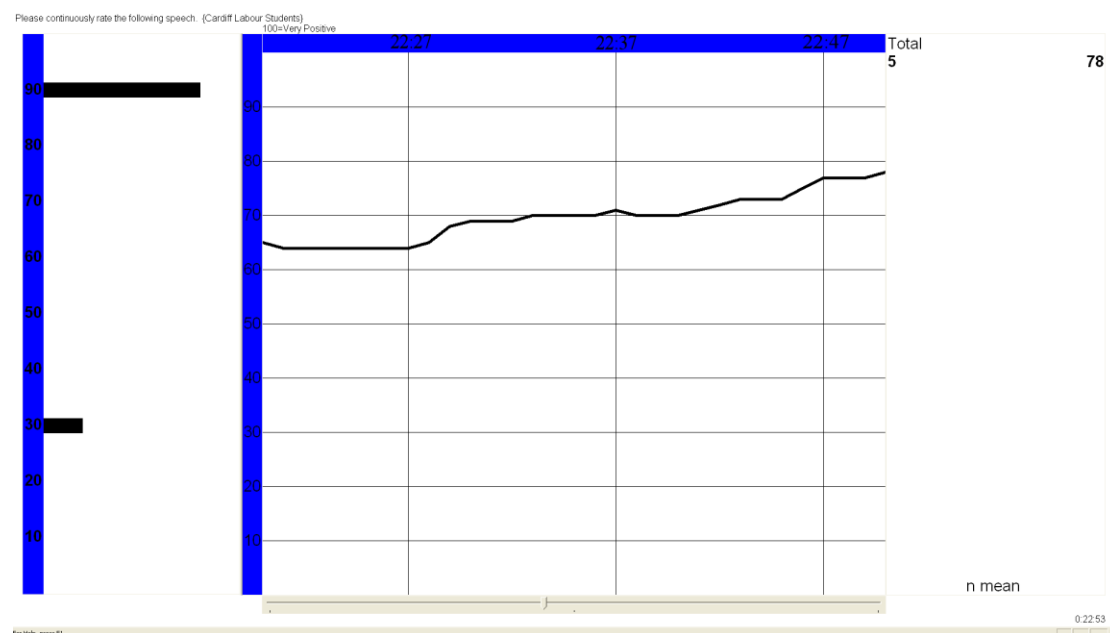
Figure 10.53: American Group
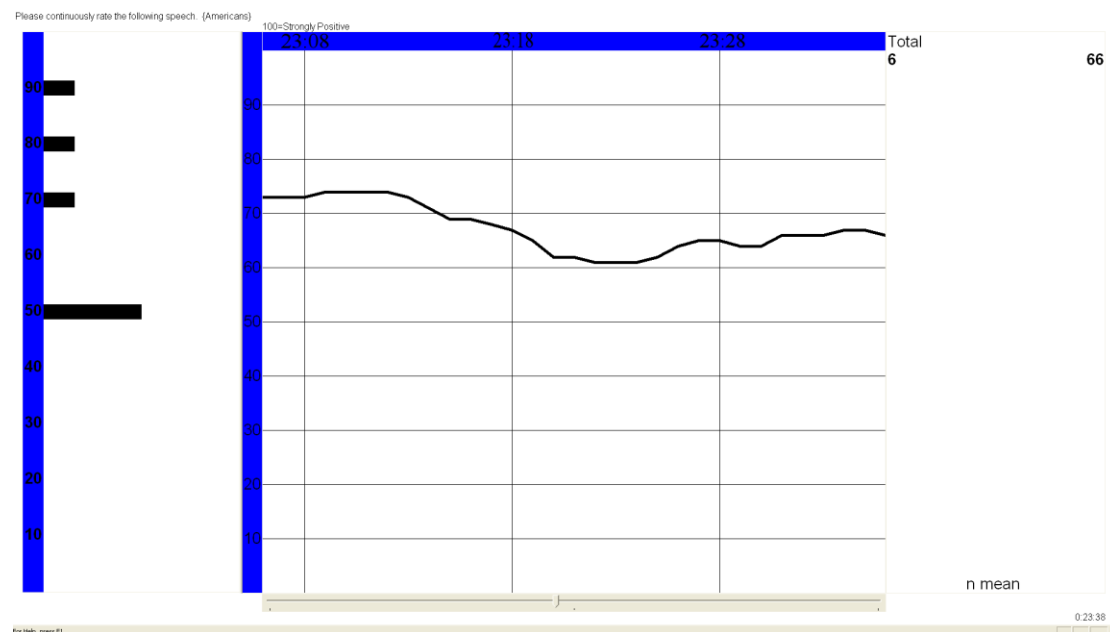
As Obama moves to his discussion of healthcare, the fluctuation of positive and negative aggregate scores between and within focus Groups continues. Giving the American people "the same kind of coverage congress gives themselves," for example, saw a rise in PNAR from the American Group within the context of a steady increase in PNAR throughout this section as shown in Figure 10.54 (+10 to 70):

Figure 10.54: American Group
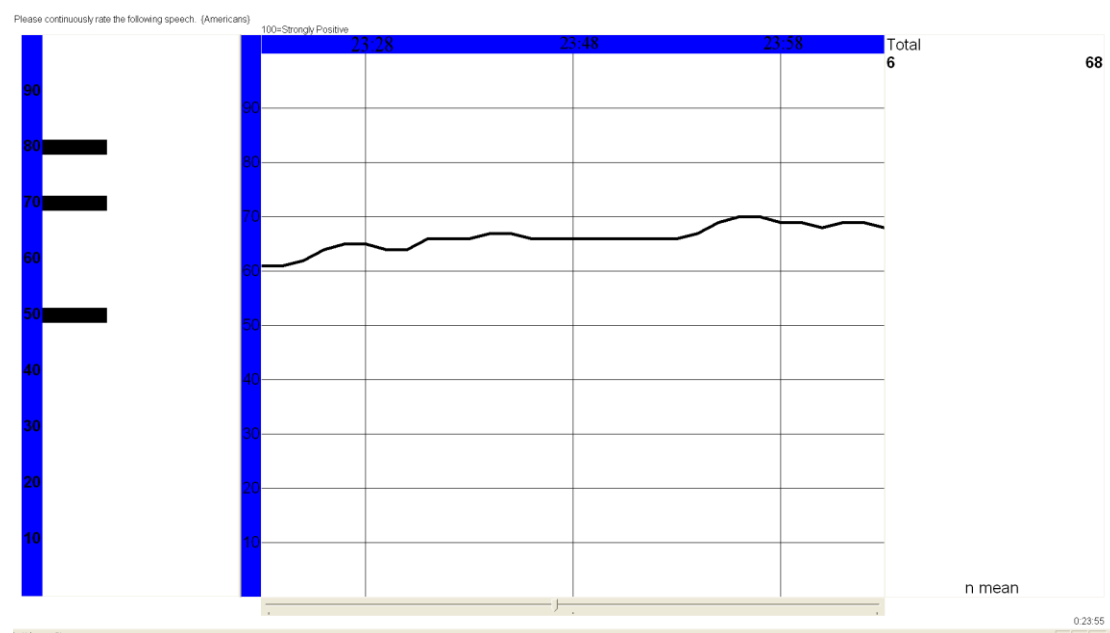
Moving from policy to the personal, Obama invokes his mother's death from cancer as an emotive appeal to stop insurance companies from discriminating against those with pre-existing conditions. Five participants in the Welsh Lib Dem Group discussed this sentence specifically, albeit in polyvalent ways:

> *Participant 6*: Yeah, particularly low when he was talking about looking after someone in bed with cancer and I just thought "ughhhh"
> *Participant 3*: I like that.
> *Participant 2*: Me too.
> *Participant 7*: I thought it was emotive, but some of it went from being emotive to being slightly much and slightly mushy (Welsh Lib Dems, 2010).

Participant 3 in the Welsh Lib Dem Group, who liked Obama's personal story, combined his discussion of this sentence along with how he approached moving the dial: "I think there's some context to those stories though, again I don't know if the worm bears this out, but I think it depends on whether those stories come after a big high or during a nice, calm quiet talking bit, you might respond differently if that emotional story came after a big high note and then he started talking about his mother dying of cancer. Then you would be in tears, probably. But if it's in the calm talky bit, you might not respond to it (ibid)." Obama's general discussion of health care received mixed reactions from the dial testing. The Cardiff Labour Group, for example, increased 7 points to 74, while the Interpol Groups increased 5 points to 80. The Welsh Lib Dem Group, however, decreased in aggregate score by 10 points to 73. Obama continues through his policy agenda and ends this section of the speech that gained PNAR from every Group: the Cardiff Labour and Interpol Group each saw a 7 point increase to 80 and 82, respectively. The Welsh Lib Dems also saw an 8 point increase to 87 and the American Group saw a smaller increase. The discussion of health care prompted an interesting conversation with the Interpol Group about human rights, Guantanamo bay and torture:

> *Participant 2*: I think it is because uh because everyone in the US is "right" because of the massive issue with communism and socialism, and they're seen as the same thing. Um, so automatically everyone is slightly to the right, he can't propose anything that looks slightly socialist. This is why you had so many issues with the Tea Party movement, they are kind of McCarthyist, against Communism and Socialism, or what they see as that...
> *Moderator*: And did you think Obama talking about what government should or should not do sounded socialist or communist?

Participant 2: It didn't but Tea Party candidates are very good at spinning things. And with the legislation that came in afterwards, it would probably explain the Republican success in the midterms.

Participant 3: When it's attacking the NHS as socialist which is nothing at all, it's not creating a state [inaudible] health care, it's just making sure everyone has health care insurance.

Participant 1: Human rights...

Moderator: You think it's a human rights issue...

Participant 1: Which I think America is usually standing up for...but definitely not in everything...

Moderator: Not in health care?

Participant 3: Human rights when it suits them.

Participant 4: Yeah...

Participant 2: You've only got to look at the fact that they've sneakily found a loophole in the Constitution for cruel and unusual punishment "The US Constitution only applies on the mainland, so let's use Cuba to base Guantanamo Bay"

Participant 1: Sleep deprivation isn't torture...

Participant 3: Waterboarding...

Participant 2: that is torture and that is illegal. Seeing as how terrorists don't actually count as prisoners of war...go for it.

Participant 1: don't they?

Participant 2: American lawyers looked at rewriting it, and I think managed to force through the changes

Participant 1: So American Presidents are always good at spinning human rights...

Participant 2: Yeah.. (Interpol, 2010).

One participant in the Cardiff Labour Group, however, disagreed and drew upon a familiar theme that would recur in many focus Group sessions, that Obama needed to say things he didn't necessarily believe in order to appeal to independent and center-right voters:

> *Participant 1*: I think...like most American politicians they have to play to that conservative middle white American audience and it's a shame because I think you know when he touches on health care then for us here who have something like the NHS, we believe that is the most logical way of providing health care and the most ethical way of doing it, but I can't imagine him not believing that at heart, that the state should provide health care for everybody, but he's...he's having to...he's either having to tone it down, you know right down not to sound like some crazy communist, you know, Americans might think he was if he was sayin'that the state should provide things like that. But it's kind of...makes you lose any faith that he actually, you know, that he's pandered his views, like I was sayin' earlier, you want someone to stand up for their views even if, you know, they may seem to be crazy but in time they'll pay off to be correct, you know, in the future. I think he pandered his opinion in his decisions to just get elected (Cardiff Labour, 2010).

Rhetorically, the American promise that has pervaded Obama's speech is mentioned with each policy proposal that creates a repetitive form: "And we will keep our promise, […] Now is the time to finally keep the promise, […] And now is the time to keep the promise." The repetition reemphasizes the point that Obama's policies will move to uphold the nation's promise to the citizen, whereas McCain's policies will continue to deviate from that communal obligation to ensure the widespread success of the citizenry.

> *Participant 2*: I really liked the line about his daughters wanting the same opportunities as...
> *Participant 7*: Their sons
> *Participant 2*: Their sons, and it was the my daughters, your sons bit and I...
> *Participant 7*: favor of equal pay...
> *Participant 2*: I'm in favor of equal pay
> *Participant 7*: Yeah
> *Participant 2*: Don't have a huge amount of knowledge or drive to pursue it individually, obviously I have to leave that to people who know better than me but that's a line I really liked and on the dial it definitely went up (Welsh Lib Dems, 2010).

Even the way Obama intends to pay for the policies he has outlined seems to fit into his narrative of antithesis: he will "close corporate loopholes and tax havens that don't help America grow," but will also "go through the federal budget, line by line, eliminating programs that no longer work and making the ones we do need work better and cost less - because we cannot meet twenty-first century challenges with a twentieth century bureaucracy." This line was recalled by several members of the Welsh Lib Dem Group:

> *Participant 2*: I did like the "we can't run a 21st century government on a 20th century programs"
> *Participant 6*: Yeah...
> *Participant 2*: Frankly, but...
> *Participant 4*: Yeah, well done.
> *Participant 3*: It's an analog politician in a digital age, kind of thing
> *Participant 2*: Yeah (Welsh Lib Dem, 2010).

With this, Obama keeps the *formal* aspect of antithesis but reframes the *content*: while corporate interests and Washington have acted or failed to act at the expense of small businesses and the "extraordinary ordinary American," Obama's policies will be

enacted and paid for literally at the expense of corporate interests, but taking this position for Obama does not indicate a "big government" agenda, that is, Obama reframes the debate from what was a choice between big business or big government to a pragmatic position of siding with the American people and economic populism that rejects an absolute attachment to either position.

In perhaps what is one of the most striking differences in audience reception to this speech, each of the British focus Groups decreased dramatically once Obama shifted from the idealistic discussion of equal pay for equal work to the methods of funding his list of policy proposals. As Figures 10.55 (Cardiff Labour, -21 to 59), 10.56 (Interpol, -12 to 69) and 10.57 (Welsh Lib Dems, -25 to 62) show, Obama's assertion that he will cut government bureaucracy to make it more cost efficient increased by 10 points with the American Group but saw steep declines in PNAR among British Groups. The focus Groups occurred at a time of immense controversy in the UK on government cuts and efficiency savings and had indeed gripped the United Kingdom and the Lib Dem/Conservative coalition:

Figure 10.55: Cardiff Labour Group
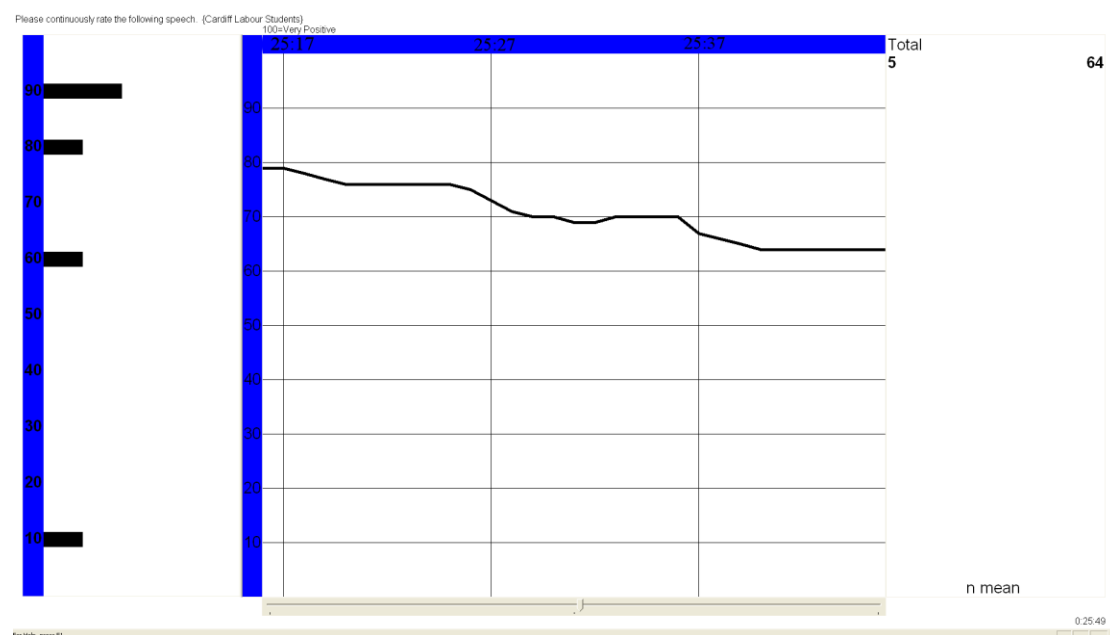
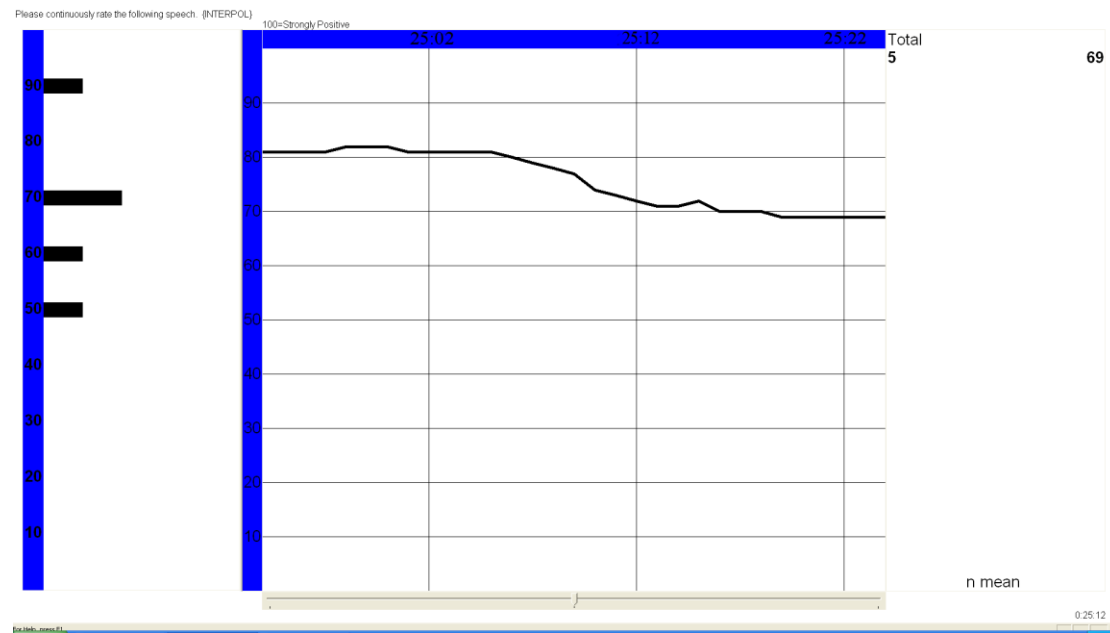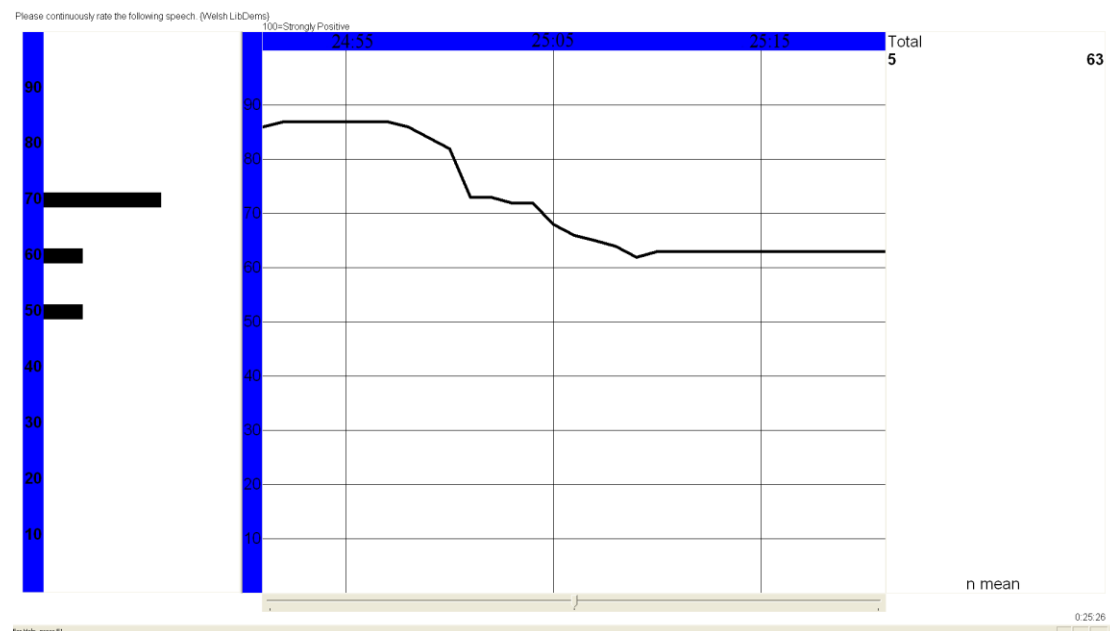**Figure 10.56: Interpol Group**

Figure 10.57: Welsh Lib Dem Group

Now that Obama has outlined what change means and what he will do in a governmental capacity to keep America's promise and how he will pay for it, he shifts from addressing all Americans to Democrats in particular. From an electoral standpoint, it is doubtful whether this message is actually addressed to Democrats, as their votes are quite secure, or whether he is addressing leaning and independent

voters by engaging in a *prosopopoeia* to demonstrate his ability to take the third way. In this section, Obama continues the theme of making qualified statements, this time on two levels. On the one hand, the *prosopopoeia* addressed to Democrats can be seen as a way to temper Obama's use of governmental change as a vehicle to return to America's promise of community with individual responsibility by invoking John F. Kennedy, a source of admiration and identification for many in the Democratic Party. He ends with a recapitulation of the promise: "Individual responsibility and mutual responsibility - that's the essence of America's promise."

It should be noted that Obama's rhetorical balancing act of "individual and mutual responsibility" generated considerable conversation in the focus Groups. The longest and most nuanced once again occurred with the Welsh Lib Dem Group:

> *Participant 2*: there was the bit where he started off and said "we're Democrats, we need to realize that it won't be money alone that..." and I can't remember what he said immediately after that, bits about we need to accept that government can't tell...take kids away from the telly
> Participant 6: Oh, yeah.
> *Participant 2*: That section, I thought he was strongly appealing to Republican or...
> *Participant 5*: Family...
> *Participant 2*: Family values
> *Participant 5*: Yeah...
> *Participant 2*: Sort of responsibility
> *Participant 7*: Small government
> *Participant 2*: No I quite like that bit, I think.
> *Participant 7*: I didn't like that bit
> *Moderator*: Did you turn it up or...
> *Participant 2*: I think I turned it
> *Participant 6*: I turned it up
> *Participant 7*: I didn't like the whole kind of rhetoric of sort of telling your kids to get out of the telly and, what was it...
> *Participant 2*: No, see I agree
> *Participant 5*: Well I turned it down because it kept on the fact of needing...it was almost the conservative thing of a family is a mum and a dad and your kids, and that concept of family doesn't necessarily [inaudible]
> *Participant 3*: I don't think he was saying that, he said it's telling the dads...I thought he was talking about split families
> *Participant 5*: No, I got it as it was...
> *Participant 3*: Tell the dad to get more involved
> *Participant 7*: I don't like it, I find it quite general in politics, I don't like it when perhaps they get into the issue of mum and dad, I think they should just say there are all types of families out there, maybe there's a reason their kids been put in front of a telly because the mum has got busy doing something

else that she has to do. I just, it's a bit of a minefield always for me and I don't...
Participant 6: But if you both interpreted that in different ways, doesn't that say that that speech has been written very well, because it's appealed to lots of people who have got different views and different lifestyles
Participant 5: Yeah (Welsh Lib Dems, 2010).

One American participant read Obama's transcendent appeals as contradictory, that is, not able to be included together in a cohesive political philosophy:

Participant 4: Yeah...It seemed strange at the beginning when he talked about the American Dream and you can make anything of yourself and then later in the speech he said that we rely on the idea of pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps and he like, it was different completely at the beginning and the end he was like "we shouldn't you know, it's social problems that are causing these issues and it's not that you should be the individual pulling themselves up, we should all look out for each other" and I was like "but you just said that..."
Participant 2: Yeah...
Moderator: So you saw that as a contradiction...
Participant 4: Yeah, we should make something of ourselves but now you're saying you know that we should all look out for each other and it's not the individual (Americans, 2010).

One participant, the self-proclaimed socialist in the Cardiff Labour Group read this in equally skeptical terms, noting that the government often states that "[it's] like 'we'll do our part, if you do this' but they don't play that part" but another participant along with the participant in the Cardiff Labour Group who more closely identified with Tony Blair's New Labour branch of the party were much more sympathetic to the appeal:

Participant 4: I think he kind of struck a good balance, I mean he hit all the right fundamental points like education, health care, defense and then touched on veterans and stuff like that. And I think he, he, the chord he struck well was balancing rights and responsibilities and saying that if you work hard, pay your tax, there will be good education good health care at the end of it.
*Moderator*: And that's something that's important to you?
Participant 4: Yeah, yeah. So a sense of fair play and decency
Participant 3: I think he actually struck a good balance between personal responsibility and the state's role, but, um, just general impressions, he's very inspiring as a speaker. There's no one...sort of to watch a speech where you feel, sort of, like, inspired to go for a candidate you know like him (Cariff Labour, 2010).

Those in the Cardiff Labour Group who were irked by Obama's emphasis on responsibility seemed to be illuminated most in the dial testing data, as shown in Figure 10.58 (-15 to 46):

Figure 10.58: Cardiff Labour Group
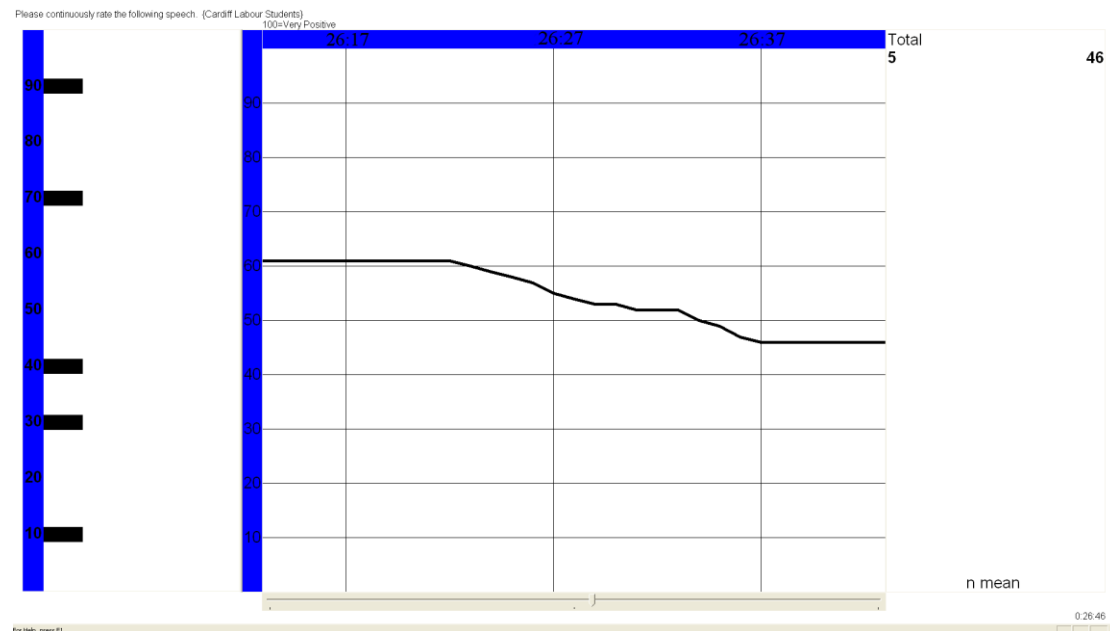
This sums up Obama's vision of the American promise at home and he leaves us just as he started. Within the address to Democrats, Obama would accomplish two objectives. First, with each qualifier within the antithetical frame, Obama is careful to put limits on his antithesis. "We" are not what the Republicans are, but neither is America. It's not "Left" versus "Right"; it's America (Obama, the extraordinary ordinary American, small businesses and soldiers) versus Bush-McCain, corporate interests, Washington, and lobbyists. Besides aligning his party with the constructed interests of the American people, Obama continues to construct a first persona that demonstrates an ability to take multiple ideological viewpoints into consideration, in this case, individualistic and communitarian concerns.

With America's economic promise complete, Obama subdivides the promise as he had in the introduction by turning his focus on America's promise abroad. Polling up to this point in America indicated that McCain led Obama on foreign policy credentials. One participant in the Welsh Lib Dem Group saw this section as "an obvious appeal to Republican voters, I think. Whether it's quite cynical or not, I don't

know (Welsh Lib Dems, 2010)." But if Obama is successful in laying out a credible vision of American foreign policy here, he would be able to neutralize McCain's attempts to define himself through his foreign policy credential, a strategy that had worked well for McCain during his political career. Obama begins by establishing, indeed, framing the standard for what a debate on foreign policy should consist of: temperament and judgment. Although Obama does not provide in any detail what he means by "temperament," a quick contextual survey indicates that this is a potentially potent *enthymeme*. The suppressed premise is that McCain has bad temperament. An article in the *Washington Post* on April 19, 2008 details the anecdotes of McCain's notoriously bad temper, and many of his colleagues questioned whether a short tempered president would be best suited to be so close to the nuclear codes and the big red button (Leahy, 2008). Later in the speech, however, Obama would be very clear in his position that he would not attack John McCain personally. To expand on McCain's temper in detail would be to violate that pledge and throw into jeopardy the transcendent image Obama has so far been at pains to construct. McCain's temperament could only be referenced, not detailed, the unstated premise filled by the auditor, not the orator. It should also be noted that for whatever disagreements some in the Cardiff Labour Group held about the need for more individual responsibility in society, there was a surge of 19 points to 65 in PNAR as Obama turned to discuss foreign policy:

Figure 10.59: Cardiff Labour Group

241
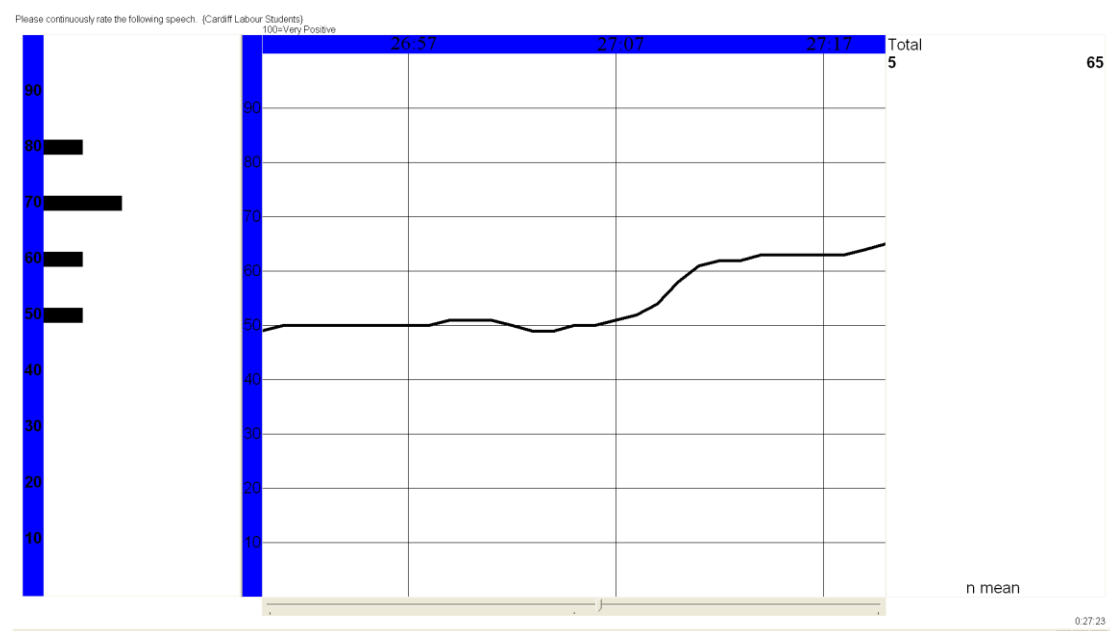
McCain's ill judgment is supported with concrete examples from his record during the Bush Administration. The antithesis continues as Obama outlines McCain's position on Iraq and Afghanistan and contrasts it with his own. Obama's position on Afghanistan, one where he "argued for more resources and more troops to finish the fight against the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11, and made clear that we must take out Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants if we have them in our sights," is yet another tempered position to Iraq. Obama is not "anti-war" so much as he is "anti-war in Iraq," that is, the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Obama frames the foreign policy debate not as pro-war or anti-war but as good judgment versus bad judgment. Cleverly, Obama then associates himself with the Bush Administration and the Iraqi government in their presumably isolated common agreement that there needs to be a timetable for US troop withdrawal in Iraq. He then pushes John McCain beyond this association, and what results is a contention that not only is McCain associated with Bush, but also on the issue of troop withdrawal his judgment and political acumen is worse. After drawing the conclusion that McCain has a more extreme position than Bush, he evaluates the implications of McCain's position. It won't keep us safe, and it's not judgment we need. McCain's judgment is rooted in the past, while Obama is looking to the future.

During Obama's initial critique of McCain's foreign policy judgment, the American Group remained relatively unchanged in PNAR towards the speech. The other three Groups, however, saw considerable fluctuation. McCain's focus on Iraq, for example, saw an increase of 8 points to 68 from the Interpol Group. When Obama argues for more resources in Afghanistan to fight "the terrorists that actually attacked us," the Cardiff Labour Group increased by 5 points to 63. The Interpol Group, on the other hand, increased by 8 points initially to 73, but then plummeted 29 points to 44 through the applause that followed Obama's assertion that McCain won't even follow bin Laden "to the cave where he lives," a direction followed by the Welsh Lib Dem (-12 to 63) as Figure 10.60 (Interpol, -29 to 44) shows:

Figure 10.60: Interpol Group
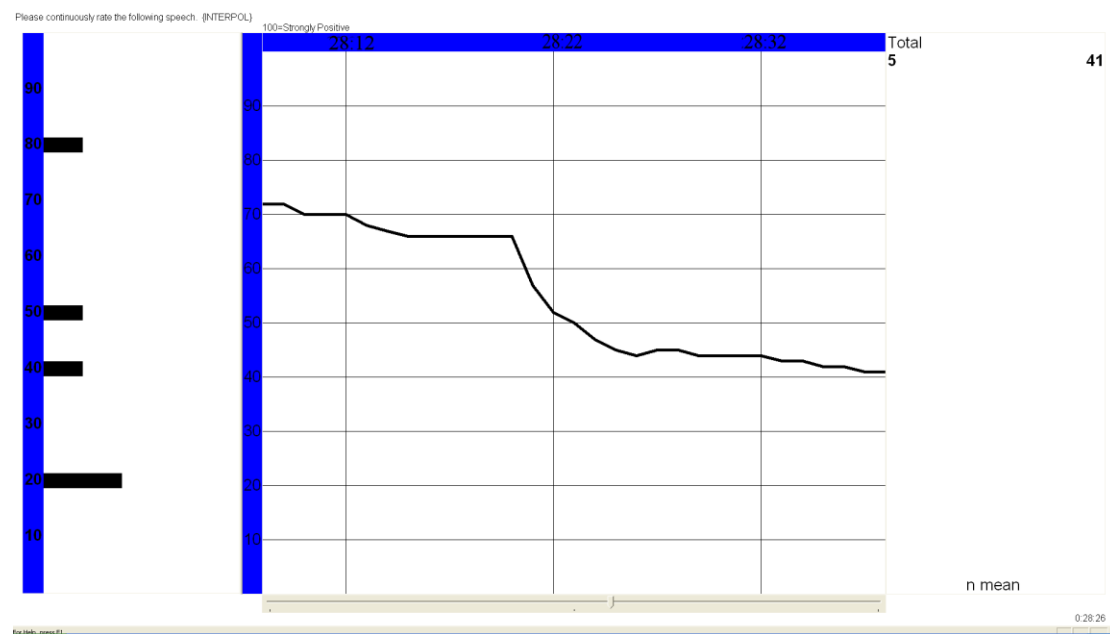
This line generated agreement and disagreement in the American Group:

> *Participant 1*: The only thing that I thought was inconsistent with his uh...was that he talked about going to kill bin Laden, which is extrajudicial assassination and a Constitutional scholar should know better. But anyway...
> *Participant 5*: I agree.
> *Moderator*: And so when he was talking about going to kill bin Laden, did you go to turn your dial down?
> *Participant 1*: Yeah...
> *Participant 5*: Yeah, I did...
> *Participant 2*: Well he was careful to say "take him out" he didn't say "kill"
> *Participant 3*: Well I like that. 'Cause everyone believes [inaudible] and he's got the guts to say it, so I turned it up at that point.
> *Participant 1*: I don't believe that should happen. And I think everybody who does believe that should happen is ignorant of human rights law for the past fifty years (Americans, 2010).

The Welsh Lib Dems were also critical of this line of attack coming from Obama. Moreover, it sparked a more general discussion of America's role in the world to clue us in to how they interpreted Obama's foreign policy appeals:

> *Participant 3*: I can tell you I went way down when he said...he was talking about John McCain and he said something about his response to Afghanistan and he said you should march up to the cave
> *Participant 6*: Yeah...
> *Participant 3*: to find Osama bin Laden and I went "woah!"
> *Participant 6*: Yeah that's when I went negative

243

Participant 3: No, no, no, no, no, that's no way to do foreign relations.

Participant 7: Yeah it was kind of a bit "we're America, we'll.."

Participant 3: Well, arrogant. As soon as anybody talks about Osama bin Laden and all the rest of them living in caves it is just so...you're calling them cavemen. And these guys are highly sophisticated terrorists, you can't treat them like cavemen, I don't like it, it's very arrogant and aggressive. And it's very George Bush. You know he said "I'll go and smoke them out of their holes" it's the same [laughter]

Participant 7: Yeah, it's very, for me, very arrogant, "we're America, we'll go and get him out of his cave"

Participant 3: "We'll bomb them into the middle ages"

Participant 7: "Whatever we need to do to get him out of his cave" it's a bit like...ohh.

Participant 6: But that's great because they've got the belief, you see.

Participant 5: Yeah that's the flip side to the American psyche that I just don't like. This gung-ho attitude that it has some time

Moderator: And so when it appeared in this speech and you didn't like it, did you turn it down

Participant 5: Turned it down a bit, yeah...

Participant 6: I wanted more of it, because I thought he...that could have been better. Far more sort of..."right!" (Welsh Lib Dems, 2010)

Obama's call for a timetable for the withdrawal of American forces in Iraq saw an increase of 13 points from the Interpol Group and a 6 point increase from the American Group, and when Obama says we need a president who will look "to the future, not keep grasping at ideas from the past" the Interpol Group increased an additional 11 points along with the Cardiff Labour Group who increased by 6 points.

To further criticize McCain's foreign policy judgment, Obama rhetorically uses three examples, formally situated as an *anaphora*. Each stem from one of Aristotle's common topics of argument (what can /cannot happen and cause/effect) and are in reference to the three pressing foreign policy issues: the war on terror, Israel, and Russia's invasion of Georgia. Obama's listing of foreign countries in this manner was recalled by a member of the Welsh Lib Dem Group:

Participant 3: I found the whole foreign policy message too much. He listed about thirty countries, not that much, about six countries and he talked about Jordan, who the hell knows about Jordan [laughter] or was it Georgia? Georgia, sorry. And I was like "who gives a fuck about George?" [laughter]

Participant 4: The thing is, Georgia...

Moderator: I think Russia had just invaded Georgia

Participant 4: Yeah it was in 2008 wasn't it?

Participant 3: Oh, OK.

Participant 7: I was like [Participant 3], I was trying to watch it not based on anything

Moderator: Oh, sure.

Participant 7: Watch it for what it was...

Participant 3: My understanding of foreign affairs is the average person doesn't give a toss about the rest of the world unless it's a specific issue, you know unless it's Vietnam or Iraq

Participant 4: The Falklands.

Participant 3: You know? You have to focus your country's attention on one part of the world at a time, you can't talk about Israel , Palestine and Georgia and South Korea, you know...

Participant 5: It's this concept the American, the US has always wanted to the world's policeman.

Participant 7: Yeah.

Participant 5: That really sticks with me, sometimes. I think you know, we have the United Nations, we have NATO, we have these other organizations, the EU, for those very reasons, it doesn't need to be one nation dominating...

Participant 7: I agree, I think that the whole smoking Osama bin Laden out, they think they have the right to just stomp in there and do what they like it's a "we rule the world" type thing, and that never, never...

Moderator: And the alternative for you is the multilateral institutions like NATO or do you disagree

Participant 7: No, absolutely I agree with [Participant 5] on that one that it should be...

Participant 4: That's great, I agree with that completely, but we have countless examples in history where that hasn't worked and we've had to turn to the US. And actually, until the War, the US was quite happy to be like "no you sort yourselves out and it was us who was "actually, the Second World War is on and we kind of in a bit of trouble"

Participant 3: And changes may very well be on America's role as the world's policeman. I used to be against it, but now I think Britain and most of the rest of Europe is in a very privileged position to be able to say "oh, we shouldn't get involved in other country's conflicts or whatever and we're going to step outside of this one only because America's there". We can only do that because America has that role. If America took the same view as the rest of the world, I think the world would be a very different place and we'd have to step up and do something about certain things.

Participant 5: Well why couldn't we step up and do certain things?

Participant 4: We can't...

Participant 3: Well in certain situations you need to. I'm just saying we have a privileged position, we can say we're not going to get involved in the Middle East

Participant 2: We can say we're not going to invade because of humanitarian reasons because there are no humanitarian reasons in Britain worth invading for.

Participant 5: True. The other thing is, there's not just that really, [inaudible] still goin' on about Iraq, I think he mentioned Sadaam at one point, um but yeah they haven't been after what's his name, yet. Zimbabwe. Mugabe. This concept of, you know, we'll stomp in where we want to, it's this, I know you don't like this word, addiction to oil, 'cause there's no oil in Zimbabwe

(Welsh Lib Dems, 2010).

Finally, in one of the more humorous moments in the focus Group sessions, one participant in the Interpol Group, who had previously been confident that Obama had not passed through any sort of health care reform, sought to criticize Obama's remarks regarding foreign policy but ended up repeating Obama's own argument almost verbatim:

> *Participant 2*: That and how he tried to claim the terrorists that attacked on 9/11 were based in Iraq and Afghanistan which is not the case. If it's a terrorist network that operates in 80 countries, why have you invaded the two that you know have biggest oil reserves (Interpol, 2010)?

Leaving aside the skepticism, we can see that, rhetorically, each of the countries that Obama lists point to three policies that argue what needed to be done in Obama's eyes versus what was done by the Bush Administration and supported by McCain. The antithesis is continued and strengthened while this line of argumentation indicates that bad judgment is ineffectual. Obama's conclusion is cutting:

> If John McCain wants to follow George Bush with more tough talk and bad strategy, that is his choice - but it is not the change we need.

These rhetorically function as a set of foreign policy maxims and the Cardiff Labour Group, for example, shifted in PNAR as Obama moved from one maxim to the next. They sharply decreased in PNAR when Obama spoke of protecting Israel and deterring Iran. Once Obama moves on to the next maxim such as protecting Georgia and once again ties McCain to Bush, the score rebounds to a net aggregate increase of 6 points as Figure 10.61 shows:

Figure 10.61: Cardiff Labour Group
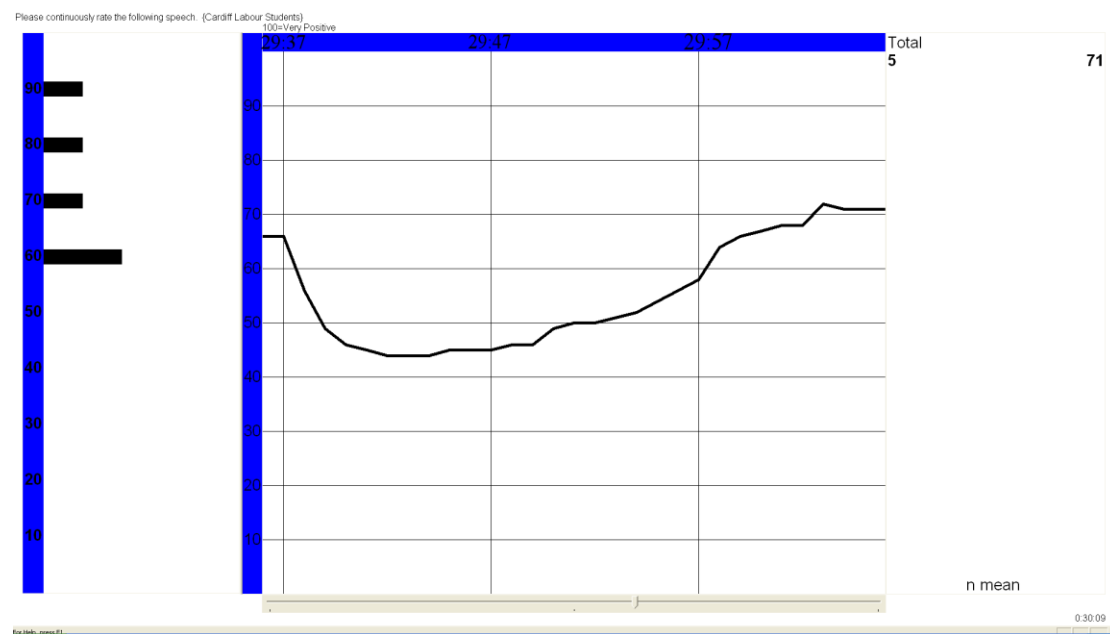
These maxims produced inverse results from the Interpol Group and the Welsh Lib Dem Group as the former increased by 10 points and the latter decreased by 9 points over roughly the same time frame. After tying McCain to Bush's foreign policy and then pushing him beyond Bush's bad judgment, Obama fills the void left by criticizing McCain with a viable Democratic alternative by using historical precedent to illustrate there have been Democrats that have been strong on foreign policy in the past. He creates an indirect link of identification between himself and the voter that admires Roosevelt or Kennedy. Obama then uses the word "Bush-McCain" in the most explicit association yet, and pushes them outside normal historical circumstances. Although he has already praised previous Democratic figures, here he praises previous unnamed Republican administrations and the foreign policy legacy they have built. Obama says he wants to "reclaim that legacy." This rhetorical maneuver indicates Obama's willingness to praise previous Republican administrations to stress how far the "Bush-McCain foreign policy" has deviated from America's promise. This also illuminates Obama's ability to bridge divides by transcending Democrat and Republican dividing lines and making it once again an issue of the communicative relationship Obama has constructed between "America" and his own *ethos* versus the "Bush-McCain" nexus. The theme of America as the world policeman surfaced once again with one participant in the Cardiff Labour Group:

> *Participant 1*: But they don't understand that America can do bad things even when, you know, it's Iraq or other things, it's still they stand by their country which is, you know, impressive when someone can stand by their country so much but I don't think it's really a sensible thing to do. They...For us Europeans it's just bizarre for...they're so...they come across to me they don't criticize their government too much and when he's banging on about military action he still seemed to go on to thinkin America's on a pedestal above the rest of the world who they could police. When he's goin' on about "oh we can't let Iran do this, we can't that" it's like you're not the world's policeman (Cardiff Labour, 2010).

The Welsh Lib Dems increased by roughly 10 points during this section while the Cardiff Labour Group declined by 9 along with the Interpol Group, who decreased by 6. When Obama moves from collectively defining the Democratic Party using "we" from what "I" will do as Commander-in-Chief, which begins with "never hesitating to keep this country safe" and will only send troops "into harms way with a clear mission," a sentence to which the Cardiff Labour Group decreased by 9 and the Interpol Group decreased by 7.

The structure of this section of how Obama will transform foreign policy is strikingly similar to the economic side of America's promise. After calling McCain's judgment into question, Obama expands on what he would do as Commander in Chief, using "I will" seven times in just a few short paragraphs. Obama again takes the middle ground between hard and soft power (Nye, 2008), military might and direct diplomacy, ending the war in Iraq while turning the heat up on Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. This section produced a polysemic moment between two members of the Cardiff Labour Group:

> *Participant 4*: See I think he stepped away from that a bit and became a bit more realistic and said that "we are willing to use military force but not with the same gung-ho attitude as the people before".
> *Participant 1*: But...
> *Participant 4*: He was like "we'll use all means otherwise, but if that fails there's ultimately a responsibility" (Cardiff Labour, 2010).

Two participants in the Interpol Group were also critical of Obama's attempt to take the "middle ground" by acting tough towards terrorism. One noted that he hated it "when they kind of...especially playing on the fact that um...keep mentioning the fact

that terrorism might get nuclear weapons" he really didn't "like politicians using fear in campaigns (Interpol, 2010)." Obama ends this balancing act on a note of ingratiation towards the American audience by making them feel good about the country to which they belong; it is the "last, best hope for all who are called to the cause of freedom, who long for lives of peace, and who yearn for a better future."

The vividly produced choice Obama presents the electorate moves seamlessly into the final section of the speech, which builds upon Obama's ability to be Commander in Chief to refute charges of being unpatriotic:

> "But what I will not do is suggest that the Senator takes his positions for political purposes. Because one of the things that we have to change in our politics is the idea that people cannot disagree without challenging each other's character and patriotism."

Rhetorically, Obama sets a standard of "the things that we have to change about our politics," and, just like the promise, if McCain violates this standard Obama reserves the ground to associate McCain with "politics as usual." He warrants this premise: "the times are too serious, the stakes are too high for this same partisan playbook," the conclusion: "so let us agree that patriotism has no party." The data to support this conclusion not only ingratiates the audience and shows a level of intertextual message consistency by alluding to Obama's message of divisional transcendence: not "Red America," not "Blue America," but the "United States of America." This familiar theme from Obama's 2004 DNC speech was recalled by several Welsh Lib Dem focus Group participants:

> *Participant 3*: I think there was a bit where he said "it's not red America, it's not blue America, it's the United States of America..."
> *Participant 5*: Yep, I turned it right up for that
> *Participant 3*: Yeah, yeah, yeah, again, I think that was an appeal to Republican voters (Welsh Lib Dems, 2010).

Although Obama has created a clear division in governing philosophy between the two parties, Obama finds consubstantiality in the source of each governing philosophy, a common love of the nation-state. "So I've got news for you, John McCain," Obama declares, "we all put our country first." One participant in the American Group noted that she "liked that" part of the text while another chimed in,

calling it "tasteful (Americans, 2010)." On the one hand, it is a rejection of McCain's statement that he puts his "country first" (*antirhesis*). Obama contends McCain's argument is in error because "we all put our country first," forcing McCain to distinguish himself from Obama in another way.

The economic and foreign policy antithesis comes to a close, and Obama addresses America directly and calls for "Republicans and Democrats" to "cast off the worn-out ideas and politics of the past." There is a suppressed premise here that these old ideas are simply insufficient, as Obama previously demonstrated in his *ad hominem* attack on John McCain's bad judgment and outdated philosophy of governing. He tells America:

> "what has been lost these past eight years can't just be measured by lost wages or bigger trade deficits. What has also been lost is our sense of common purpose- our sense of higher purpose. And that's what we have to restore."

Obama then lists a number of the most controversial political issues of the day: abortion, gun ownership, same-sex marriage, and immigration. He follows in parallel form with the internal movement of the speech by discussing these issues as a series of qualified statements, yielding to the issue's ability to polarize and strain before qualifying with an emotive or personalized example. It is an acknowledgment that different sides feel passionately about a particular issue, thus identifying their values with his *ethos*. Each of these statements generated considerable conversation, sometimes prompted by the moderator and at other times volunteered by participants. On Obama's line of same sex marriage, one American told the moderator that she would turn her dial up on the more idealistic end and then when Obama would move to the middle, would waver. Three participants in the Welsh Lib Dem Group seemed to agree in their feelings towards this section:

> *Participant 2*: Maybe the mention of family at that bit, which he did at another point mention gay and lesbian couple, which you wouldn't have seen in John McCain's speech or...because in that section he was going for Republican voters, he mentions families.
> *Participant 7*: I really liked the bit about the gay and lesbian couples and equality.
> *Participant 5*: Yea, yep... (Welsh Lib Dems, 2010).

Obama's discussion of the Second Amendment and gun ownership, however, seemed to push "Americaness" into the realm of the Other, at least for the Cardiff Labour Group:

> *Participant 1*: I think in Europe we just don't understand why anyone needs a gun
> *Participant 3*: Yeah...
> *Participant 4*: I mean I empathized a bit with, he kind of he took apart the two different Groups of people, the hunters that need them in America and then the people in the inner cities that have no need for them whatsoever where most of the crime is. And that, although it was, would have been a positive the fact that guns were involved in any way made me go down, but I liked the fact that he picked the two apart rather than had them as the same...
> *Participant 1*: I do think also a criminal doesn't need an AK 47 to kill someone...I mean...yeah hunting is understandable we have it in this country, people shoot birds and whatever and that's different but the fact is that it's written in the Constitution that you're allowed to carry a gun is just...mad and bonkers to me. Like I can't understand why anyone needs to carry a gun now with them.
> *Participant 5*: I went up on that one because it is in the Constitution it's not, there's not really an awful lot he cold do about it. There's no way he could every get people to support banning guns. So I thought what he was saying was fairly sensible like um, you know, because the gun laws are so ridiculous you can buy like bullets that have special cases on them so the police can't track the gun...you can buy machine guns and he's saying you know "ok fine let's have the right to bear arms but lets get rid of some of the inconsistency."
> *Participant 3*: Some states have essentially banned guns so I don't see why they all can't...
> *Participant 5*: Well you can't ban all guns...
> *Participant 1*: You mean you can't buy a gun and get it that day (Cardiff Labour, 2010).

One participant in the Welsh Lib Dems tended to side with most of the Cardiff Labour students, noting that he "turned it right down when it came to him saying about guns. Because I just don't agree with that. [...] I just don't agree with the idea that everyone should have the right to bear arms. That's not something I agree with, so I turned it down (Welsh Lib Dems, 2010)." Another participant at a separate time recalled this section of the speech and honed in on one word Obama used: "I remember the bit that he said about guns, the guns in rural Ohio and the gangs in New York and I immediately thought 'rural Ohio, that's a swing state and there conservative, small "c" conservative voters' (ibid)." Finally, two participants in the Welsh Lib Dem Group felt negatively towards Obama's discussion of issues of pro-life and pro-choice:

> *Participant 3*: And I turned it down for the abortion bit, not because I have an opinion on abortion one way or the other but I just don't think it has a place in a political speech
> *Participant 7*: Yeah, I was kind of the same
> *Participant 3*: I don't want to hear it...(ibid).

Although Obama's speech is riddled with these qualified statements and balancing multiple interests clearly addressed to a fragmented society, this is the first time he explicitly and constitutively associates it with America's promise in the conclusion of his inductive chain of reasoning:

> This too is part of America's promise - the promise of a democracy where we can find the strength and grace to bridge divides and unite in common effort.

So, the American promise has now been subdivided three times: America's promise at home, America's promise abroad, and America's promise to have a democracy able to bridge divides and "unite in common effort" to achieve the former two. The latter makes the former two possible. And, of course the notion of tying this to the promise as a standard of what is needed is rhetorically advantageous for Obama as he has already demonstrated his ability to transcend differences through acknowledging each side's attitudes towards specific issues, and tempering his own governmental philosophy with individualistic and communitarian concerns.

Obama then turns to anticipate a potential "cynical" counterargument against the transcendent candidate. There are "those who dismiss such beliefs as happy talk. They claim that our insistence on something larger […] is just a Trojan Horse for higher taxes and the abandonment of traditional values. And that's to be expected." Obama once again assumes the voice of the Republican Party (*prosopopoeia*), or perhaps more specifically, he is outlining what might be found in his version of the "Republican playbook," or a "how-to" guide to Republican tactics:

> Because if you don't have any fresh ideas, then you use stale tactics to scare the voters. If you don't have a record to run on, then you paint your opponent as someone people should run from. You make a big election about small things.

In its essence, this too is an anticipation of an argument (*praemunitio*). He is anticipating a cause and effect relationship: "if you hear these things from the opposition [effect], then you will know why [cause]." Obama continues the cause and effect argument, positing that these arguments are what "feeds the cynicism we all have about government." Obama then states, "I get it. I realize I am not the most likely candidate for this office. I don't fit the typical pedigree, and I haven't spent my career in the halls of Washington" In this use of *paromologia*, Obama literally "concedes a point […] to strengthen one's own argument (Silvae Rhetoricae, 2010)." Obama concedes the charge of "otherness" but only insofar as it becomes a strength for his candidacy and his first persona. It also predicates the next statement. He may be "other," but that doesn't matter because the election isn't about him, it's about "you." That something so big as this monumental election is about the ordinary American is empowering, thus ingratiating. And if the auditor is ingratiated, then the auditor might more easily assent to Obama's constitutive appeals:

> For eighteen long months, you have stood up, one by one, and said enough to the politics of the past. You understand that in this election, the greatest risk we can take is to try the same old politics with the same old players and expect a different result.

Obama once again places this "defining moment" with "you" as the protagonist in American historical time, as a continuation of ordinary Americans and their defense of America's promise. It's about "you" because "in defining moments like this one, change doesn't come from Washington, change comes to Washington." The American people certainly do not all come "from" Washington, and Obama has also made clear that he too hails from outside Washington, furthering his identification with the American voter on purely geographical grounds. Obama now moves from the universal statements of American historical narrative and change back to current time. "America, this is one of those moments." Obama now lays out a second, more concrete reason he can deliver change: his experience. He lays out his experience formally in an *anaphora* to emphasize what he has seen in his life of public service. He mentions what he has done on health care reform, on veteran affairs, and on national security, and what he has seen by invoking (and ingratiating) the ordinary American who has struggled but continued to work through these areas despite the Bush Administration's failure to act. This is yet another contention placing Obama

and the ordinary American on one end of the spectrum with the Bush Administration on the other.

Obama continues constituting the nation and ingratiates the American audience for being American in yet another series of qualified statements:

> This country of ours has more wealth than any nation, but that's not what makes us rich. We have the most powerful military on Earth, but that's not what makes us strong. Our universities and our culture are the envy of the world, but that's not what keeps the world coming to our shores.

The 'thing' that is at work for Obama is the American promise. The promise serves several functions for Obama. We have, up until this point found out what Obama says the promise is, and now he tells us how it functions:

> that American promise - that pushes us forward even when the path is uncertain; that binds us together in spite of our differences; that makes us fix our eye not on what is seen, but what is unseen, that better place around the bend.

The promise, for Obama, "is our greatest inheritance." The tone becomes emotional as Obama creates another communicative relationship between his own story, the auditor, and the American story as he tells his audience that:

> It's a promise I make to my daughters when I tuck them in at night, and a promise that you make to yours - a promise that has led immigrants to cross oceans and pioneers to travel west; a promise that led workers to picket lines, and women to reach for the ballot.

Emotional and historical, in Obama's world there is now virtually no difference between his personal story, the American auditor, and a larger American historical narrative; a feeling of consubstantiality pervades these closing paragraphs.

To drive this point home, and in accordance with the exigency, Obama finally invokes Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his "I Have a Dream" speech on its 45th anniversary. It would be unimaginable for Dr. King, a man Obama admires, not to be invoked at some point in this speech as he had been in other campaign speeches, especially on the anniversary of Dr. King's speech. The common thread between Obama, the election, and Dr. King is, unsurprisingly, the American promise:

> And it is that promise that forty five years ago today, brought Americans from every corner of this land to stand together on a Mall in Washington, before Lincoln's Memorial, and hear a young preacher from Georgia speak of his dream.

That was a "moment" in Obama's vision of American history where the American promise was defended, and his campaign is a continuation of that and other previously mentioned "moments." Obama describes what the people heard "that day" as a metaphor of what they have just heard in his speech. They could have heard "anger and discord," they could have "been told to succumb to the fear and frustration of so many dreams deferred."

> But what the people heard instead - people of every creed and color, from every   walk of life - is that in America, our destiny is inextricably linked. That together, our dreams can be one.

Dr. King told them that "we cannot walk alone," and that "we cannot turn back." In fact, there is such a continuation of "that moment" and "this moment" that, intentionally or not, Obama literally becomes Dr. King. There is a slight change of rhythm, syntax, and accent:

> America, we cannot turn back. Not with so much work to be done. Not with so many children to educate, and so many veterans to care for. Not with an economy to fix and cities to rebuild and farms to save. Not with so many families to protect and so many lives to mend. America, we cannot turn back. We cannot walk alone. At this moment, in this election, we must pledge once more to march into the future. Let us keep that promise   - that American promise - and in the words of Scripture hold firmly, without wavering, to the hope that we confess.

Formally, this climax contains several elements of repetition both at the beginning and in the middle of propositions that emulate the style of Dr. King. This received generally positive but certainly mixed reactions from focus Group participants. One participant in the Interpol Group, for example, read this section as playing on white guilt:

> *Participant 1*: I didn't particularly like the Martin Luther bit...'cause it's kind of playing on everyone's guilt of, you know things like that or...
> *Moderator*: When you say guilt...
> *Participant 1*: Well, America's history of black people. It makes everyone...it

takes it to a personal level, it's like "you've done this to me why don't you vote for me now" payback, you know, I thought it took it a bit too far, there.
Moderator: OK. Are you talking about right at the very end...
Participant 1: Yeah...
Moderator: So you thought he guilted people into voting for him?
Participant 1: Kind of, yeah...It's a fair point to make but it's, I don't now (Interpol, 2010).

Still, a member of the Welsh Lib Dem Group saw this entire section in much more positive terms:

Participant 7: I like the bit when he was saying "we can't turn back, we can't do" you know it was building up
Participant 6: Yeah, yeah....
Participant 7: It had some emphasis, it was really getting them rallied up and that was, I liked that you know as a concept that (Welsh Lib Dems, 2010).

Another member of that Group "wanted more there" while another gave the "Martin Luther King bit" a "ten (ibid)." A more nuanced discussion ensued:

Participant 5: I liked the invocation of Martin Luther King without mentioning who he was and the actual...
Participant 7: Yes it wasn't gratuitous, was it? It wasn't like "here's Martin Luther King, he's black, I'm black let's make comparisons" it was...
Participant 5: I was half expecting him to quote the "I Have a Dream" speech
Participant 7: I don't think...that would have been easy to do.
Participant 5: It would have been too cheesy. But...
Participant 2: But, there was no one there and no one here, and no one in America who didn't know who he was referring to.
Participant 5: Oh, absolutely.
Participant 3: And I also think it's very, very cleverly done the way he described him in very lowly terms, "a young preacher from George" or Alabama or wherever he was from
Participant 2: And by the way I'm a young preacher-esque speaker from Illinois.
Participant 7: Yeah...
Participant 3: Um no but it was, it just reinforced the American Dream again, here's a young guy, a young no body from no where who...
Participant 7: I think, yeah, I think he could have as well he could have just gone and said "Martin Luther King" and everybody would have gone "woooh!" you know this great big thing but I thought it was far more subtle and far more   sophisticated to do it the way he did and I thought it was done really well (ibid).

Obama ends on a note of scripture, which is commonplace enough. Obama surrounds himself with the religious "property" that voters could find admirable. This, however, upset several members of the American focus Group:

> *Participant 2*: It was annoying um and I turned it way down when it got to the "God Bless America" thing because that's one of my pet peeves...
> *Moderator*: You didn't like that...
> *Participant 4*: Yeah, me too...
> *Participant 2*: Well once he started quoting scripture it makes me want to just strangle people...
> *Participant 4*: Yeah same here...
> *Participant 6*: Me too...
> *Participant 4*: Separation of church and state, right (Americans, 2010)?

But he also continues associating his campaign with historical narrative, "we must pledge once more to march into the future, there is a promise to keep." The final demand of the president, and the demand of *doxa*, is that he end on a "God bless the United States of America," which is perhaps the most banal, commonplace, yet for Obama because of the contextual exigencies, effective endings to a presidential campaign speech.

E. The Text: Conclusion

The fact that this speech was read *teleologically*, with identification in mind, is justified over and over again in the text. It is especially fitting given that Obama begins and ends on a strong association between himself, his audience, and a larger American story. The use of stylistic devices, setting and date, commonplace arguments, and antithetical reasoning all contribute towards placing Obama in an American context while placing John McCain outside that narrative along with Washington, lobbyists, corporate interests, and perhaps most importantly the Bush Administration. The promise as a concept is textually stable insofar as it is constructed as historically consistent but often under threat, only to have been protected by the "extraordinary ordinary American." The promise, for Obama, is something and does something. It is a promise that envelops domestic and economic concerns as well as concerns of foreign policy. It also is a standard and motivating factor of bi-partisanship that candidates and the American people must live up to, it goads "us" to work together on the most pressing challenges of the democracy. To establish the kind of first persona that is consistent with this transcendent, bridge

building standard of the promise, Obama's speech is full of carefully constructed, qualified statements, acknowledging multiple sides to a given issue and demonstrating that he can bring these sides together with the policies he is proposing to return the nation to its promise.

Obama's constitutive vision of American history is a series of moments where ordinary Americans defend, for Obama, what makes America great. Obama then makes several associations between his own presidential campaign and those moments, his moment is an extension of a larger American experience. In each of the exigencies, Obama's need to overcome his "otherness" as a candidate, to lay out a case against John McCain, to unify the Democratic Party, and an overarching philosophical goal of identification were all achieved through the ingratiating associations Barack Obama made during his convention speech as well as his articulation and contextualization of America's promise.

F. Audience Reception Summary
At the very least, it can be said with confidence that Obama's words affected focus group participants in various ways to a degree which led to a turning of the dial up and down at various points of the speech. It can also be said that the speech as an artistic unit complicates viewer attitudes towards candidates: dial-testing productively complicates traditional quantitative binaries such as "like" and "don't like" and even Likert scale questions that offer a range of choices to respondents. Dial-testing shows that these questions are inadequate and the only accurate response to how a viewer feels about a candidate is: it depends. Rhetorically, this speech indicated that it is not possible to even think of Obama in isolation as participants felt positive towards the speech at times when Obama was associating himself with a range of ideas and, perhaps more importantly, people such as family and politicians. This begs the question: when we vote, are we voting for the name we see on the ballot, or for a nexus of emotions and associations we make with that name?

In relation to these focus group participants and this speech, a few specific conclusions can be made. First, the two themes that pervaded this text, the American promise and the construction of John McCain as antithetical to this concept, probably did not serve as the potent source of identification and division they were intended to

be. This is, in part, probably due to the amount of time that has passed since the election: the possibility of McCain becoming president is far less than it was when this speech was delivered. As such, dedicating *any* amount of time to criticizing McCain in 2010 seems superfluous. This specific point can probably be applied to most of the graphical fluctuations: time passed has dulled what might have been sharper increases and decreases in PNAR. That said, as with other focus groups George W. Bush was able to serve as a scapegoat and often led to increased positive and negative sentiment towards the speech. While the graphical increases and decreases remain polysemic, triangulating this with focus group data indicates that many participants felt positive because Obama attacked Bush and his record and felt negative because of what Bush had done.

The other theme that pervaded the text, Obama's American promise, probably got in the way of many participants identifying with the ideology behind the promise. In other words, the symbols that Obama marshaled and associated with the promise *did* see increases in positive sentiment up until they were labeled as something inherently *American*. One of the most striking findings of these focus groups was how, at least measuring by PNAR, participants seemed to buy into the standard of the "extraordinary ordinary American" Obama was at pains to construct throughout the speech. When Obama praised them or their actions, sentiment was generally positive. When Obama's antagonists threatened or hurt them, sentiment was generally negative (or "positive" in the sense of feeling positive Obama addressed these injuries). And while there were important demographical differences in reading the speech, this specific trend often cut across age, ethnicity, gender, nationality and prior feelings towards Obama.

The use of personal stories by Obama to support his own *ethos* as he integrated with a larger American narrative received mixed reception. Sometimes participants expressed their like for these stories and sometimes participants were skeptical of their use or adamant that they had no place in politics. This highlights another common theme: most participants desired more policy discussion and, where there was policy discussion, participants responded in a variety of ways that sometimes broke demographical assumptions, for example, when participants in the Cardiff Labour group could disagree vehemently on policy particulars such as the

environment or energy. Often, disagreements on policy initiated interesting discussions about differing values between participants but also perceived differences between participants and the United States. Examples of this were the necessity of guns in society, where many participants responded negatively to Obama's appeal to the Second Amendment, or to values such as equal pay or equal rights for GLBT citizens, which many participants and Obama expressed their support for. In terms of identification and division, these policies act just as much as potential sources of participant identification and division as Obama's personal stories or constitutive appeals of the American second persona. In sum, besides the American group, participants were largely divided from the United States on a *national* level but were able to identify with and divide from a range of rhetorically constructed beliefs, maxims, concepts, ideologies values and policies presented by Obama in this text. Moreover, Obama remained for many participants an empty vessel that changed according to who was talking as more than one participant noted he had to mention this belief or that policy in order to receive independent and Republican votes; what he *really* believed more closely resembled the decoding equipment of whoever was doing the listening.

XI. Post-Nationalism and Global Citizenship: Obama in Berlin

A. Overview

In this final chapter of speech analyses, the focus shifts to Obama's speech at the Tiergarten in Berlin on 24 July 2008. Here, the intrinsic features of the text are placed in the immediate campaign context while the constraints and audiences Obama faced are identified. A *teleological* reading of the text, with identification as the guiding principle, is justified through both textual and contextual considerations. Finally, a *teleological* close reading of the speech is conducted and interleafed with focus group and moment-to-moment data.

B. Contextual Concerns: Obama and Foreign Policy

His comments, according to Senator Hillary Clinton, were "irresponsible and frankly naïve (Klein, 2007)." This statement came the day after the CNN/YouTube Democratic debate on 23 July 2007 and was specifically in relation to Obama's affirmative answer as to whether he would be willing to sit down and negotiate with leaders from Venezuela, Cuba, North Korea, or Syria in the first year of his presidential term. While Obama's answer attempted to ground his willingness to negotiate with "belligerent" nations in a presidential tradition (namely Reagan and John F. Kennedy) of both "talking tough" and conducting direct diplomacy, this was not the first nor would it be the last time Obama's opponents would make his foreign policy credentials an election issue. Little less than a year before the election, Obama would tout his upbringing in Indonesia and extensive adolescent travel abroad as complementary to his foreign policy positions. The response by the Clinton campaign, as reported by the *Chicago Sun-Times*, was scathing:

> "Voters will have to judge if living in a foreign country at the age of 10 prepares one to face the big, complex international challenges the next president will face, […] I think we need a president with more experience than that, someone the rest of the world knows, looks up to and has confidence in (Clinton, 2007; Sun-Times, 2007)."

In December of 2007 *Time* magazine reported that "[foreign] policy experience, or rather his lack of it, has been one of the chief arguments used against Barack Obama in his run for the Democratic presidential nomination (Newton-Small, 2007)." This thread of argumentation by the Clinton campaign, of questioning Obama's ability to

lead the US among other nations, to "keep the country safe" from external threats continued through the Super Tuesday primaries. In a speech on foreign policy at George Washington University on 25 February 2008, Clinton's critique of Obama and his foreign policy credentials was nothing less than critical:

> The American people don't have to guess whether I understand the issues or whether I would need a foreign policy instruction manual to guide me through a crisis or whether I'd have to rely on advisers to introduce me to global affairs. [...] Senator Obama, meanwhile, represents another choice. He wavers from seeming to believe that mediation and meetings without preconditions can solve the world's most intractable problems. To advocating rash unilateral military action without cooperation from our allies in the most sensitive region of the world. [...] Electing a president should not be an either/or proposition when it comes to national security. We need a president who knows how to deploy both the olive branch and the arrows, who will be ready to act swiftly and decisively in a crisis, who will pursue strategic demands of hard diplomacy to re-establish moral authority and our leadership. In this moment of peril and promise, we need a president who is tested and ready, who can draw on years of real world experience working on many of the issues that we now confront, who knows when to stand ones ground and when to seek common ground, who has the strength and fortitude to meet the challenges head on without fear and without sowing fear. [...] I believe I am the candidate most ready today to be that kind of president and commander in chief (2008).

This argumentative pattern culminated in Clinton's "3 a.m." ad, which aired only during the Texas primary but quickly picked up national coverage, and for Orlando Patterson, a sociologist at Harvard University, was at least partially responsible for a twelve point swing among white voters in Texas from Obama towards Clinton (Patterson, 2007). The visuals included worried parents watching over sleeping children with a telephone ringing in the background. The male voiceover begins:

> It's 3am and your children are safe and asleep. But there's a phone in the White House and it is ringing. Something is happening in the world; your vote will decide who answers that call. Whether it is someone who already knows the world's leaders, knows the military, someone tested and ready to lead in a dangerous world. It's 3am and your children are safe and asleep. Who do you want answering that phone (Clinton, 2008b)?

The McCain campaign would eventually put Clinton's "3 a.m." and on their own YouTube channel (where it remains at the time of writing) and would in fact continue the basic argument that juxtaposes experience with Obama's lack of experience through the summer of 2008. McCain would make Obama's opposition to the troop

surge, touted by many Republicans at the time as a success, a campaign issue for several months. In New Hampshire, McCain responded to a question about the surge by stating Obama's opposition to the troop surge showed that he "doesn't understand national security, has no background, no experience on these issues (2008)." At a town hall meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico in early July 2008, McCain closed with a similar sentiment:

> In wartime, judgment and experience matter. In a time of war, the commander-in-chief doesn't get a learning curve. If I have that privilege, I will bring to the job many years of military and political experience; experience that gave me the judgment necessary to make the right call in Iraq a year and half ago (2008b).

On the one hand, according to interviews conducted by Balz and Johnson, foreign policy issues were fading to the electorate's concern over the faltering economy as the Great Recession commenced. Obama advisers calculated that "as long as [Obama] cleared a minimum threshold in [foreign policy], he could be elected. One way to do that was to demonstrate his comfort on a world stage, standing shoulder to shoulder with foreign leaders (2009: 300)." And so, from the summer of 2007, the Obama campaign began to plan a trip abroad. David Plouffe confirms Balz and Johnson's interviews, that a trip abroad "would show that Obama could operate effectively on the world stage and would also acutely demonstrate how his election would change the nature of our relationship with the rest of the world (2009: 271)," or in the words of Jeff Zeleny at the *New York Times*, the trip was designed to "make a one-term senator from Illinois look presidential to voters back home from America (2008; Heilemann and Halperin, 2009: 327)." We may begin to approach the context doxologically by observing an elaboration made by Plouffe on the trip functioning as a showcase for Obama's ability to repair relations between the US and the rest of the world:

> A key factor for many voters in 2008 was their belief that America needed to repair its relationship with the rest of the world. [...] Americans believed that their next president needed to bridge some of [the] divides [created by the Bush Administration]. We were surprised to learn that general-election voters across the board felt just as strongly about the need to repair relations abroad as primary voters had (2009: 271).

The trip's itinerary included both official functions (Senator Obama in a fact finding

mission in Iraq and Afghanistan) and unofficial functions (Candidate Obama meeting with European leaders). While each leg of the trip served a particular purpose in aiding Obama to show off his foreign policy credentials, what is of particular interest here is Obama's only speech, delivered in Berlin on 24 July 2008. It is of interest for several reasons. Rhetorically, Obama faced the constraints of multiple audiences, both "European" and "American." Doxologically, the trip had to balance the perceived American value of wanting positive international relations, without seeming too "European," nothing short of a polysemic minefield, with a recognition that many in the immediate audience Obama faced abroad felt slighted by the perceived hubris of the Bush Administration. On top of this, there was the delicate balance of restoring international relations as well as responding to the persistent line of argumentation developed by the Clinton Campaign and refined and perpetuated by the McCain Campaign of "keeping America safe" and acting not only "presidential," but as the Commander in Chief, a terministic screen that demands a reaffirmation of American exceptionalism. Second, Obama had spent his entire campaign constructing the political identity of being an agent of change. He could not (and more likely would not) speak like Bush: there could not be an overt "city on a hill" analogy," no "you're with us or you're with the terrorists" moment that could coincide with a promised departure from Bush Administration policies. The tone then, need to be conciliatory; Obama needed to simultaneously ingratiate himself with European citizens, whose immediate praise he needed to deem the trip a success, and the American voters whose support he would need to win the White House. The exigency of communitarian ingratiation generally, and as we have seen with Obama specifically, brings us within the realm of rhetorical identification. Indeed, while not naming it specifically, the journalistic reception of the speech in both the US and the UK loomed around the concept as it was grounded in Obama's oratorical performance.

Many accounts of the speech note this tension between simultaneously addressing multiple audiences (Balz and Johnson, 2009: 311; Plouffe, 2009: 277-279; Dowd, 2008; Graham, 2008; Feldman, 2008; Marinucci, 2008; Zeleny, 2008; Saundders, 2008; Katz, 2008; MacAskill, 2008; Harlow, 2008; Usborne, 2008; Reid, 2008). An article in the *New York Times* by Maureen Dowd, quoted at length, best captures the journalistic doxological discussion of this rhetorical tension as well as the McCain Campaign's attempt to exploit it:

> Since he's already fighting the perception that he's an exotic outsider, he can't be seen as too insidery with the Euro-crats. He doesn't want a picture of him nibbling on a baguette to overtake the effete image of the Europhile John Kerry windsurfing. [...] Then again, maybe it will be a refreshing change to see a leader abroad reflecting the America the world wants to believe in, after the ignominy of Iraq, Afghanistan, Dick Cheney and Abu Ghraib. [...] Even if Obama is treated as a superstar by W.-weary Europeans, some Obama-wary Americans may wonder what he's doing there, when they can't pay for gas, when the dollar is the Euro's chew toy, when Bud is going Belgian and when the Chrysler Building has Arab landlords. [...] "I don't know that people in Missouri are going to like seeing tens of thousands of Europeans screaming for The One," a McCain aide snarked to The Politico (Dowd, 2008).

In other words Dowd, and other cited journalists, questioned whether Obama's "post-national" interpellative attempts in Berlin could be compatible with American *doxa*. Up until this point (and upon immediately returning to the United States), the, to borrow a Burkean phrase, "ultimate term" in Obama's rhetoric was a discourse of constitutive assertions about America and American identity; but this constitutive rhetoric and the means of identification Obama had used to merge the first and second persona could not possibly incorporate an audience that could hardly be said to be identified with American identity.

Because of this rhetorical tension, or perhaps in spite of it, both the British and American media reception of Obama's speech in Berlin was, to say the least, mixed. Egland of the *New York Times* called Obama's speech in Berlin "eloquent," one that "dazzled crowds in Europe," while Jesse Jackson, one of Obama's eventual surrogate supporters, wrote in the *Chicago Sun-Times* that the "[s]tunning reception Barack Obama received from 200,000 Berliners [attests] not only to his remarkable appeal, but also to the enduring hope that peoples across the world have for America (2008)." On that note, Frank Rich of the *New York Times* wrote that "what was most striking about the Obama speech in Berlin was not anything he said so much as the alternative reality it fostered: many American children have never before seen huge crowds turn out abroad to wave American flags instead of burn them (2008)."

Balz and Johnson described the speech as "sober and substantive" and while David Brooks of the *New York Times* described Obama's tone as "serious," his commentary on the content of the speech was far more critical: after half a year, the "post-

partisanship of Iowa has given way to the post-nationalism of Berlin, and it turns out that the vague overture is the entire symphony. [...] Much of the [speech] fed the illusion that we could solve our problems if only people mystically come together. [...] This was the end of history on acid. [...] Obama has benefited from a week of good images. But substantively, optimism without reality isn't eloquence. It's just Disney (Brooks, 2008; Balz and Johnson, 2009: 310)." Brooks was not alone however, as several more journalists shared similar sentiment (Saunders, 2008; Erlanger, 2008; Will, 2008; Cohen, 2008). George Will of the *Washington Post* noted that Obama's eloquence was "beginning to sound formulaic and perfunctory," and in his extensive imagery of walls and bridges he "neared self-parody with a rhetoric of Leave No Metaphor Behind (2008)." Roger Cohen at the *New York Times* was another journalist who could not help putting this speech in the context of the high self-set standard for eloquence Obama had created:

> Everything was wrong: a Victory Column setting when he's not yet victorious, a jejune weave from fighting Communism to fighting terrorism, and an accumulation of worthy platitudes. Presence was absence: the semiotics of yesterday's world cascaded from America's Homo Novus. [...] Obama made a brilliant speech about race shot through with the truth yielded by personal experience and a questing mind. He made a poor speech about the cold war's lessons because he never lived it. Originality ceded to orthodoxy (2008).

The exigency then, of Obama's address to his immediate audience of 200,000 Berliners plus a global televised audience of Americans and Europeans was to find common ground to repair transatlantic relations, perhaps as an end in itself, but at the very least as a means to negate detractors in the United States who questioned his lack of foreign policy credentials or inability to be "presidential" on the world stage as well as outline his foreign policy agenda. He needed his rally specifically, and his trip generally, to be deemed a success. If it were to be deemed a failure then the entire trip might be labeled a "gaffe" and might prove counter-productive to the intended message of being able to, at the very least (and unlike the Bush Administration), "play nice" with the rest of the world. As such, Obama needed to give a speech to gain votes from Americans and applause and acceptance from Berliners, Europeans and a larger global public which is certainly a difficult, if not insurmountable task. This speech, then, is a significant test in "praising Athenians among Lacedemonians" and puts pressure on Cicero's contention that the orator's province is "impressive and

distinguished speech that is adapted to the way most people think and feel (2001: 70, 172)." In a fractured, globalized and televisual world, how could Obama, in addressing so many simultaneous audiences, possibly adapt a speech "to the way most people think and feel"? Even with the most acute rhetorical and doxological faculty, how could Obama, as Cicero writes in *De Oratore* "track down the thoughts, the feelings, the opinions, and the hopes of his fellow citizens and those people whom he wants to persuade with his oratory"? How could he possibly "have his finger on the pulse of every class, every age group, every social rank, and get a taste of the feelings and thoughts of those before whom he is now, or in the future, going to plead some issue (ibid: 112)." And while Cicero further argues the importance of bringing an audience into a desired mindset as a starting-point, even this would seem an improbable, if not impossible, task (ibid: 132, 144, 157, 165). With the constraints and exigencies identified as well as justified with a reading of contextual concerns, we can now approach the intrinsic features of the text.

C. Focus Group and Audience Response: Key Numbers and Scores

A total of 25 participants were involved in three focus groups in Gregynog, London and Cardiff. The groups that were convened were two groups of practicing journalists (Journalist Group 1 and Journalist Group 2), the Asylum Seeker Group, a group working at the British Humanist Association. There was a range of age groups present in each focus group, although 24 participants were under 40. Participants comprised of 16 males and 9 females. An overwhelming number of participants indicated they were not religious. Unlike other chapters, these focus groups comprised of a majority of participants not born in the United Kingdom and represented a range of nationalities and ethnicities of people who had come to work, study and claim asylum in the UK. Most participants had achieved some level of postgraduate education. In the pre-test questionnaire, most participants felt somewhat favorable towards Barack Obama and frequently heard about him during the election. Figures 14.1, 14.2, 14.3 and 14.4 show the overall PNAR of each focus group for this speech:

Figure 11.1: Asylum Seeker Group

Figure 11.2: Humanist Group
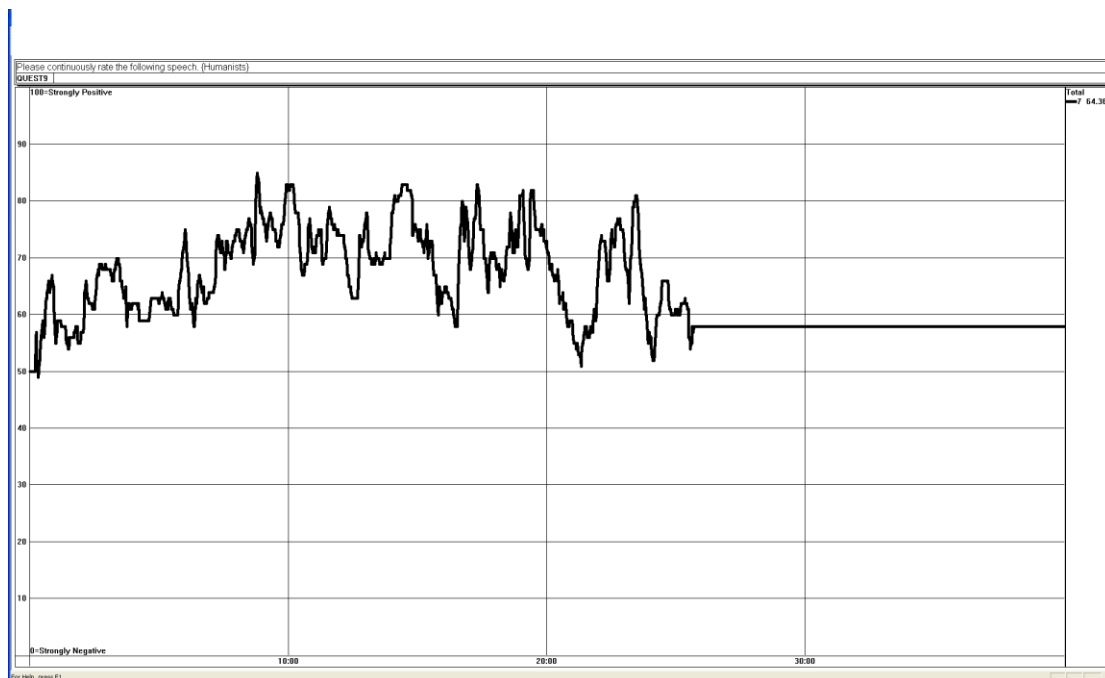
Figure 11.3: Journalist Group 1 Group
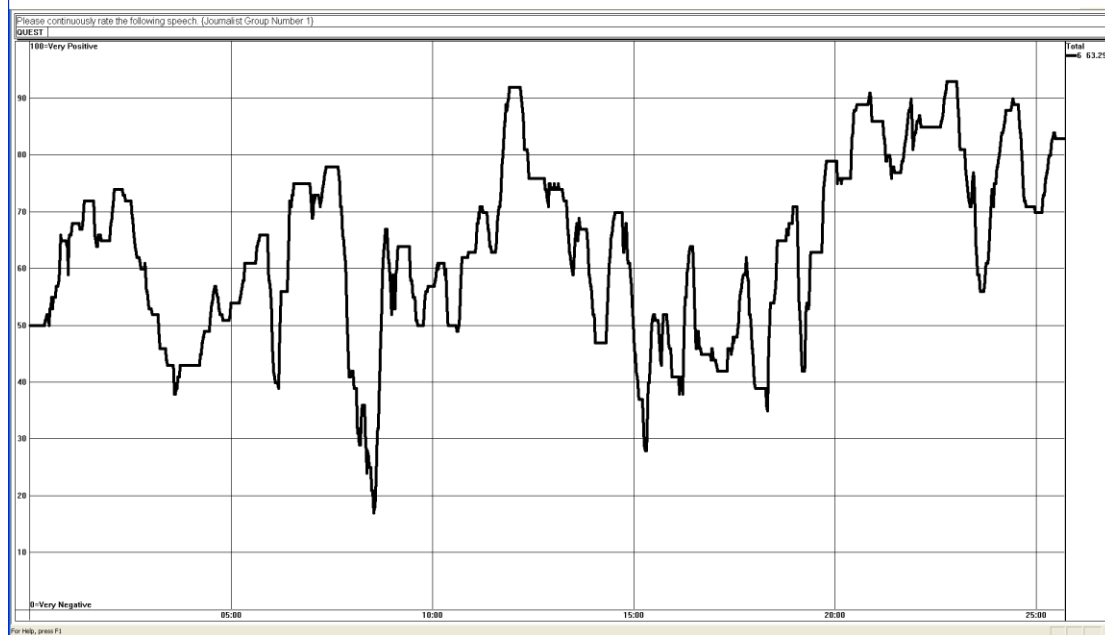
Figure 11.4: Journalist Group 2

As with other chapters, these figures illustrate a range of audience responses that warrant an investigation into the textual and rhetorical qualities of Obama's speeches that coincided with some of the more significant PNAR increases and decreases. The remainder of the chapter is dedicated to unpacking those qualities and interleafing

them with the moment-to-moment data.

D. The Text: Post-Cold War Global Citizenship through Identification, Division, Action

i. Defining the Past, Connecting with the Present

Obama begins, like many if not most of his speeches, with a series of "thank you's." In so doing he surrounds himself verbally with powerful symbols of German society: Chancellor Merkel, Foreign Minister Steinmeir, Mayor Woweriet, the Berlin Senate, the Berlin police. Thanking someone in this sense is, even if only at a superficial level, a sign of respect. But Obama is not just thanking these symbols, he is asking permission of his auditors to "let me thank" these symbols, putting "the people" in a position of power; a powerful platitude: whatever power and importance Obama holds, his audience somehow holds more. Beyond these symbols of "power," Obama can be seen to begin to identify himself with any auditor who sees these modes of German power as respectable or admirable; they too, like Obama, see these symbols as respectable and/or admirable, even if only enough to be mentioned.

After these "thank you's," Obama begins constituting his own identity and speaks in the first person singular: "I come to Berlin as so many of my countrymen have before." Geographically, Obama uses simile to identify with these unnamed countrymen insofar as they have come to a particular location, Berlin. Referring back to the context of the speech, there is discordance between the non-voting audience in Berlin whom Obama addresses and the voting audience at home. Obama is not just a presidential candidate, he is "a citizen," a term that signifies normative equality in the American and European experience (and although he is much more than citizen, the author of *Ad Herennium* notes how *litotes* or down playing one's own accomplishments (something Obama does later by noting his humble beginnings as his grandfather was a domestic servant for the British) is particularly effective in gaining favor with the audience) but not just a citizen, a "proud citizen of the United States, and a fellow citizen of the world (Rhetorica Silvae, 2010)." Obama's "pride" in the corporate body "the United States" is a sort of vicarious laudation whereby his American audience can feel ingratiated by sharing in the same corporate unit as he, and his narrative may "ring true" as auditors may spontaneously identify with Obama for holding a similar pride in the United States. For his immediate audience, Obama

transcends the difference created by being a proud citizen of the United States (for few Berliners are) by being both that and a "fellow citizen of the world." Each form of identification is not mutually exclusive with the other. Obama's Campaign Manager David Plouffe recalls that it was the most controversial moment of the speech, and yet it encompasses so much of the rest of the text (Plouffe, 2009). Obama calling himself a "fellow citizen of the world" resulted in a 5-point PNAR increase with Journalist Group 1 from 50 to 55, a 7-point PNAR increase with Journalist Group 2 from 58 to 65. While the PNAR score would continue to climb, this sentence also saw an 8-point PNAR increase with the Asylum Seeker Group from 42 to 50 from 28 seconds to 35 seconds:

Figure 11.5: Asylum Seekers Group
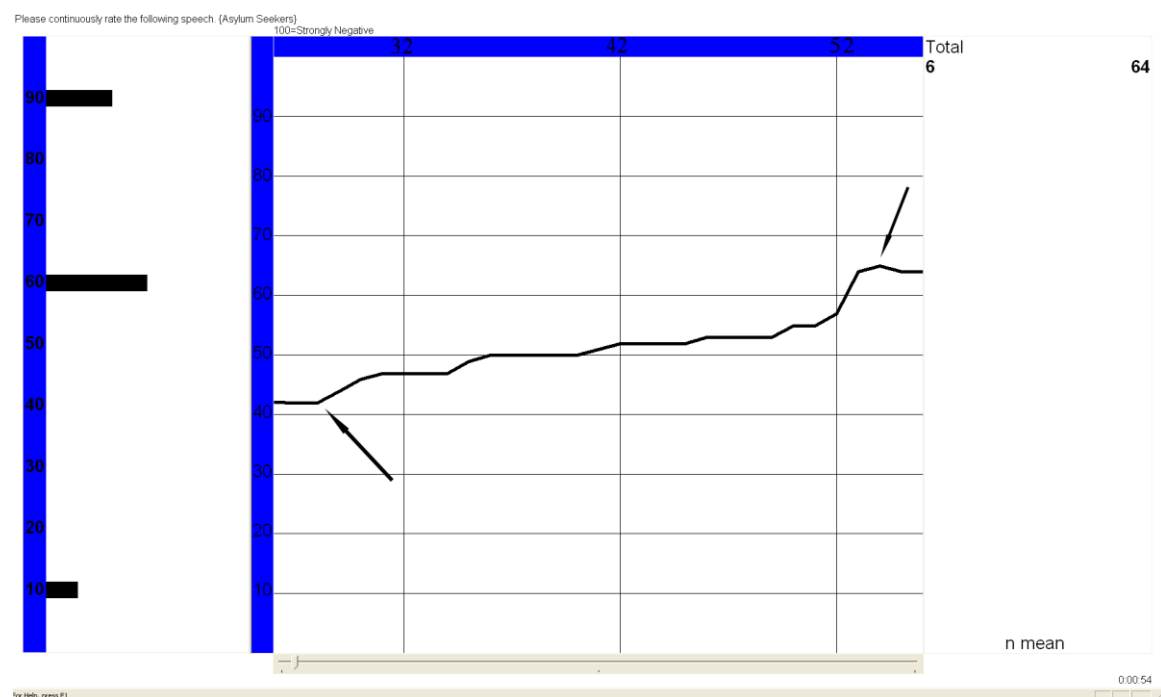
The most compelling example, however, comes with the Humanist Group. Note in Figure 11.6 how the PNAR score increases as Obama tells his audience he comes to Berlin as a citizen, drops slightly when he adds "a proud citizen of the United States," and rises again when he adds he is also a "fellow citizen of the world," resulting in an overall PNAR increase of 17-points from 49 to 66:

Figure 11.6: Humanist Group
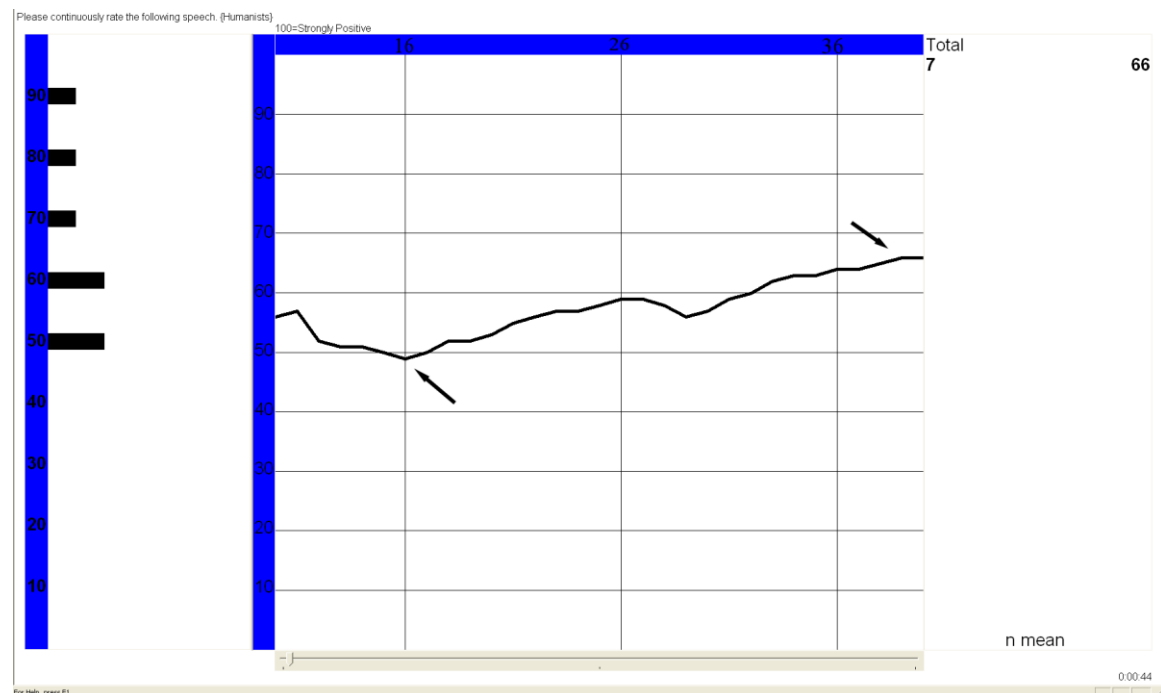
This new term lays the verbal groundwork for both Americans and Europeans to work together as citizens of the world. Global citizenship is a higher order, in Burkean terms, to which Berliners and a European audience can identify while not necessarily alienating Americans. Obama does not leave his American citizenship behind, he incorporates into global citizenship.

Previously, Obama identified himself with his predecessors who had come to Berlin. Now, he offers an important qualifier that continues to establish his own identity through his personal narrative: "I know that I don't look like the Americans who've previously spoken in this great city," a line that received mixed reactions from focus group participants. One journalists, for example, voluntarily admitted that "What I really liked, for example, is, his opening which was um, that he didn't look like the others, like...so this cut with previous presidents or US politicians. That's what I really liked (Journalist Group 1, 2010)." A participant in the Humanist Association disagreed, however, and stated that the remark "put me off right at the beginning, which I suppose soured me for the thing is he started almost immediately with this weird sort of 'dad humor' joke about not looking like previous American presidents, and to me I can kind of see what he was aiming for with that, but I just, immediately

felt like he was trying to put himself in too much into it, um, right at the beginning...um, I guess it was quite self-congratulating, to start off with (Humanists, 2010). Rhetorically, Obama's *ethos* can be seen as increasingly complex; he is both like his predecessors and serves as a departure from his predecessors; he is here to give a speech like them but is different from them, or more specifically, he "doesn't look" like them. The cheering laughter and applause this line gets is telling as it seems Obama means more than he says (*significatio*) as discourses of racial identity, racial progress, and ideological departures from the Bush Administration float around each word in the sentence (Rhetoricae Silva, 2010). Indeed, the personal story is Obama's point of departure. "The journey that led me here is improbable," Obama tells us. As he traces his American identity from his mother and his transcendent, global identity from his father through a crucial "but" ("My mother was born in the heartland of America *but* my father grew up herding goats in Kenya"; emphasis added), Obama simultaneously draws upon the deliberative argumentative topic of possibility by setting the standard of overcoming what seems improbable, a standard Obama will later in the speech vibrate against contemporary challenges facing the global citizen. Obama's description of his father being from Kenya, herding goats and as a domestic servant to the British resulted in a 5-point PNAR increase with Journalist Group 1 from 67 to 72:

Figure 11.7: Journalist Group 1
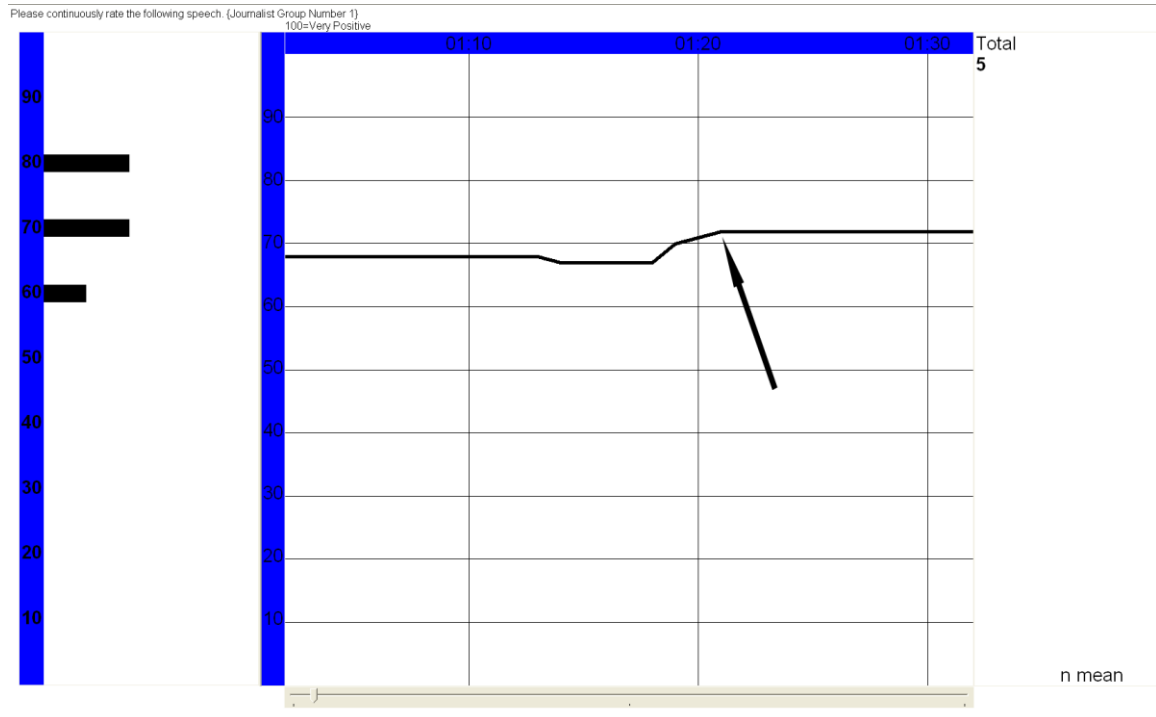
Through the lexical choice "improbable" Obama will find his story consubstantial with the story of Berlin and will apply each story's overcoming of improbability as a means to goad all global citizens to action. Obama's very presence, and the presence of Berlin, are indicative of the probability (and necessity) of a particular course of action. Obama's father, he tells us, had a "dream" that required the "freedom and opportunity promised by the West." This section saw a PNAR decrease of 8 points from 72 to 64 with Journalist Group 1:

Figure 11.8: Journalist Group 1
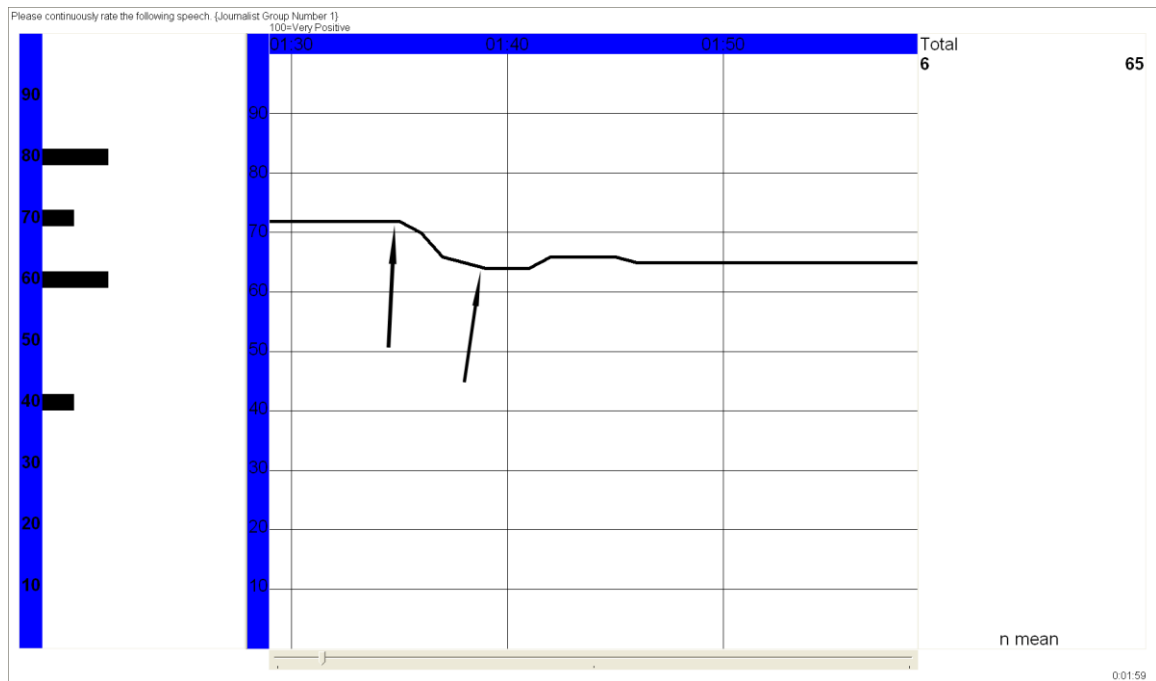
The Asylum Seeker Group, however, saw a 7-point PNAR increase from 67 to 74:

Figure 11.9: Asylum Seeker Group
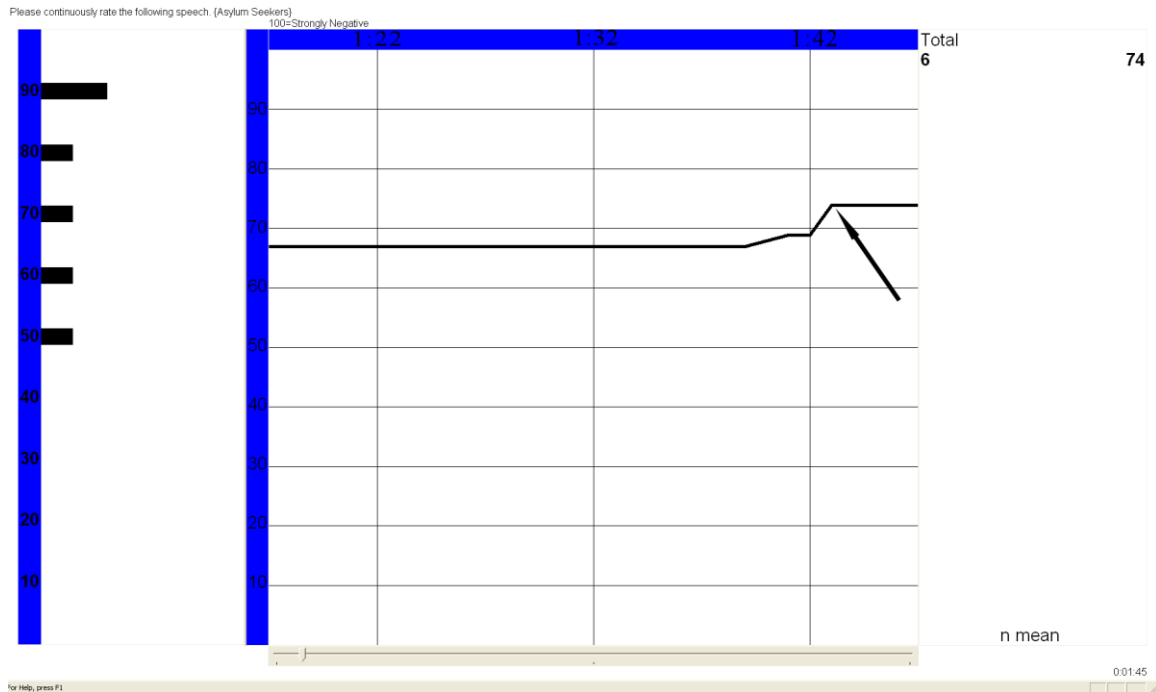
Rhetorically, the "West" is a transcendent term capable of easing the tension of American and European audiences and, moreover, the properties he assigns to the West, "freedom and opportunity" would be ingratiating for those who identify with these ideas, however polysemic they may be. Obama infuses his father's application process with spiritual meaning: his father had a "dream" of the West and his "prayer for a better life" was answered by "somebody, somewhere" but definitely in "the West". This portion of the speech dedicated to Obama's personal background generated several discussions among focus group participants. In Journalist Group 1, for example, participants disagreed on whether it was effective:

Participant 5: Um, yeah, like it's always like um. Most of his speeches he has always given his background. I think that is the strongest point which he always wanted to emphasize. Like being from such-and-so background
Participant 2: Yeah...
Participant 5: And still he could, like he has made a big thing in life. You know? So he is always emphasizing all of that aspect of...
Participant 3: He mentioned that his father was a cook, so he is like a symbol of the American Dream and walking the ladder from the bottom to the top...
Participant 6: Yeah...
Participant 5: Yeah...
Participant 1: A cook and a servant to the British...[laughter]
Participant 2: But I thought it was too Hollywood style like [laughter] because it's overdone...
Participant 5: That is his strongpoint...and he uses it, like in everything.

276

Moderator: So [Pariticpant 5] thinks it's a strong point, [Participant 2] thinks it's a little over the top?
Participant 5: Yeah..
Participant 2: Yeah because it's been done how many times, I don't know or how many times he repeated this sentence...
Participant 5: Every time...like I'm just talking about myself but every time I get to hear this, it's really inspiring, you know? Even an ordinary person can reach to this if he really wants and if he really tries. You know (Journalist Group 1, 2010)?

After establishing this story as the precondition for Obama's presence, he shifts to constituting the second persona in a way that is identified with his own story. This link manifests itself in the word "too" ("And you are here because you too know that yearning"). For Obama, his and Berlin's very existence are predicated by this "yearning for freedom." Here, Obama literally tells Berliners what they know to be true; a difficult maneuver to be sure, and an assertion that Obama thickens with several supporting examples set up formally as historical narrative. Using synecdoche, "this city" is what knows the "dream of freedom," Berlin becomes something beyond itself; it "knows" something, which is the first of a series of metaphors that infuses the city with seemingly supernatural qualities. In this way the city of Berlin is "special," and by extension so are the people of Berlin, and by extension his immediate audience. Up until this point, Obama has constructed the first and second persona but has only now used the first person plural. The "we" works on two levels; it includes Obama's personal story, the story of Berlin, and as we shall soon see, an international tale of transatlantic cooperation ("both of our nations came together"). These shared historical circumstances, which Obama will soon expand upon and detail, put emphasis on the need to work together. Obama is arguing from cause and effect, in fact, "the only reason we stand here tonight" is because of what happened in the past (for an Aristotelian treatment of this argument, see Aristotle,1991: 186, 198). For now of course, praising the "men and women" of past generations in both Germany and the United States lends itself to ingratiation. It is a clear case of vicarious boasting: they struggled, they sacrificed, and they also happen to be "your" grandparents.

Expanding upon Obama's recollection of transatlantic cooperation, Obama tells the story of the Berlin airlift, an event mythologized in American history as an early 'victory over Communism" in the early days of the Cold War. Yet, the story contains

within it allegorical value for Berliners/Germans/Europeans and Americans as it is presented in the text; it serves as a model for action later in the speech. Moreover, easing the tension of multiple audiences it is presented in a way that Obama can both praise Berliners who endured suffering and Americans who sought to relieve it. As Obama will seek to tie the lessons learned at Templehof with present circumstances, the fact that Obama comes at a deliberative question (whether a particular course of action should be taken) from an epideictic angle (coming together "this summer" to celebrate "our" partnership on the anniversary of a momentous occasion in "our" history, the Berlin airlift) strengthens the potential for identification. Obama uses the collective "ours," and "partnership," which may glaze over the, at times, unequal relationship and US economic, militaristic and cultural hegemony in Europe through most of the Twentieth Century; when men and women "came together," their status was transformed into this "partnership," but at the very least, for our purposes here, it elevates a people from the potential of interpreting transatlantic events as being the "lap dog" of an "imperial hegemon" to the more equitable terministic screen "partnership." This description of past events and the ensuing applause on the video saw a steady PNAR increase with the Asylum Seeker Group of 13-points from 63 to 76:

Figure 11.10: Asylum Seeker Group

278
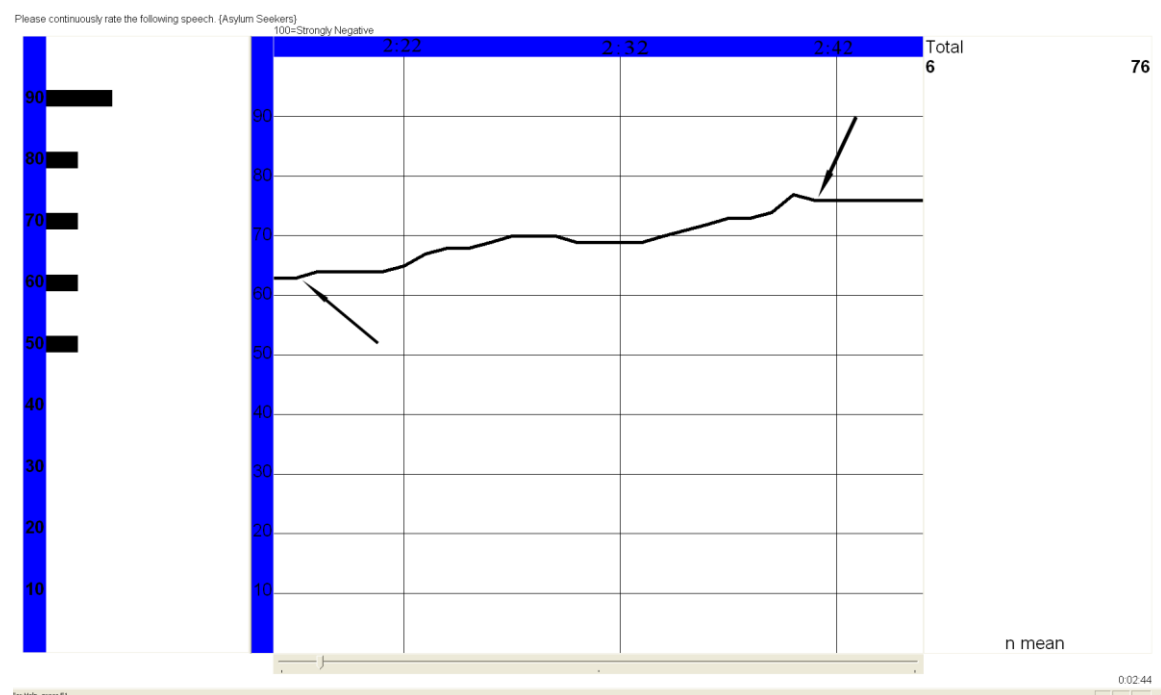
Moving from the act of the airlift to its context, Obama describes a continent that "still lay in ruin. The rubble of this city had yet to be built into a wall." Obama is laying the groundwork to shift from the literal Berlin wall to the existing and potential metaphorical walls throughout the speech, serving as metaphors for identification and division. But to identify with and divide from what?

Obama describes the "Soviet shadow" that "had swept across Eastern Europe," both "shadow" and "swept" serving as sinister spatial metaphors of the Soviet "Otherness," or, put another way, the term through which Europe and the United States could divide from, thus identifying with one another, through a common Soviet threat. As this "shadow swept," the West, America, Britain, and France "pondered how the world might be remade." This phrase is a key for Obama in finding continuity in historical and present circumstances, indeed, Obama will close the text by asking his audience to "remake the world once again." Obama returns to the airlift and frames the argument as one of cause and effect: the airlift was the effect of the Communist's blockade which "cut off food and supplies to more than two million Germans in an effort to extinguish the last flame of freedom in Berlin," adding sinister act to sinister metaphor as "Communists" and "Soviet" become terms of a common enemy. This reference of communism and the Soviet Empire became a contentious issue for several focus group participants. One journalist, who had formerly belonged to the Communist Party in Italy, told the group that negative references to communism caused him to turn his dial down, and that "my background is pretty much from...I used to be in the Communist Party so that's something I didn't really like. Anyway I think that's old enough... I mean…(Journalist Group 1, 2010)." Journalist Group 2 saw severe declines during Obama's discussion of communism, a point that was brought up for clarification by the moderator:

> *Moderator*: Gotcha. Ok. Um let's keep talking about general impressions. One of the other big drops came when he was talking about um communism
> *Chorus*: Yeah…
> *Moderator*: Who dropped it down? What was going on in your mind when you turned it down?
> *Participant 7*: I was thinking get over it.
> *Participant2*: Yeah…
> *Moderator*: Get over it
> *Participant 7*: Get over communism…
> *Participant 2*: It's a pretty much gone issue, in the sense that, other than, if

you are actually mentioning communism as an ideology, you should either pinpoint who it is you are pointing it to…

Moderator: And you don't think he did that in the speech. You thought it was just more of a vague…

Participant 7 and 2: Yeah…

Participant 7: It's like you mentioned this topic, go on (Journalist Group 2, 2010).

An American journalist living in the UK in this group felt similarly, and noted that the discussion of communism in this way "reinforces the US imperialist message (ibid). Another participant in Journalist Group 1 had more to say about Obama and communism:

Participant 4: I actually had the same feeling about communism. It's been done to death. You know they talk about Russia in the same way for such a long time. The world has changed. I think – you know that the world has changed, again you say "come on the world has changed" Russia is not the same, it doesn't work in that way. That's one thing. Um again I feel it's a bit exaggeration talking about his background every time. OK, everyone knows he has come from the grassroots level; he concentrates on the lower part of society. Still it's a bit kind of exaggeration (Journalist Group 1, 2010).

A participant in the Humanist Group felt Obama had misrepresented historical reality by creating the binary of freedom and communism, and in doing so, insulted his intelligence:

Participant 6: I mean I find it very irritating the way that he rewrote history and portrayed the Cold War all as purely an argument about freedom, which it wasn't, it was about nationalism, yes there was ideology to it but that was a very small aspect of it. So I was irr-, I found he insulted my intelligence a little, and the people's intelligence by claiming "oh, it was all about freedom, we stood for freedom" well where the hell were the Allies when Poland was denied um democracy after the Second World War. Yeah, I found he was insulting my intelligence.

Moderator: And so you turned it...down?

Participant 6: I did, yeah (Humanist Group, 2010).

Later in the Humanist Group, several participants pointed to the seeming contradiction of Obama's "Othering" of the Soviet Union and his simultaneous appeals to unity:

Participant 8: Something that [inaudible] me there is that um he was referring to the um, having won the Cold War and defeated the Soviets and things like

that, if he'd gone to Berlin and said "do you remember when we beat you in World War Two?" that would have been a very bad idea, and I just wonder "how do you think the Russians feel when they're being referred to as the losers the whole time?" because um that slightly bothered me, they did that in the leader debates over here, when David Cameron said "oh, we need to keep Trident to stop China"

Participant 6L I know! What...stupid...

Participant 8: What do the Chinese feel about that? [inadubile] if I were the Chinese, and it just feels a little bit like they're still the enemy, and he's kind of, that just kind of got me there, like it's not really going to help if you act like the victors the whole time, um, you do have to sort of brush over the fact that we did probably win [inaudible] and just have to carry on...

Participant 2: Especially in the context of a message that overall is supposed to be saying "we all have to work together...|"

Participant 8: we all have to work together, yeah. (Humanist Group, 2010).

Textually, Obama tells his audience that "the size of our forces was no match for the much larger Soviet Army" and in so doing continues the "improbability" of his own story as well as the story of Berlin and the airlift, which was "the largest and most unlikely rescue in history," a framing that Cicero noted made an action, due to its unprecedented nature and novelty, easier to praise in the forum (May and Wisse, 2001: 218). As an action, it will later be used as a standard by which Obama goads his audience to accept his deliberative prescription. Had it not been for Berlin, the Soviets would have "marched" across Europe. Already containing supernatural qualities in the text, Obama not only approves but also applauds the actions taken by Berliners in post-war Germany (*comprobatio*). This lends itself to ingratiation: the heroism of Berliners prevented World War Three (Rhetoricae Silva, 2010)! He continues to praise Berlin but now, perhaps mindful of his American audience, praises the more inclusive "Allies" and "our forces," terministic screens that are indicative of cooperation and encompass both his immediate and televised audiences. Turning once again to Berliners, Obama continues *comprobatio* through the "shadow" metaphor cast across Europe with his laudatory exclamation that "in the darkest hours, the people of Berlin kept the flame of hope burning. The people of Berlin refused to give up." This praise of the hardship and resilience of the people of Berlin saw a 14-point PNAR increase from 43 to 57 with Journalist Group 1:

Figure 11.11: Journalist Group 1
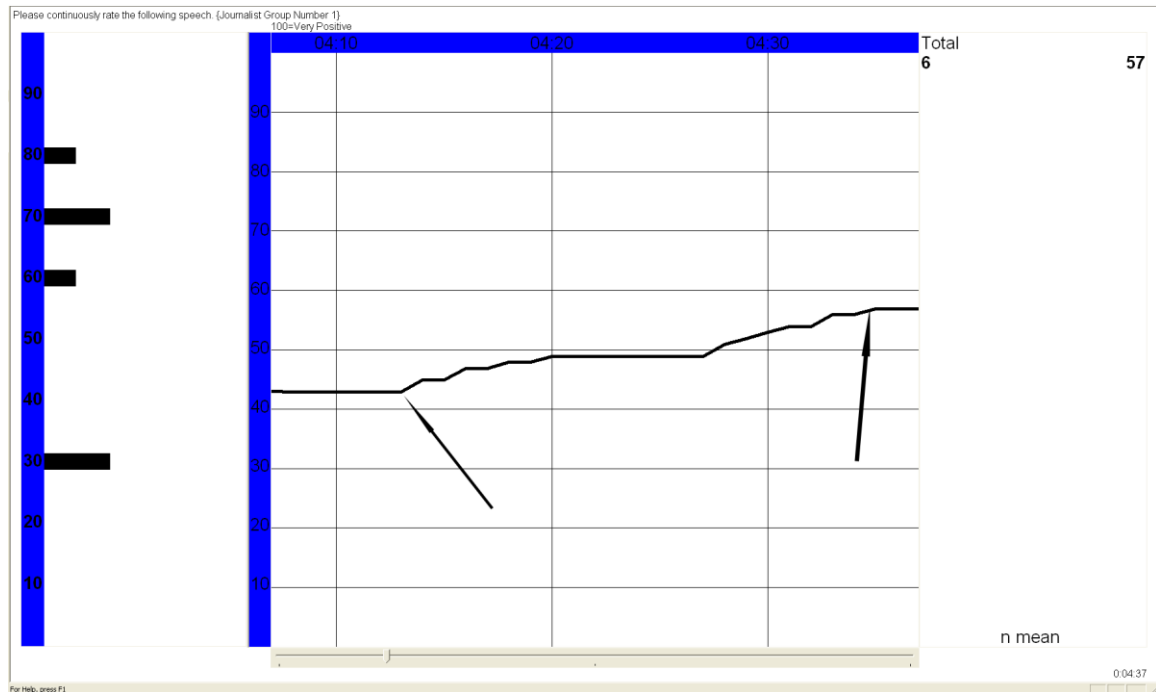
Obama provides historical continuity from past to present circumstances from another angle: the setting. Like Obama, the former mayor of Berlin spoke at the Tiergarten, and, like Obama, he implored "the world not to give up on freedom." Obama takes the mayor's message and applies it to the rhetorical situation at hand:

> "There is only one possibility," he said. "For us to stand together united until this battle is won...The people of Berlin have spoken. We have done our duty, and we will keep on doing our duty. People of the world: now do your duty...People of the world, look at Berlin!"

First, this section and the applause that comes after saw a 7-point PNAR increase from 54 to 61 with Journalist Group 1:

Figure 11.12: Journalist Group 1
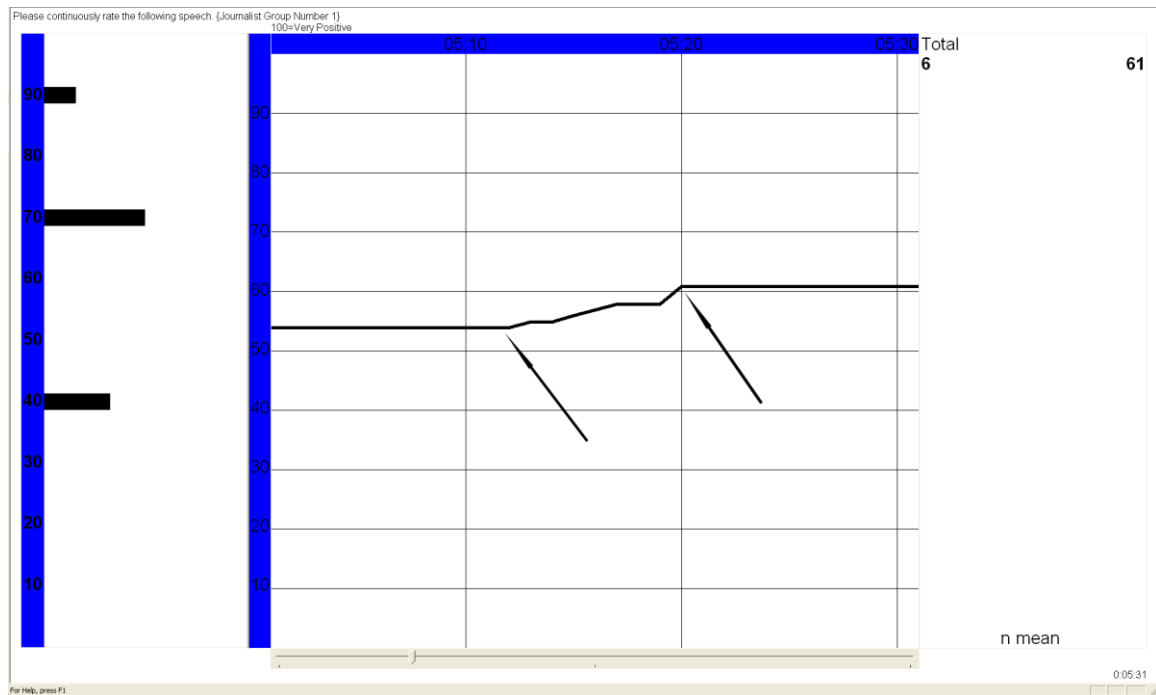
The Asylum Seeker Group saw a sharper 8-point PNAR increase from 69 to 77 during "'the people of Berlin have spoken, we have done our duty', he said," as shown by Figure 11.13:

Figure 11.13: Asylum Seeker Group
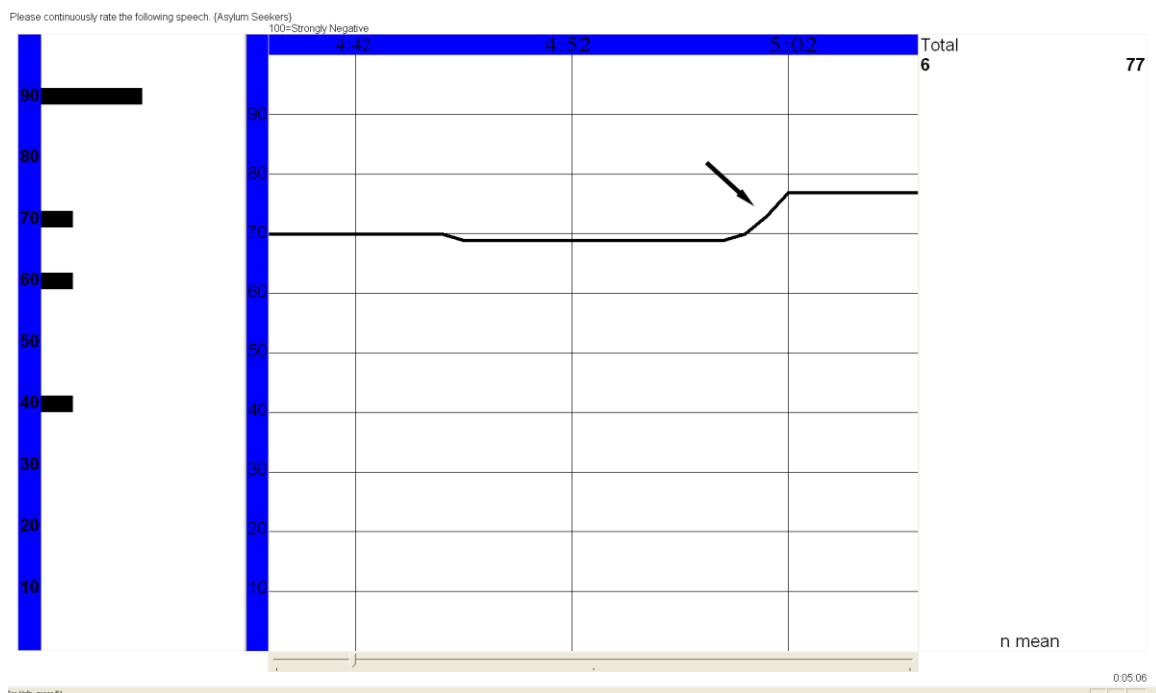
Rhetorically, for any of Obama's immediate audience who admire this former mayor,

Obama's direct quotation might also earn admiration (*Apomnemonysis*), feeding into Obama's *ethos* ("you are the company you keep") and identification. With the last clause, Obama assumes the voice of the mayor of Berlin, asking the world to look at Berlin and begins an *anaphora*, recalling the recent history of Berlin and the model it can serve for people coming together to accomplish "improbable" tasks. And, while the Mayor of Berlin used the "us" to include Berliners (he does so by making a contrast between the "we" and "people of the world,"), Obama will seek to stretch this "us" to include all global citizens. The mystical qualities of Berlin are expanded upon in the form of an *anaphora*; the repetitive argument being Berlin is a place where people come together. Obama praises the "determination" of Berliners and the "generosity" of the US Marshall Plan, he recalls the "German miracle," a direct result of the potion of determination and financial generosity, a framing both Aristotle and Cicero noted is often used as a particularly effective source of praise (Aristotle, 1991: 106; May and Wisse, 2001: 178). Moreover, structures in Berlin such as the "somber stones and pillars […] insist we never forget our common humanity (emphasis added)"; both the German "miracle" and the speaking city extend the spiritualized metaphorical description of Berlin particularly and the West generally which also continues the series of spiritual/mystical metaphors to describe Berlin particularly and the West generally. This description of coming together generated a 15-point PNAR increase from 60 to 75 with the Humanist Group:

Figure 11.14: Humanist Group
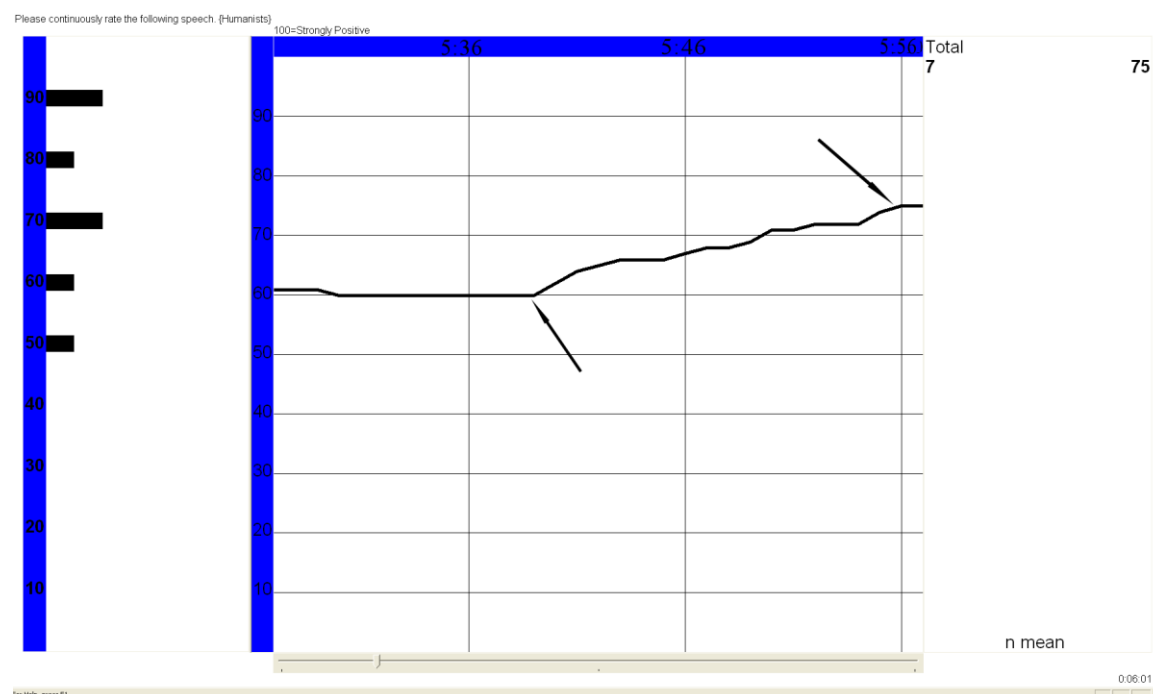
This coming together gave rise to the shared structural substance of NATO; phrases of consubstantiality continue with lexical choices such as "come together," "greatest alliance," "common security," and "common humanity." Note how in Figure 11.15 the PNAR for the Humanist Group decreased upon the description of NATO as the "greatest alliance" from 75 to 58:

Figure 11.15: Humanist Group
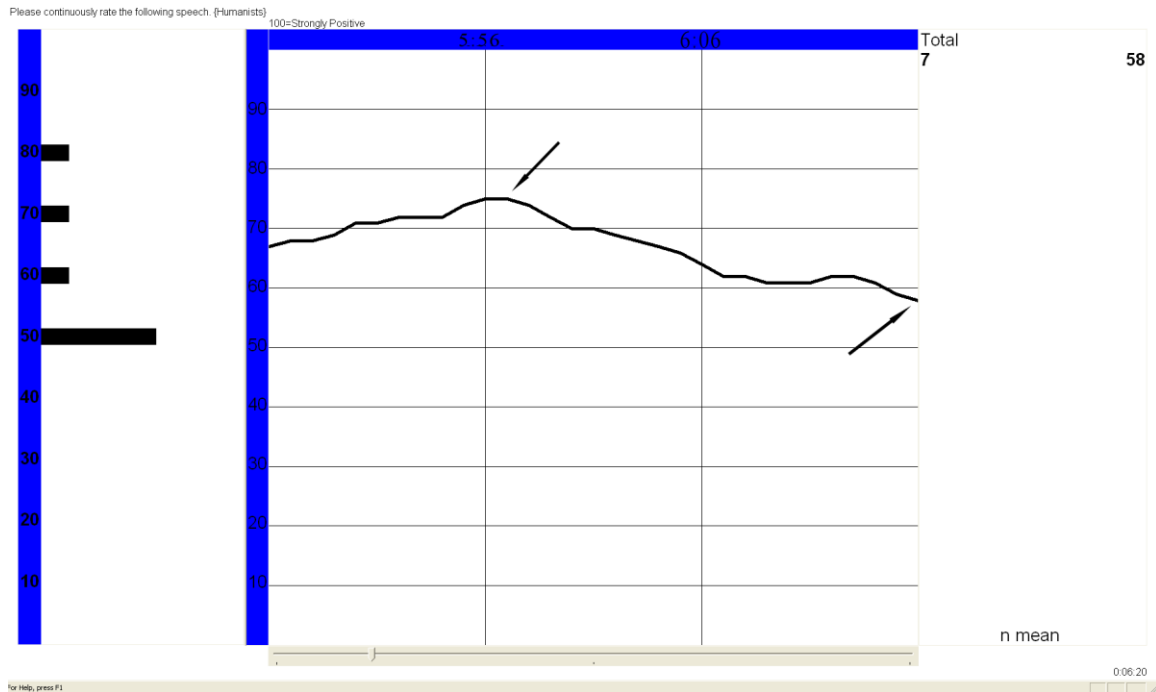
This decrease in PNAR was reflected with Journalist Group 2 who decreased 7-points from 66 to 59 and Journalist Group 1 which decreased 26-points from 66 to 40:

Figure 11.16: Journalist Group 1
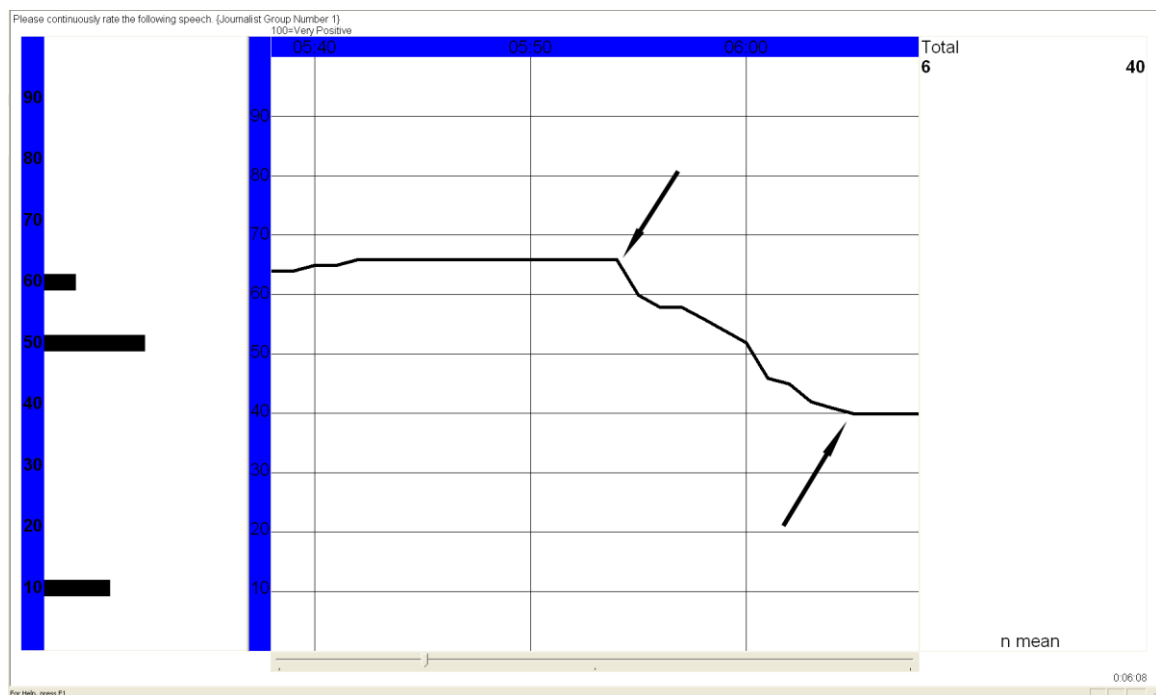
In the focus groups, there was an oppositional reading to the reference of NATO by a journalist participant who had recently interned with NATO's Central Command:

Participant 1: And right after that when he says that NATO is the greatest alliance to defend freedom, well that's not exactly what I think about...

Moderator: That grated against you, you didn't think that was true...

Participant 1: No I definitely didn't think it was true and actually I was working in NATO for, for a few months um...

Moderator: So you worked in NATO?

Participant 1: Yeah..

Moderator: OK...

Participant 1: I mean it was only an internship there...and, well that's not exactly what I think about NATO

Moderator: So that ran counter to your own experience?

Participant 1: Yeah...either my own experience or my own feelings. And there was another part which I didn't really like was this freedom around the globe, that's a quote from him, and 'cause I didn't really like all of the ways that the US was exporting these ideas of freedom, so I think he should have stressed more that he wanted to have a different way to bring freedom to the world (Journalist Group 1, 2010).

Later, another participant in the same group would agree with Participant 1, noting that "I don't see anything good done by the NATO to Afghanistan to these countries (Journalist Group 1, 2010)." Participant 1 of Journalist Group 1 felt that Obama's discussion of post-war global history was a recurring theme with American politicians:

Participant 1: Actually you just reminded me, in part of his speech he was talking about the Second World War, the role of US in Europe....I found that part a bit rhetorical and I already had this conversation with a former counselor of the White House, he was saying "yeah, but you know we came to Europe, we freed Europe from Nazis and fascism or whatever" and I was like "yeah, right, that's true, thanks a lot, that was sixty years ago anyway but thanks again. But still, at least in Italy, that created for us fifty years of huge problems because to free us from fascism, you finance the mafia, which condemned Italy to fifty years of problems, "ingovernability," one party government which was really linked with mafia and I mean right yeah thank you very much for that but you know I don't think that you gave us everything, because...

Moderator: And so that was a part of the speech where you were thinking he was   just trying to gain favour or...

Participant 1: Yeah. And it's an old way. It's like "please stop that" because, at least as Italian...maybe in other countries it was different but, uh, as Italian where I know where US money went to and to whom, and I know what happened and what kind of politicians we had after that...uh...I'm not very happy about that. Not totally. It's probably better than fascism but still...

Participant 4: Yeah I agree it's an Italian perspective, it's very valid and pretty good. As [an outsider?] I may not have the same view

Participant 1: That's because again I was finding this pattern in several

speeches of several US politicians, Republican and Democrat and I don't think it's that convincing anymore.

Moderator: Where it's like "look what we've done for you"...

Participant 1: Yeah..."you should be great to us forever", we've been grateful to you for sixty years and, probably that's enough, don't you think?

Participant 3: Because at that time he, he was not the president, so he has to gain some, um favor from other countries, no matter from Europe or Asia or any country. So it's diplomatic, it's his strategy (Journalist Group 1, 2010).

Rhetorically, Obama seems to be taking a slightly different approach. In praising the events that took place, Obama would take a note from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*; these historical events could have occurred due to chance or circumstance, but by finding agency in the German people, and in the city of Berlin, Obama infuses each with virtuosity, as Aristotle says, the man is "not a product of fortune, but of himself [sic] (1991: 108-109)." It is also here Obama repeats the thesis (title) of his speech, "a world that stands as one." This build up, culminating in an applause and the audience chanting "Yes We Can" saw a 36-point PNAR increase from 39 to 75 with Journalist Group 1 and a smaller 9-point increase with the Humanist Group from 58 to 67 that occurred primarily during the ensuing applause:

Figure 11.17: Journalist Group 1

288
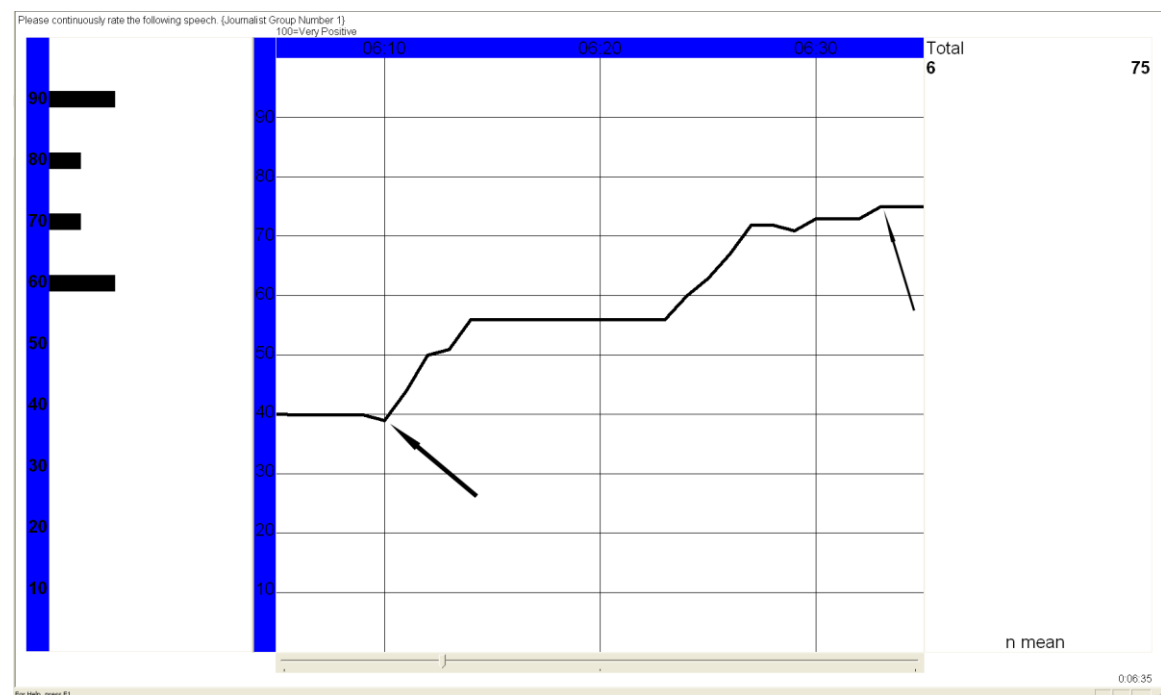
Figure 11.18: Humanist Group
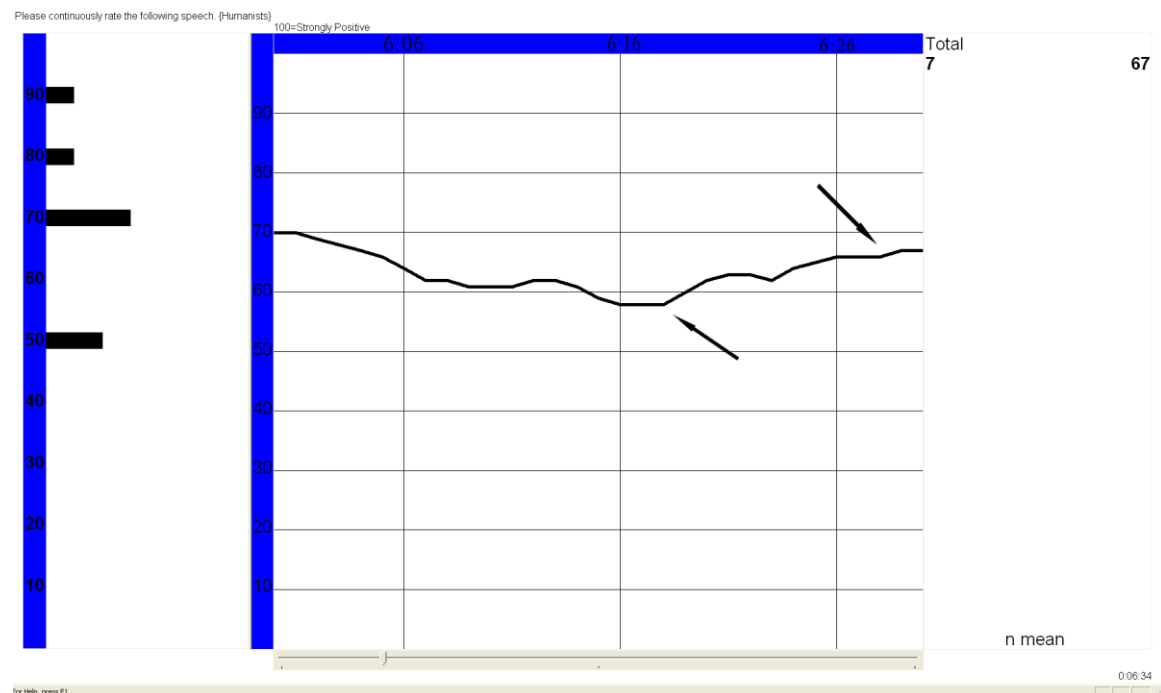
Rhetorically, "standing" is an interesting metaphor, repeated several more times, used before to describe Berlin's stand as the only act deterring World War Three with the Soviets. Burke sheds light on the metaphor "to stand": to stand *for* something is to stand *against* something else (Burke, 1966). In this case, Obama is asking the world to stand as one against "common challenges," and perhaps also John McCain!

ii. Speaker, Audience Consubstantial through Common Challenges as an "Other": A Rhetorical Foundation for Global Citizenship?

Keeping with the metaphorical journey his own family took to come to the West, Obama now draws a direct line from the Berlin airlift to present circumstances in which "we" find ourselves at a "cross roads". For as much agency as Obama finds in the global citizen's ability to address challenges by finding commonality, his audience here can only react to history. "History has *led us* to a new crossroad [emphasis added]" he tells us, turning back does not seem to be an option, only taking his or another course of action, presumably the one full of "new promise" and not of "new peril." As the epideictic function of the speech becomes increasingly used as a foreground for deliberative action (thus the "cross road"), Obama returns to historical time and lauds the German people who "tore down that wall" and begins a series a swinging antitheses to describe a once bi-polar world: "East and West"; "freedom and

tyranny"; "fear and hope". Form and content intertwine as the antithesis aids in the description of the West as protagonist and the Soviets as antagonists. Obama expands on this initial, literal wall falling as the cause whose effect was additional metaphorical walls that "came tumbling down around the world." More broadly, these walls "from Kiev to Capetown" are more tangible and less metaphorical: "prison camps were closed, and doors of democracy were opened. Markets opened to and the spread of information and technology reduced barriers to opportunity and prosperity." This section of the speech saw a 10-point PNAR increase from 64 to 74:

Figure 11.19: Humanist Group
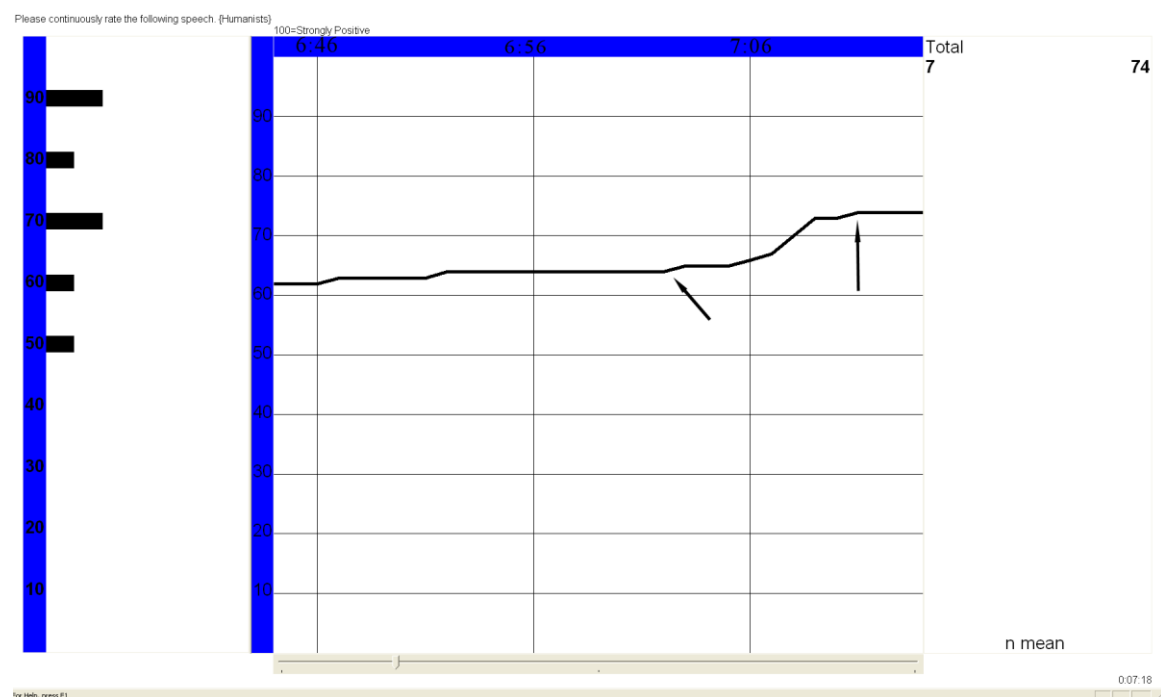
The specific reference to market liberalization saw a 7-point PNAR increase with Journalist Group 1 from 71 to 78:

Figure 11.20: Journalist Group 1
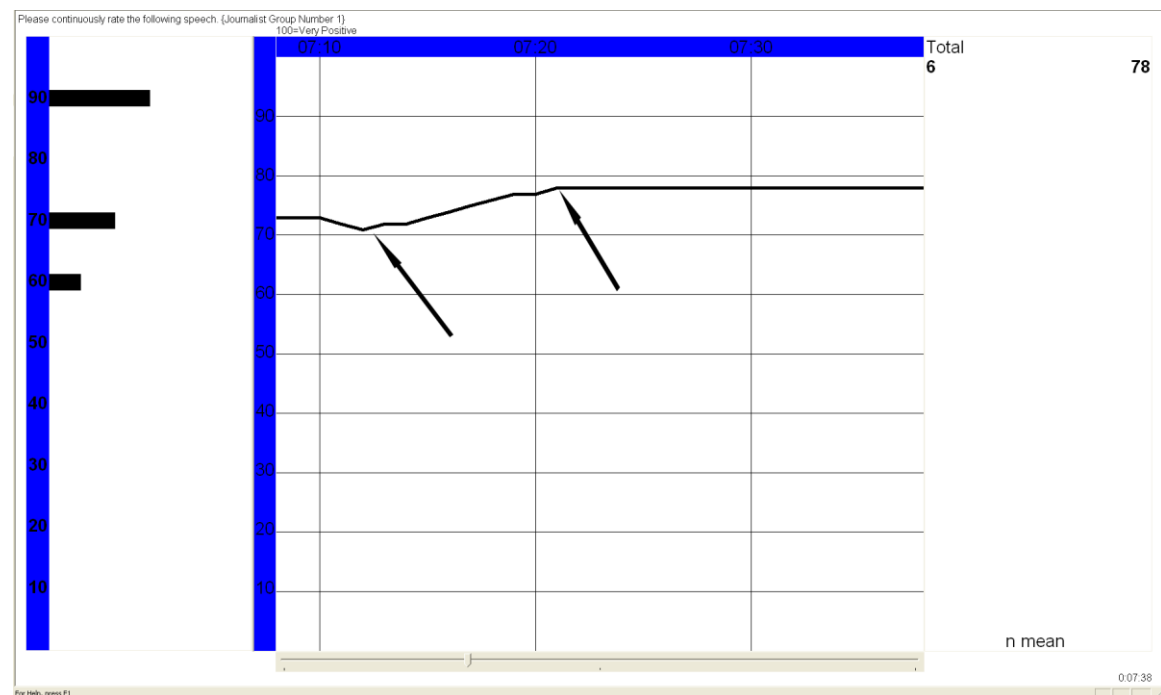
Obama will later address trade inequality that has arisen as a result of the neo-liberal project, but for now he can still be seen as ingratiating himself with his German audience, and as such, is associating their actions with what Obama considers the more favorable aspects of trade and technological liberalization. Moreover, the effects of these metaphorical walls coming down all over the world continue to construct the "other" of the West: if prison camps were closed, they had been open; the doors of democracy had been closed; markets were closed, and information and technology were restricted by someone or some nation. Overall then, a "common destiny" and a "world more intertwined" are the terministic screens marking the post-Berlin Wall world. These screens make makes room for the first person plural "we" and "us" as notes of consubstantiality. The 20th century "taught" us something, Twenty First Century has "revealed" something to us like an oracle while the word "destiny" goads a spiritual/mystical inevitability. With Berlin established as a model and as the root cause of this interconnectedness, Obama judges it as neutral, balancing the properties he finds good for the global citizen with common challenges as a result of this interconnectedness.

While not referencing Communism or the Soviet presence in Europe specifically, these "new dangers" cannot "be contained within the borders of a country" Obama

tells us drawing upon one of the most popular foreign policy metaphors of the Twentieth Century. To support his abstract metaphorical contention, Obama offers several examples to support his claim which largely fall under the headings of terrorism, global warming, nuclear weapon proliferation, drugs, poverty and genocide. Obama uses alliteration in the first supporting example, noting cars in "Boston and factories in Bejing are melting the ice caps in the Arctic, shrinking coastlines in the Atlantic, and bringing drought to farms from Kansas to Kenya." Formally, the alliteration serves as a unifying device; that no matter the differences in content, each ocean or city have something in common: the "global" nature of global warming; a "global" challenge that requires solutions deriving from Obama's "global citizen." Using a parallel structure, this series of examples also follows a pattern Obama will continue when laying out his solutions to these challenges. He begins with the more contentious issue of terrorism, which reached the height of transatlantic divisiveness during the American-led Iraqi invasion of 2003. The section dedicated to global warming and nuclear proliferation saw a PNAR increase of 6 points from 71 to 77 with the Humanist Group:

Figure 11.21: Humanist Group
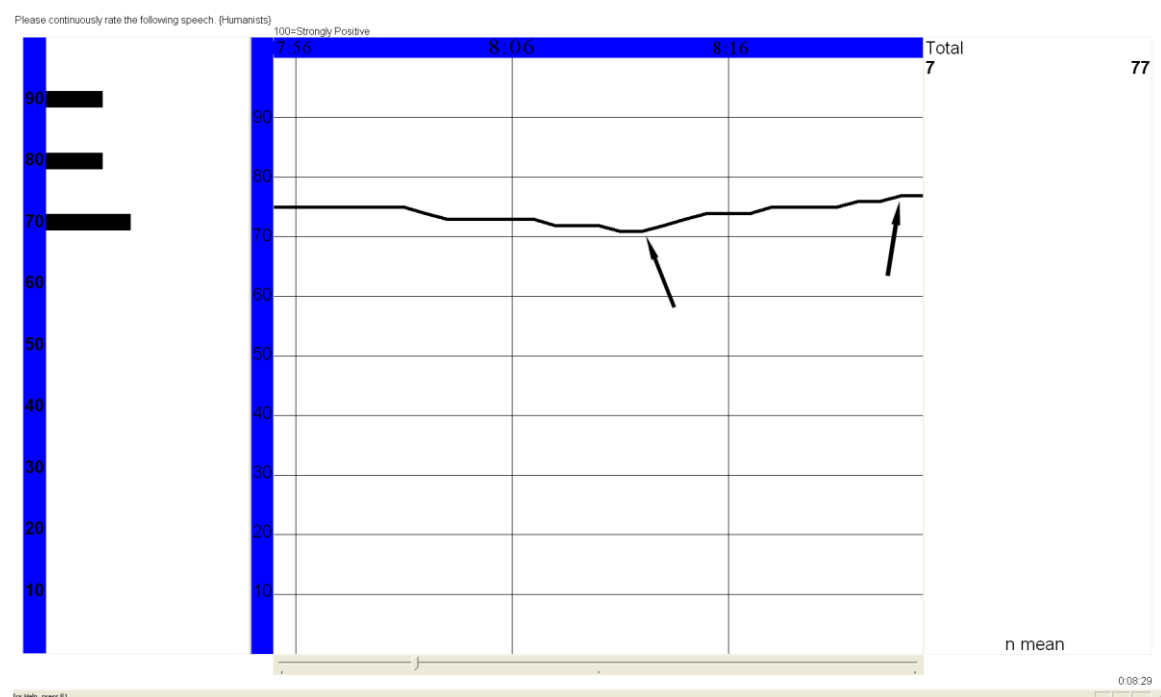
Journalist Group 1, however, saw an initial PNAR increase of 7 from 29 to 36 during Obama's discussion of global warming but, once Obama transitioned to nuclear

weapons and terrorism the PNAR decreased 19 points from 36 to 17:

Figure 11.22: Journalist Group 1
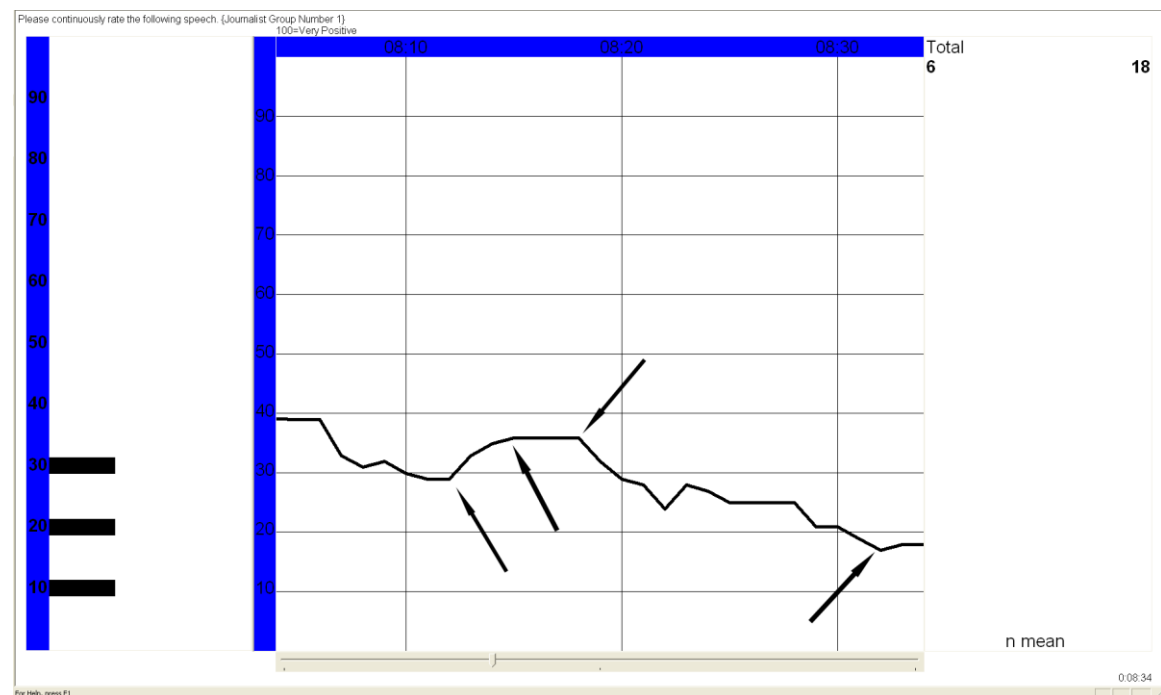
One participant in the Asylum Seeker Group disliked Obama's reference to terrorism in the speech while another tied this reference to the context of American foreign policy:

> *Participant 2*: Yeah, mainly negative, yeah. I don't like this talk about terrorism because Americans cause it.
> *Participant 1*: Yep...
> *Participant 2*: Sorry...Um, there was no need to [inaudible] as well, there was no need for Iraq, um when it comes to Darfur and other parts of the world, quite, quite, quite a lot is due to American and European hypocrisy and the need for minerals and stuff like that. If there was more of it in Zimbabwe I am sure that Mugabe would be gone by now. Uh Muslims pissing them off big time, because he's still there...
> *Moderator*: So, sorry, when you were saying there was no need to piss Muslims off, were you talking about in the speech or contextually?
> *Participant 2*: I'm talking about the policy [inaudible] that led to September 11th, to, to...and after that. I am talking about what was created by the West. So...and who's paying for it? Innocent people.
> *Moderator*: And so at these points during the speech you were going...down?
> *Participant 2*: Way down (Asylum Seeker Group, 2010).

From there he moves to global warming, then to nuclear weapons, back to terrorism

and Pakistan, then to the Afghan conflict (but framed as a drugs issue), then to poverty, then to genocide in Darfur. While not wishing to make an audience conjecture, it might be said that Obama's series acts as a sort of "audience insurance policy," ensuring applause at the end. By mentioning the contentious issue of terrorism at the beginning, it does not matter if there is no applause, for applauding in the middle of a series would breach the *kairotic* sense of decorum, the equivalent of cutting someone off in mid-sentence. But, by grouping the contentious issue of "terrorism" with other issues that perhaps-but-probably enjoy more broad support such as action against climate change, poverty and genocide, the applause that comes at the end becomes ambiguous; does the crowd cheer for violent action against terrorists or to relieve poverty in Somalia? It is unclear, and rhetorically advantageous in deliberative rhetoric. While we saw the reaction to these groupings with Journalist Group 1 in Figure 14.17, Figure 14.18 demonstrates the Asylum Seeker group too saw an initial and sharp PNAR decrease when Obama discusses terrorism in Somalia and a small PNAR rebound when Obama references Darfur:

Figure 11.23: Asylum Seeker Group

But why do these new issues Obama is highlighting matter for a *teleological* reading? What do identification and division have to do with these issues? On one level, Obama's shift from the first person to the second person to the first person plural, and

the conciliatory and ingratiating tone Obama takes throughout, precede more traditional "deliberative" appeals of persuasion such as these challenges and the solutions to these challenges Obama will soon offer, fulfilling the theoretical premise that identification precedes persuasion (Burke, 1961). On another level, however, Obama seems to be in tune with much of the literature surrounding post-Cold War transatlantic relations in the sense that the perceived shared (identified) interests of preventing mutual nuclear annihilation or Soviet expansion was given precedence over at the time seemingly less pressing issues of trade, and until 9/11, terrorism. In Burkean terminology, the various rhetorical acts of division were taking place internally what was once a corporate unity, the West, instead of an external act of division from the Soviet Union. Here, Obama can be seen as seeking to remind Europeans of their once common foe with the United States as well as to establish a new, external "Other" through which to identify. Of course, this new laundry list is no rhetorical match for the bi-polar world of the West versus the monolithic Red Scare, but Obama's new terms of division could gain traction with any of his auditors who believe terrorism, nuclear proliferation, drugs, poverty, or genocide are worthy to be cooperatively mobilized against. To aid in the transference from one other to another, Obama uses the same metaphor; the Soviet shadow swept across Eastern Europe but was eventually contained, while these new dangers have "swept along faster than our efforts to contain them."

With new dangers serving as terms to divide from, Obama now explicitly calls for international unity: "That is why we cannot afford to be divided. No one nation, no matter how large or powerful, can defeat such challenges alone. […] Yet in the absence of Soviet tanks and a terrible wall, it has become easy to forget this truth. And if we're honest with each other, we know that sometimes, on both sides of the Atlantic, we have drifted apart, and forgotten our shared destiny." As the second set of arrows in Figure 14.19 shows, the Journalist Group 1 Group saw an initial PNAR decrease, but, as Obama implored his audience not to be divided, their PNAR increased 11 points from 53 to 64 and a 5-point PNAR increase with Journalist Group 2:

Figure 11.24: Journalist Group 1

Figure 11.25: Journalist Group 2
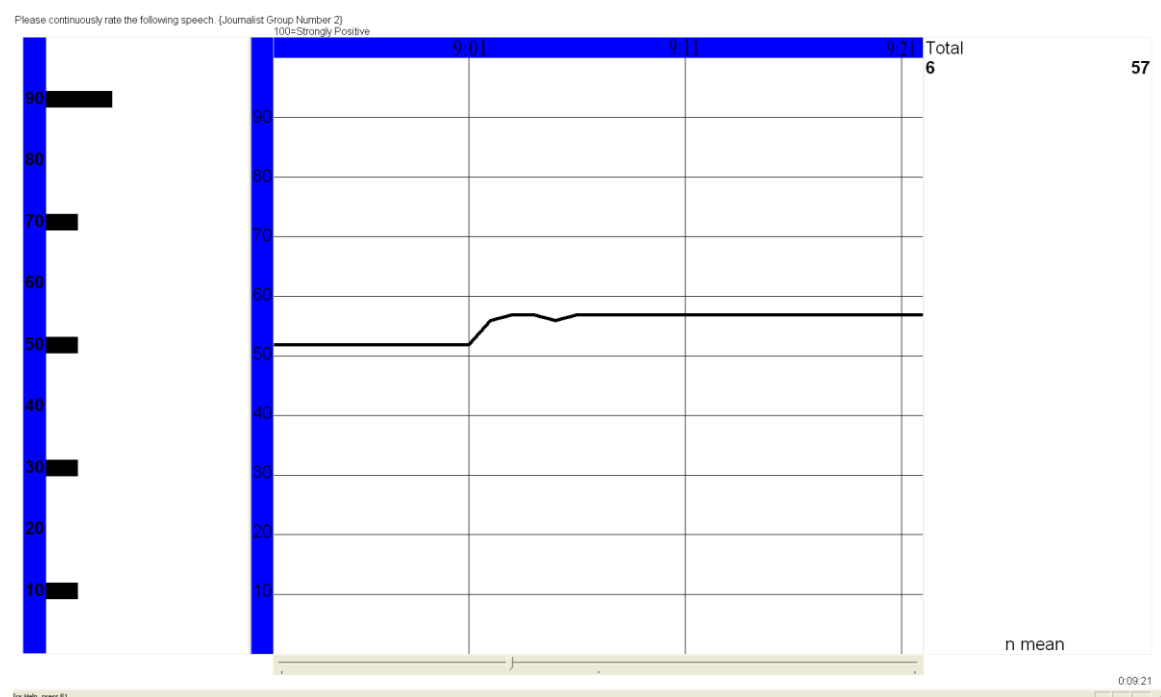
Rhetorically, Obama's use of the word "drifting" indicates his acknowledgement of differences, and perhaps more importantly it serves as an act of metaphorical division. Now a "shared destiny" continues the mystical metaphor of directional consubstantiality, but this destiny of interconnectedness has already largely been

addressed; Obama is interested in subdividing this point to focus on points of division in the transatlantic "partnership." In so doing, Obama becomes the spokesperson to Europe and the United States on behalf of the other. Rhetorically, Obama selects particular views of the other (or two different threads of argumentation of the other) that he can directly address and quickly reject (*antirhesis*), thus claiming a middle ground. Obama would (re)constitute reality here about the meaning behind American action and the perceived diminutive status of the European Union in geopolitics. This constitutive rhetoric of Europe's role in the world is interesting, because it is precisely what Obama is about to ask of Europe; he needs Europe to engage more, and so by reconstituting reality in such a way that makes Europe's global involvement a matter of fact rather than a matter of debate, the ask of contributing becomes a matter of confirming a preexisting reality rather than a point to be debated; the crossroads at which Obama finds transatlanticism becomes a choice of the familiar filled with promise and the unfamiliar filled with peril. In speaking to Europe on behalf of the United States, Obama is anticipating an argument that might be summed up as "American actions are part of the problem, not the solution" and Obama specifically gives meaning to American military bases, reminding Europeans that those "built in the last century still help to defend the security of this continent, so does our country still sacrifice greatly for freedom around the globe." Unless the European is willing to deny her own security or freedom, this sentence serves as a hedge, making it more difficult to categorically denounce American military bases around the world on the grounds that they defend security and sacrifice for freedom. Of course this is a contestable premise, but for those who would agree that American foreign policy played a role in Europe's security during the Cold War, the argument gains significance. As Figure 14.21 and Figure 14.22 show, however, Journalist Group 1 reacted largely negative with two significant PNAR decreases of 14 and 10, respectively:

Figure 11.26: Journalist Group 1
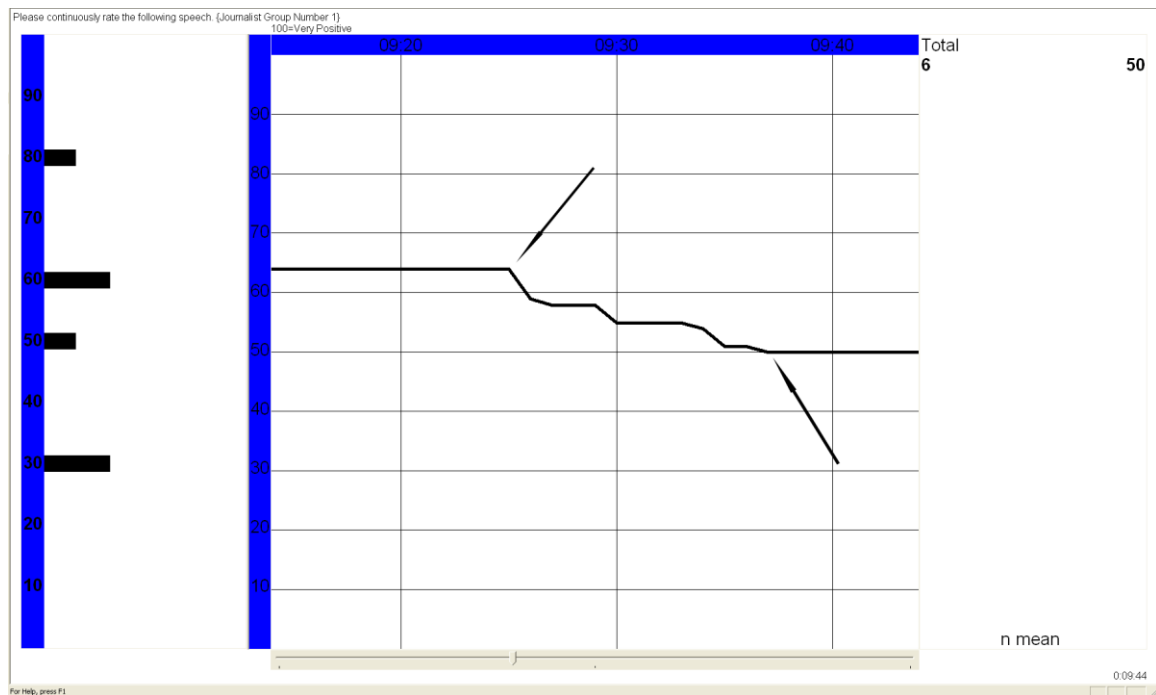
Figure 11.27: Journalist Group 2
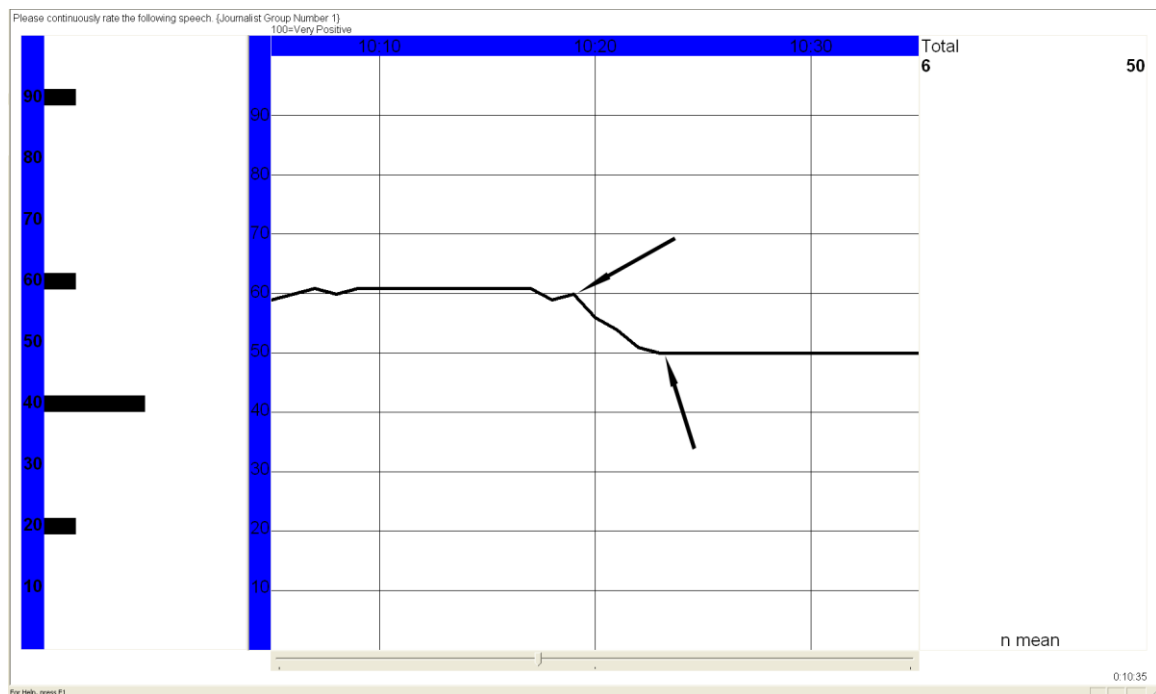
Conversely, Journalist Group 2 saw two moderate PNAR increases of 5 and 7 during the same portion of the speech:
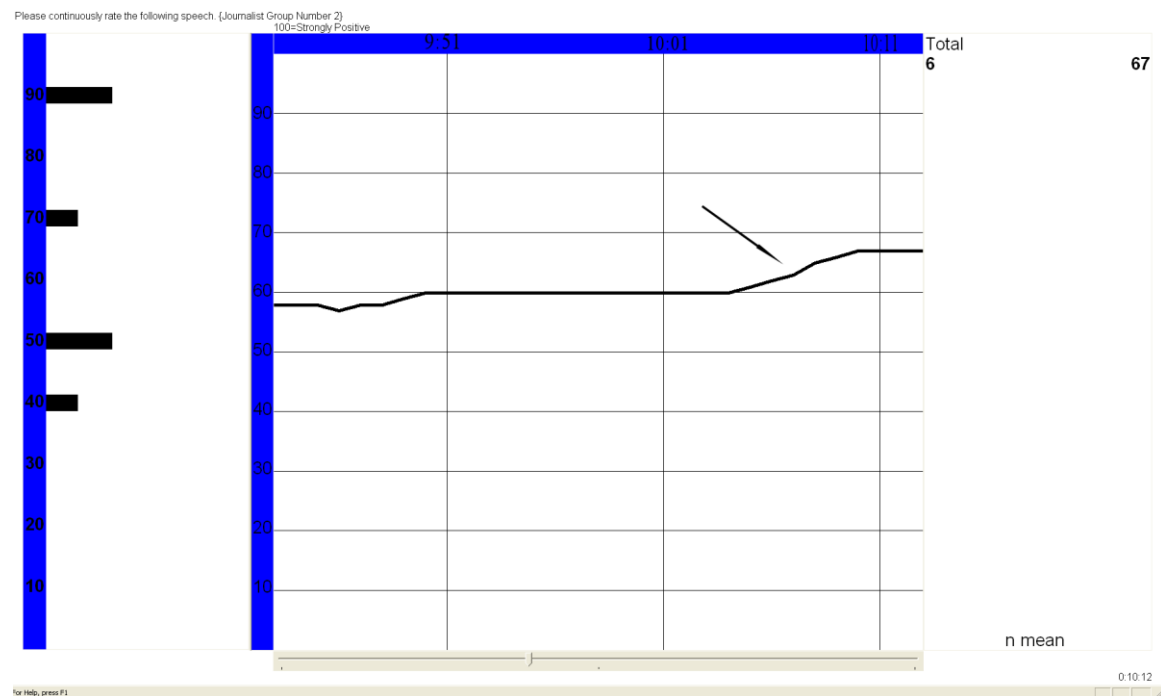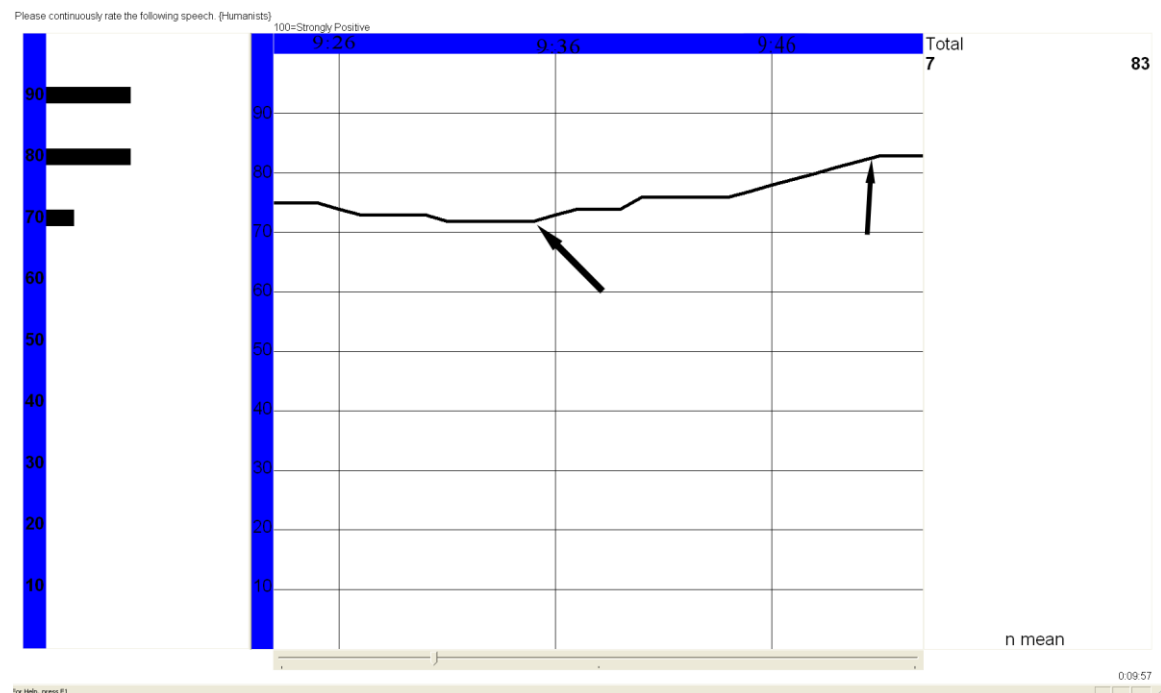
Figure 11.28: Journalist Group 2
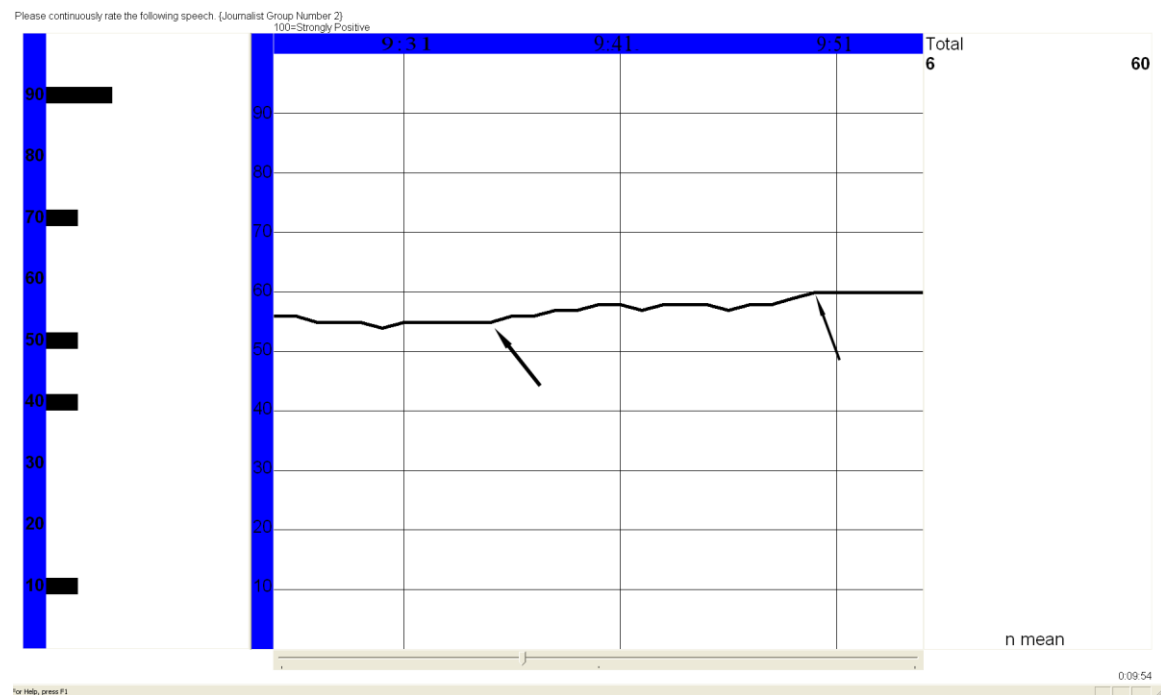
Figure 11.29: Journalist Group 2

From the moment Obama reminds his audience Europe and America "have drifted apart" to the point Obama defends a growing European role in global affairs saw an 11-point PNAR increase from 72 to 83 with the Humanist Group:

Figure 11.30: Humanist Group

Textually, Obama moves to restate his contention in a slightly different way, telling Americans and Europeans that "the burdens of global citizenship continue to bind us together." For Obama, the multiple audiences he addresses are consubstantial through common burdens. "A change of leadership in Washington will not lift this burden" Obama tells us, as he shifts back to the first persona, continuing to demarcate where he stands; he is like his predecessors in that they came to Berlin, he "looks" different than them (indicating more than just a physical departure) but will continue to ask Europe to meet their "burdens of global citizenship" which for Obama is grounded in action, manifested in his contention that Americans and Europeans will, in this new century, be required to "do more, not less." This discussion of global citizenship was raised with the moderator during the focus group session.

> *Moderator*: OK. That was also a moment where I think actually a lot of the dials went up. Did anyone not turn their dial up when he was talking about breaking down the walls today...
> *Participant 1*: That was a good one...
> *Moderator*: Did anyone turn their dial down during that time? Because it was at that moment he was talking about global citizenship. What do you think global citizenship...what do you think he meant by that? Or what does that mean to you?
> *Participant 1*: Well to me it would mean equality
> *Participant 5*: Yeah...

Moderator: Among people or among nations or...
Participant 1: Yeah, yeah...both
Participant 5: Among nations, yeah of course.
Participant 2: Yeah...
Participant 1: I mean actually if it's a global citizenship, we don't have separate...
Moderator: Yeah that's a good point...
Participant 1: I mean we're all citizen of the same nation or state or entity, whatever it is...so that's something I really liked, and now we have to see how he wants to achieve it. [laughter]. No, I mean if the way for him to achieve it is the same way they wanted to do it in Iraq (Journalist Group 1, 2010).

Obama lists four expressions that are of particular interest as phrases that signify identified interests as means and as ends: partnership and cooperation (means) in order to "protect our common security and advance our common humanity (ends)." The applause that resulted in this part of the speech also generated an 8-point PNAR increase from 63 to 71 with Journalist Group 1 and a 12-point increase from 63 to 75 with Journalist Group 2:

Figure 11.31: Journalist Group 1
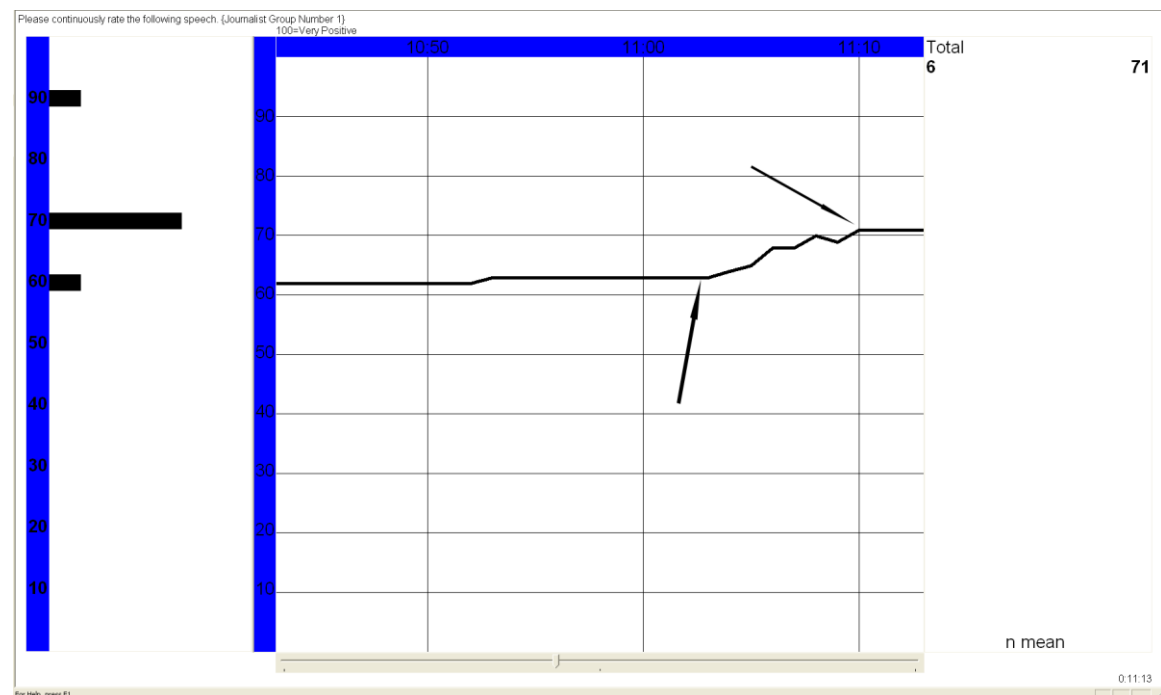
Figure 11.32: Journalist Group 2
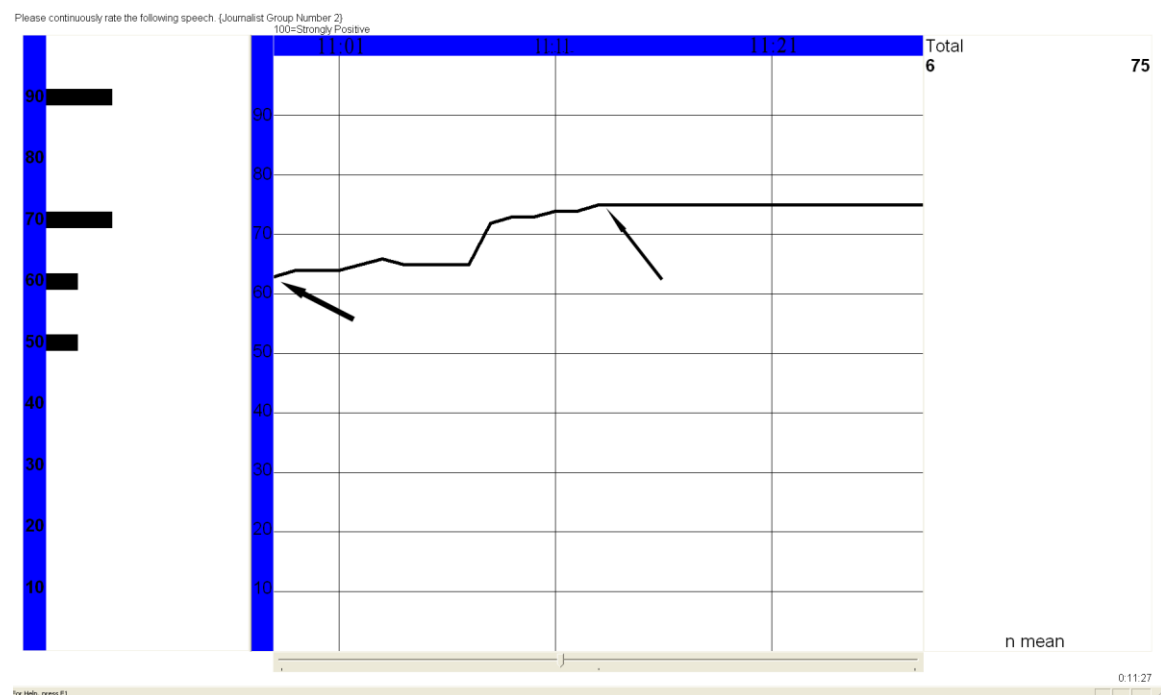
For Obama, identification is essential to build on the concept of global citizenship, but the metaphorical act of "[allowing] new walls to divide us from one another" can undermine partnership and cooperation. Obama once again has us swinging along with different corporate bodies using *polysyndeton* to "say everything without saying everything," by the second or third series we, to borrow Burke's phrase, see how it is formally destined to develop: all groups with differences should find ways to come together in order to "advance our common humanity." Obama ends this sequence on a note of intertextuality of Ronald Reagan's speech given in Berlin in which he asked Gorbachev to "tear down this wall." In this way, Obama finds himself consubstantial with Reagan, while the literal wall was torn down the task for Obama is incomplete as the list of new walls "are the walls we must tear down." Obama would need many of the voters who had once voted for Reagan, and it could help that Obama takes a similar tone of toughness on issues of foreign policy, if only at a lexical level, as Reagan did, towards a new set of common challenges. The new walls that Obama demands should be knocked down generates significant PNAR increases with Journalist Group 1 (+ 29 from 63 to 92), Journalist Group 2 (+10 from 76 to 86) and the Asylum Seeker Group (+15 from 75 to 90). The Humanists, however, fluctuated with an initial PNAR increase (+9 from 70 to 79) followed by a steady decrease (-5 from 79 to 74):

Figure 11.33: Journalist Group 1
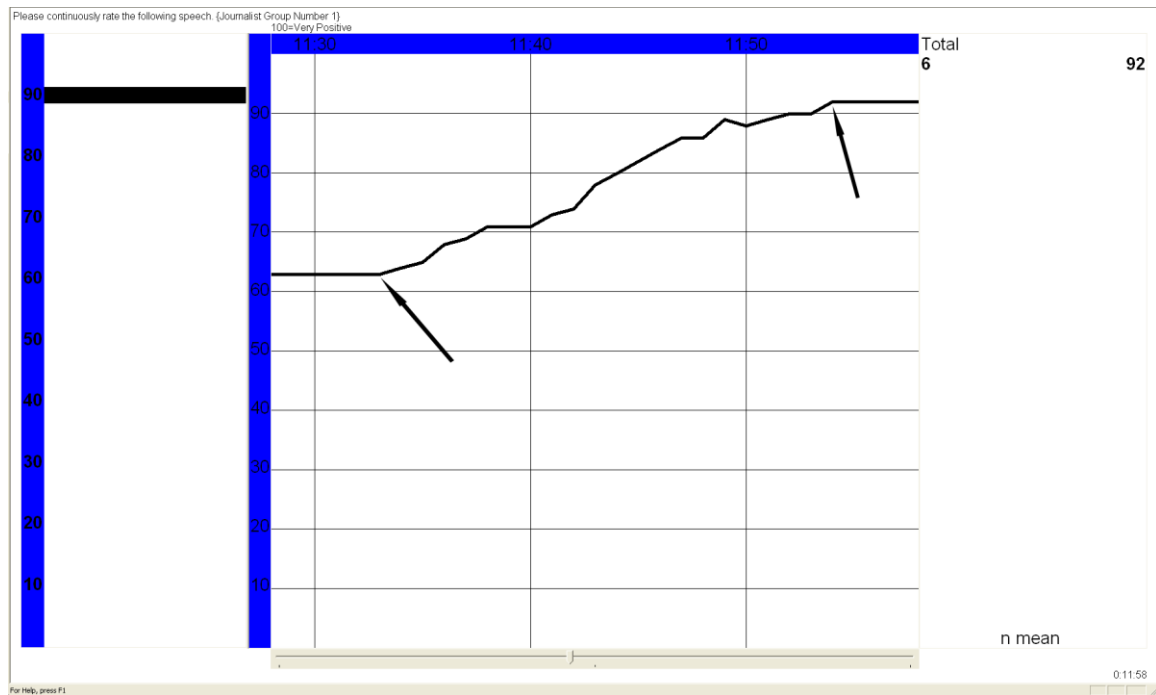
Figure 11.34: Journalist Group 2
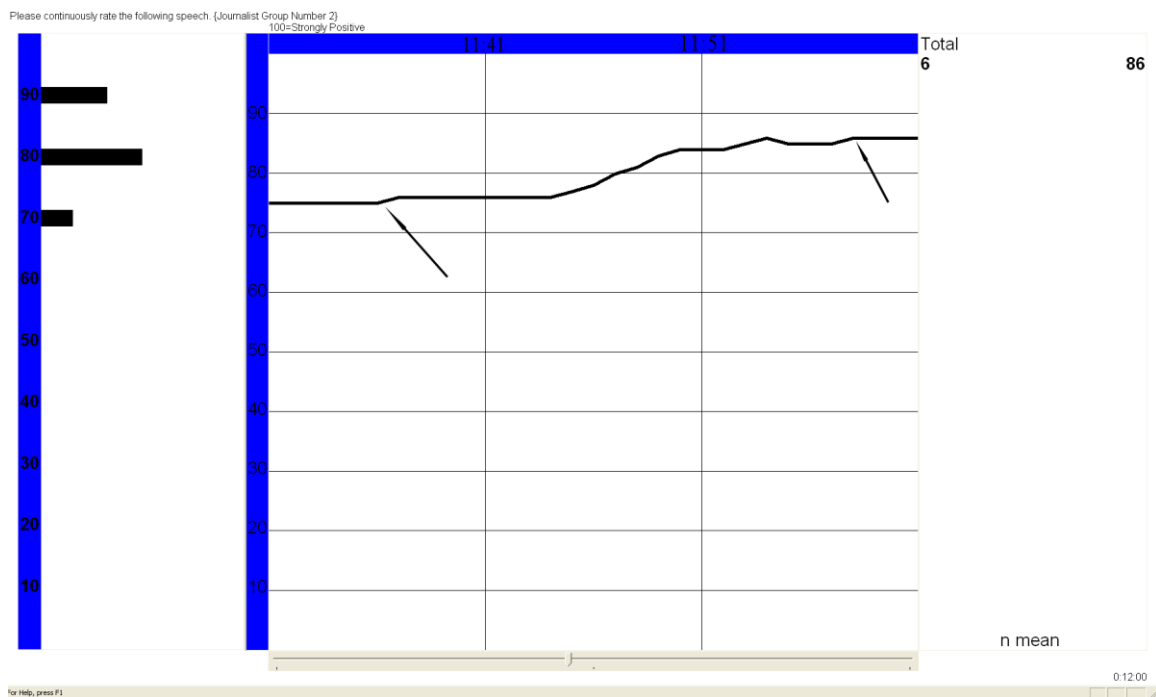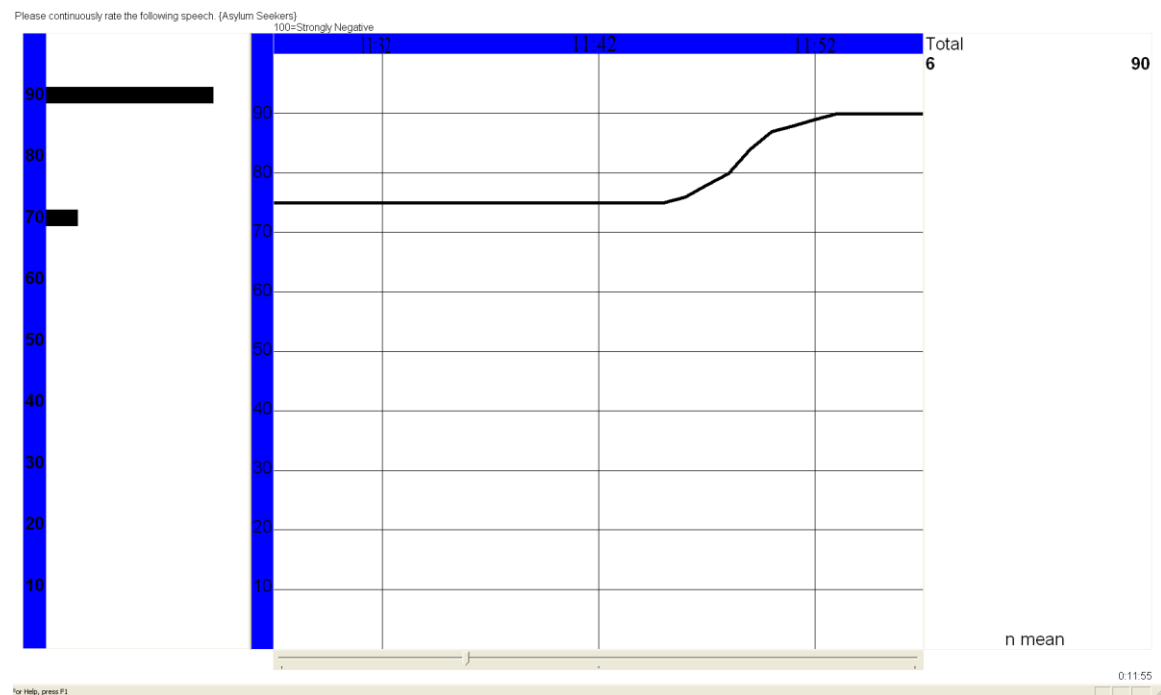
Figure 11.35: Asylum Seeker Group

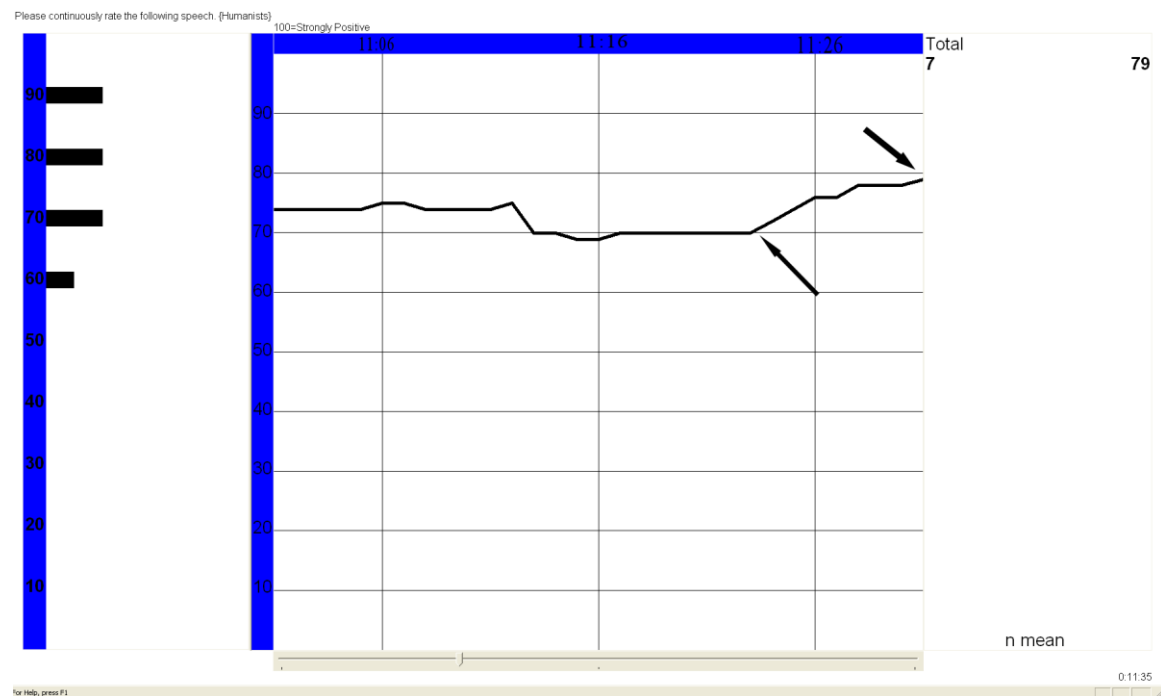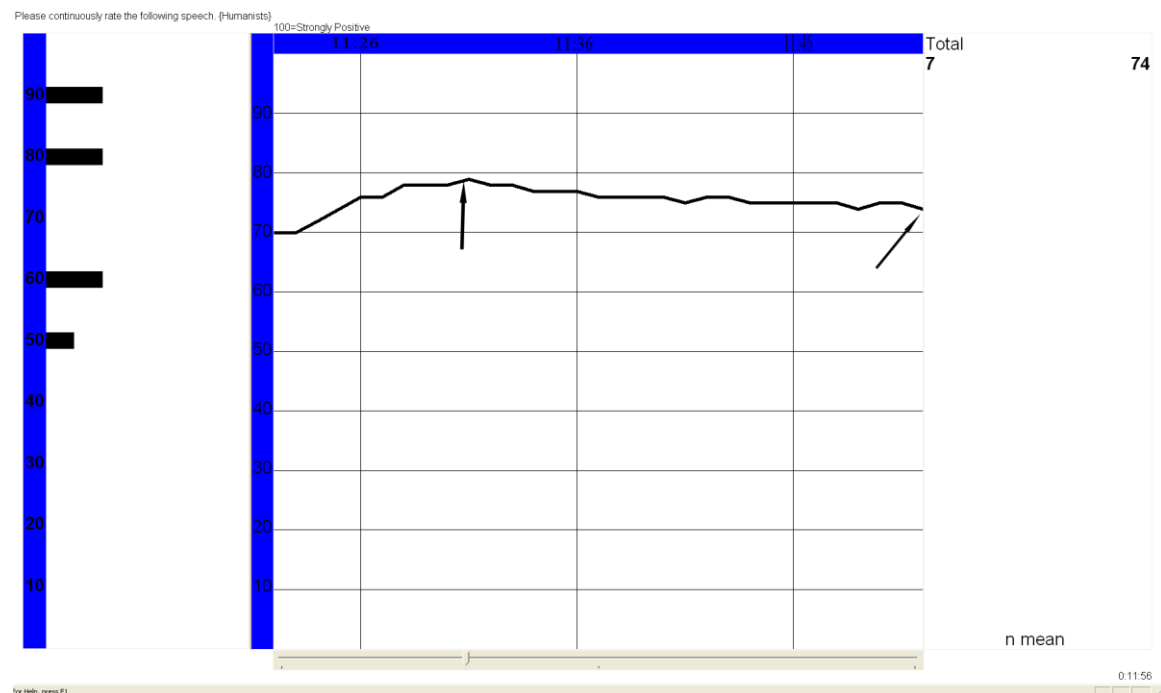**Figure 11.36: Humanist Group**

Figure 11.37: Humanist Group

This notion of knocking down walls was brought up by the moderator of Journalist Group 2 because of the increased PNAR score:

> *Moderator*: And knock down walls. Which is funny that you say that because at that moment when he was talking about knocking down walls was a big moment where people were turning their dials up.
> *Participant 2*: Yeah
> *Participant 7*: Yeah
> *Moderator*: Who turned it up and who turned it down? What was it you liked about breaking down the walls?
> *Participant 2*: Isn't that like…
> *Participant 7*: Because that's…
> *Moderator*: Or what you didn't like, I didn't mean that everyone turned it up…
> *Participant 4*: I did, I did, I don't know how much but I did. It's more about not liking what he is saying but the way it hits you.
> *Participant 7*: Yeah
> *Moderator*: How do you mean?
> *Participant 3*: [inaudible]
> *Participant 4*: No, the way he put the whole thing, you know? So you feel it all. There's a positive vibe on the whole thing.
> *Participant 7*: Yeah
> *Participant 4*: Whether you like it or not. Again, going subconscious. You feel good, yeah, right.
> *Moderator*: So it's not what he's saying, it's the way he's…
> *Participant 4*: Exactly. I go back to what he said, that he's a brilliant orator,

you know? If you're listening to him live, you know, you will never be able to think what you are thinking. He's such a good orator (Journalist Group 2, 2010).

Rhetorically, after arguing from cause and effect, Obama returns to an argumentative topic already woven with the first persona: possibility. Obama lays out several supporting examples to argue that it is possible for walls, both literal and metaphorical, to be torn down. Obama references the Berlin wall, the wall in Belfast between Catholics and Protestants, the Balkans conflict, and apartheid in South Africa. While the act of tearing down walls is grounded by Obama in history, the task "is never easy." While the three other groups saw modest PNAR decreases, the Humanist Group saw a 16-point PNAR increase from 63 to 78 after Obama mentions Catholics and Protestants:

Figure 11.38: Humanist Group
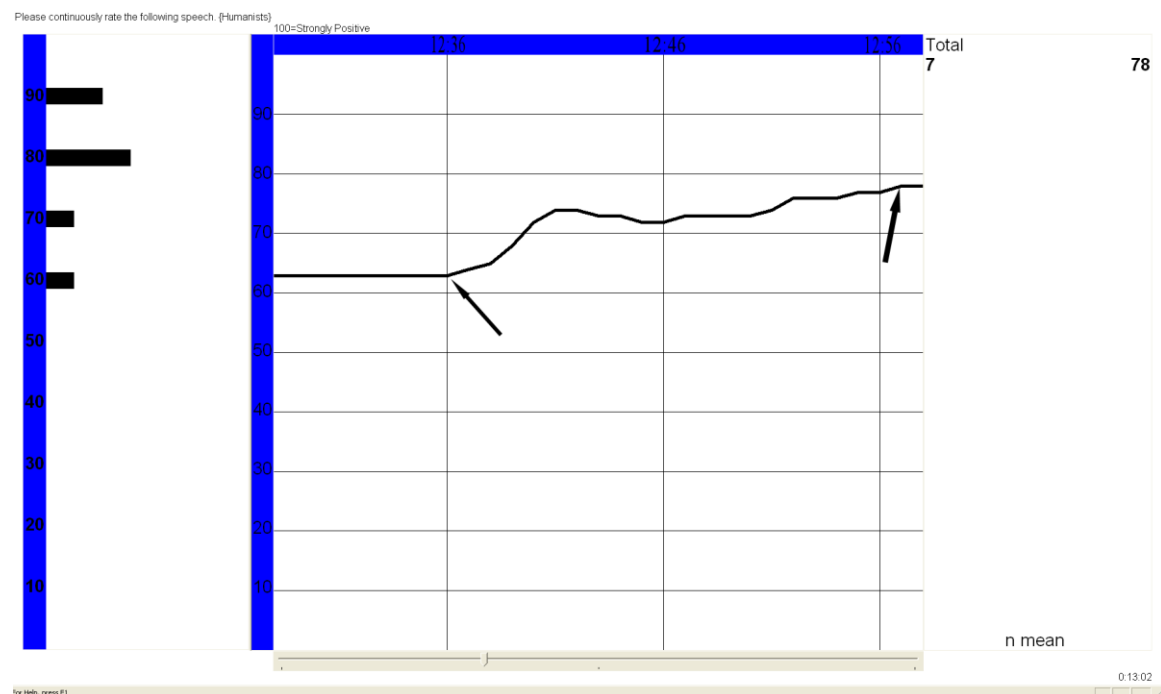
In this speech there is a tension between possibility and inevitability; on the one hand Obama is at pains to make his course of action very doable, however, not easy. It might be said that the acts of identification, the "coming together" is part of Obama's transatlantic destiny, but how the transatlantic structure "progresses" is not a given. For Obama, action is possible but not inevitable. Obama once again returns to action as the burden of "true partnership and true progress" which "requires constant work

and sustained sacrifice." The applause generated after Obama's importing allies "to trust each other," Journalist Group 1 saw an 8-point PNAR increase from 59 to 67:

Figure 11.39: Journalist Group 1
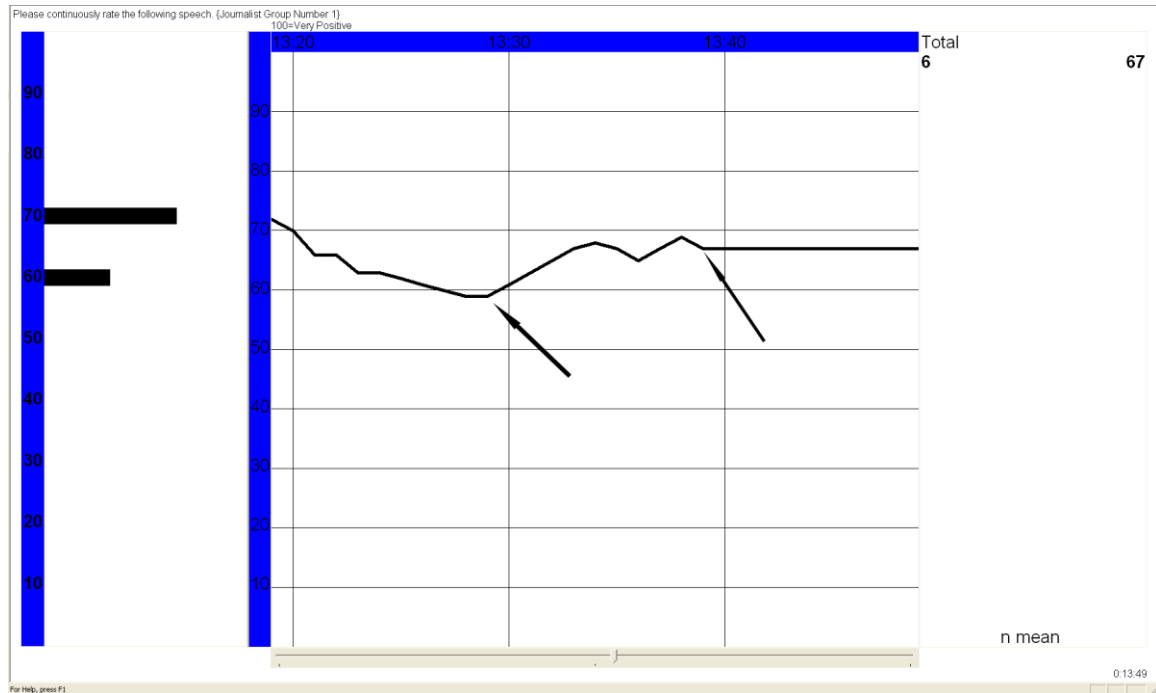
Obama asks nations to share "the burdens of development and diplomacy; of progress and peace" as the "sharing of burdens" brings us back to a note consubstantiality. That said, this sentence saw a 9-point PNAR decrease from 67 to 58 with Journalist Group 2:

Figure 11.40: Journalist Group 2
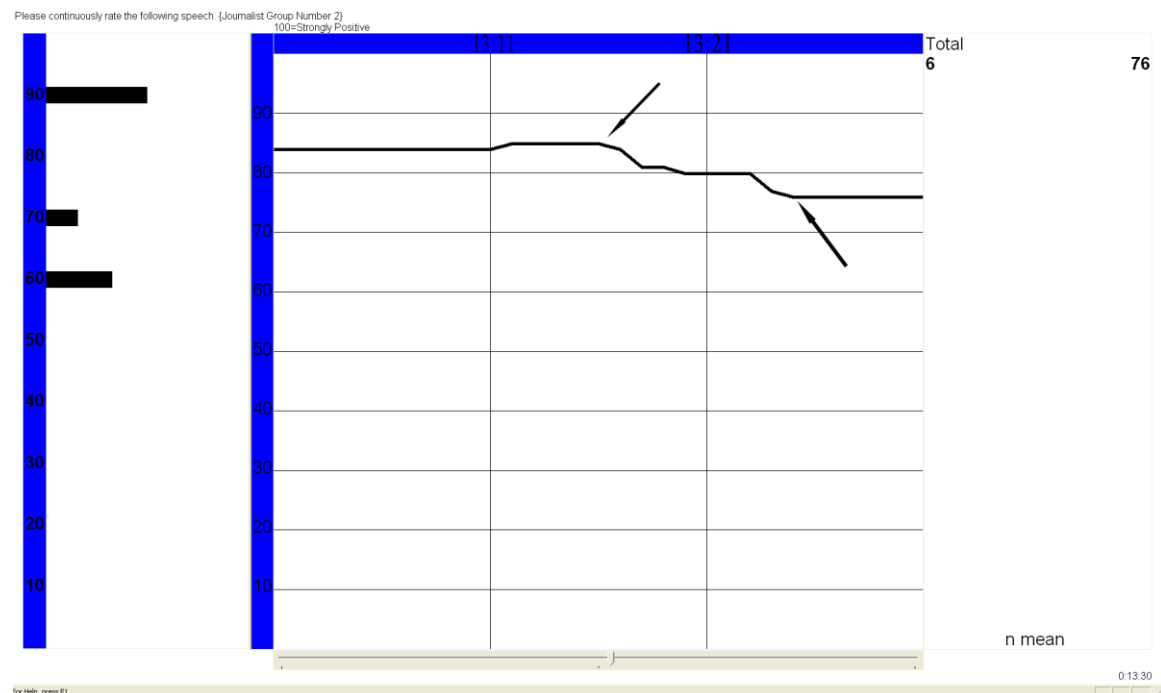
Neither America nor Europe "can turn inward," and a Burkean reading of this metaphor signifies an act of division. This is further proven with the sentence following this one: for Obama, the opposite of turning inwards is "building bridges," the ultimate metaphorical invitation to identification. Upon praising Europe as America's partner and the applause that would follow, the Humanist Group saw a 10-point PNAR increase from 70 to 80:

Figure 11.41: Humanist Group
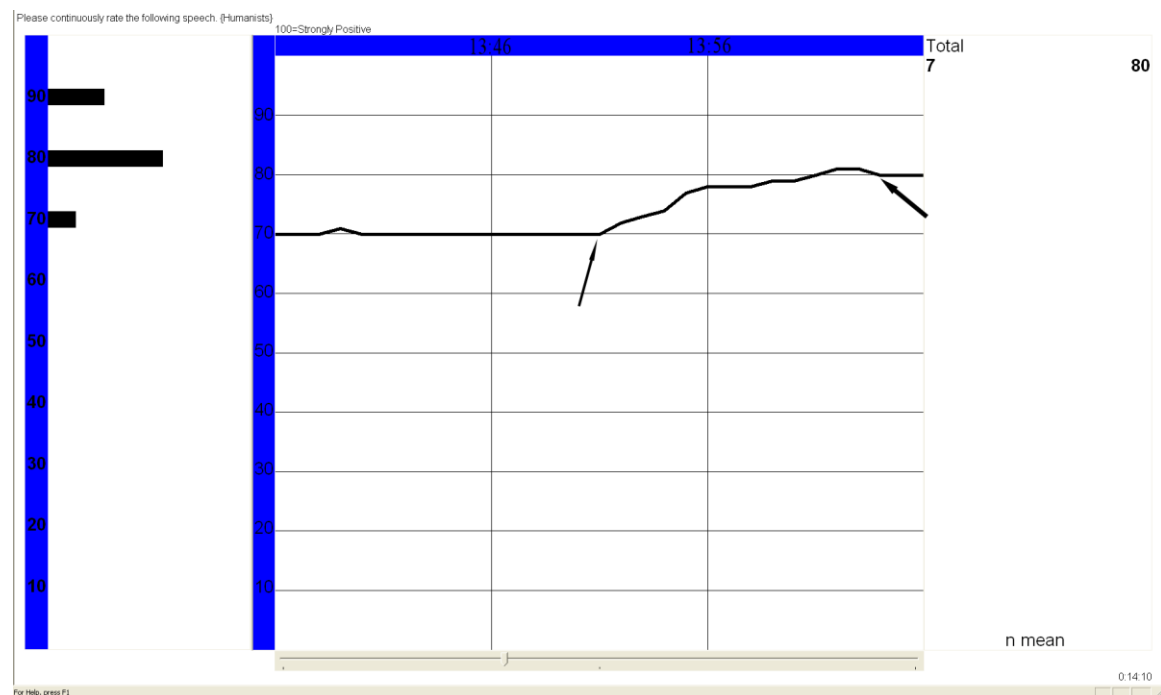
Obama shifts to mark the beginning of several *anaphoric* paragraphs beginning with "Now is the time" and shifting to "This is the moment". Here, Obama outlines his proposed solutions (a variant is the implications of failing to solve the challenge) to the common burdens shared by global citizens which is structured as roughly parallel to the preceding section that outlined these burdens: Obama first addresses the general need for shared institutions and a commitment to global progress, a sentence that occurred alongside a 23-point PNAR increase with Journalist Group 1 and a steady PNAR decline of 8 points from 78 to 70:

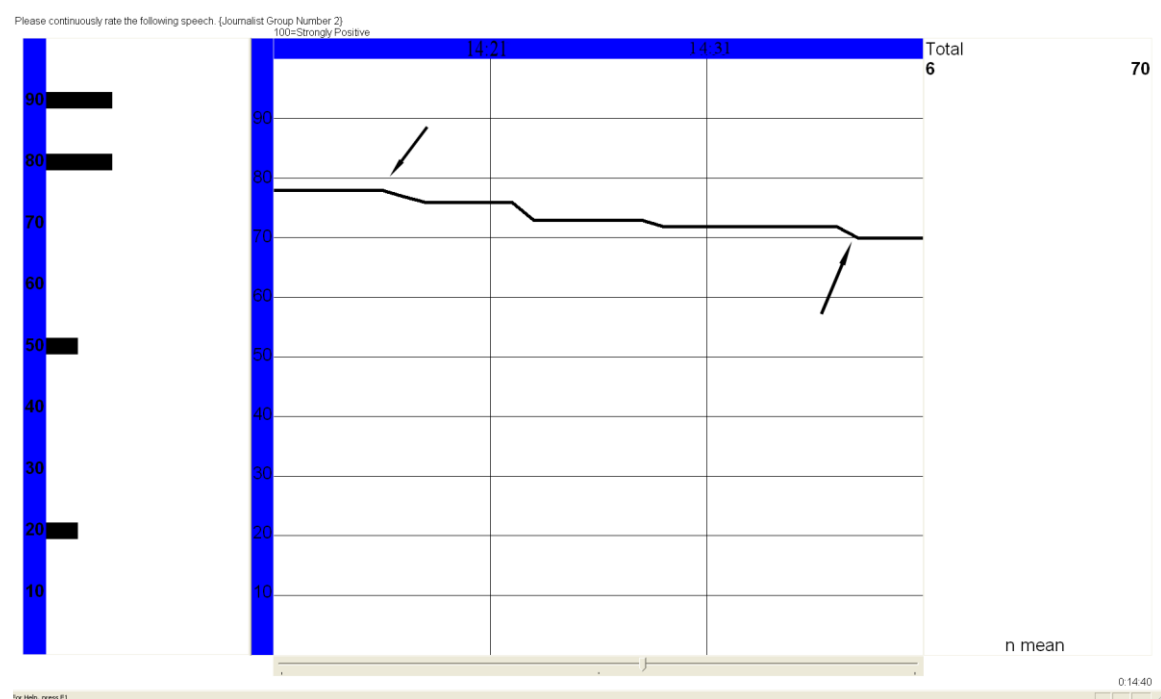**Figure 11.42: Journalist Group 1**
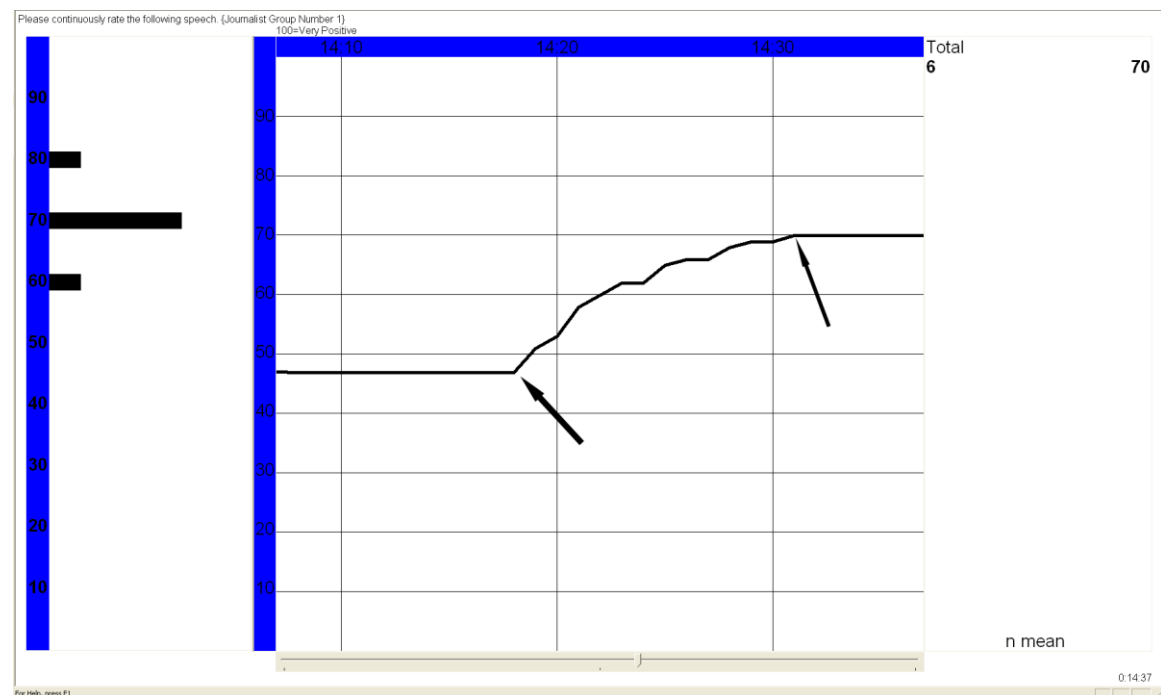
Figure 11.43: Journalist Group 2

From a general assertion to more specific policy areas, Obama addresses specific policy concerns: terrorism, Afghanistan, nuclear proliferation, European security (in relation to Russia), more equitable trade, Iran, Iraq and poverty. He also details how

each should be addressed (constant cooperation, strong institutions, shared sacrifice, global commitment to progress, using history as a guide). This new *anaphoric* structure brought humored criticism from the Humanist Group:

> *Participant 2*: I just mean specifically that he kept, he did sort of "this is the moment" thing about three times where he did the list of things that this was the moment on, and by the third time I was like "I thought that was the moment before, now again?" and...
> *Participant 4*: Different moment, though, so...
> *Participant 1*: [laughter]
> *Participant2*...and yeah, this other moment...and like Darfur, it came up once, then it came up again, global warming came up once, then it came up again..
> *Participant 4*: Iran...
> *Participant 1:* Yeah...
> *Participant 2*: I get that there's a degree of repetition can be useful when you're saying something, but when it's the whole structure of the speech it seems to turn around, not really having a structure, that's pretty strange (Humanist Group, 2010).

One participant in the Humanist Group admitted feeling positively towards the list of issues Obama's references and ties it to questions of American leadership in international affairs:

> *Participant 1*: I, I liked um, the thing that in the speech is he mentioned so many things that were, that needed to be done, and the sheer kind of volume of that is kind of comforting in the way that he recognizes that there's that much and he's also saying everyone has to do it, which is nice because half the time, like when I was growing up, it's like "OK, what's America going to do about this situation?" and then everyone else will decide what to do as well. Whereas pushing Europe to take a bigger role in kind of these affairs, was kind of at least a recognition that they shouldn't have to do it alone or that they shouldn't be the only person, be the only country advocating for, you know, carbon reductions, or you know civil war in wherever, to kind of take a stance rather than sit back and take a pronouncement.
> *Moderator*: So you thought positive about this aspect of coming together to do stuff...
> *Participant 1*: Yeah, and giving...saying that we can't do this alone, that everyone else has to get involved as well...
> *Moderator*: OK (Humanist Group, 2010).

Rhetorically, Obama only slightly varies on the previous form, Obama switches between contentious and couched asks, following the need for more troops in Afghanistan with the need for a nuclear free world; the need to be firm with Russia

with the need for an equitable global trade policy; action needed on Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons and Iraqi reconstruction with action on climate change. These generally accepted "couched" assertions were picked up as being "fake" by several participants of Journalist Group 2:

> *Moderator*: OK. When you say made up, I want to get an idea of what you mean. The others are pretty explicit but made-up could mean different things, I just want to figure out what it is…
> *Participant 7*: Fake.
> *Moderator*: Fake? OK.
> *Participant 2*: It's like your favorite dish. A little bit of everything.
> *Participant 7*: Yeah, it's like a soup, he mixed up everything.
> *Participant 2*: There's [inaudible] in there, there's communism in there…nuclear in there.
> *Participant 7*: What I'm going to say here…
> *Moderator*: So it's just…
> *Participant 4*: He made a carbon-free….right?
> *Participant 2*: Yeah, [inaudible] to every group that may matter…
> *Participant 7:* Yeah…"I will cover everybody and everybody will be satisfied" (Journalist Group 2, 2010).

A participant in the Humanist group seemed to feel similarly, although he admitted to turning his dial up during what he considered to be generally acceptable premises and assertions:

> *Participant 5*: I found myself turning up the dial quite high but then kind of thinking "well, you know just because you can't disagree with things when he's saying 'kittens and puppy things and flowers and peace and love' [laughter] and you can't go negative on that necessarily

This list of challenges to be solved, a list that Obama would have replace the former Soviet threat as terms for identification, contain several interesting metaphors and lexical choices worth noting that make them more tolerable. First, the terministic screen "defeat terror," a choice used *ad infinitum* by the Bush Administration is difficult to not divide from; it is, in Burke's word, a "curative" other; how can one not want to defeat terror? Moreover, the metaphor of "drying up the well" of extremism and "dismantling" terror networks subtracts any note of violence, and combined with defeating terror makes it a suitable new term of division. Arguing from the topic of possibility and historical continuity, Obama creates a formal analogy between NATO defeating the Soviet Union and a new partnership to "dismantle" terror networks. It is

also worth noting the sharp PNAR decrease that occurred with the Humanist Group when Obama told his audience this was the time to fight terror and "dry up the well of extremism that supports it" by 8 points from 82 to 74:
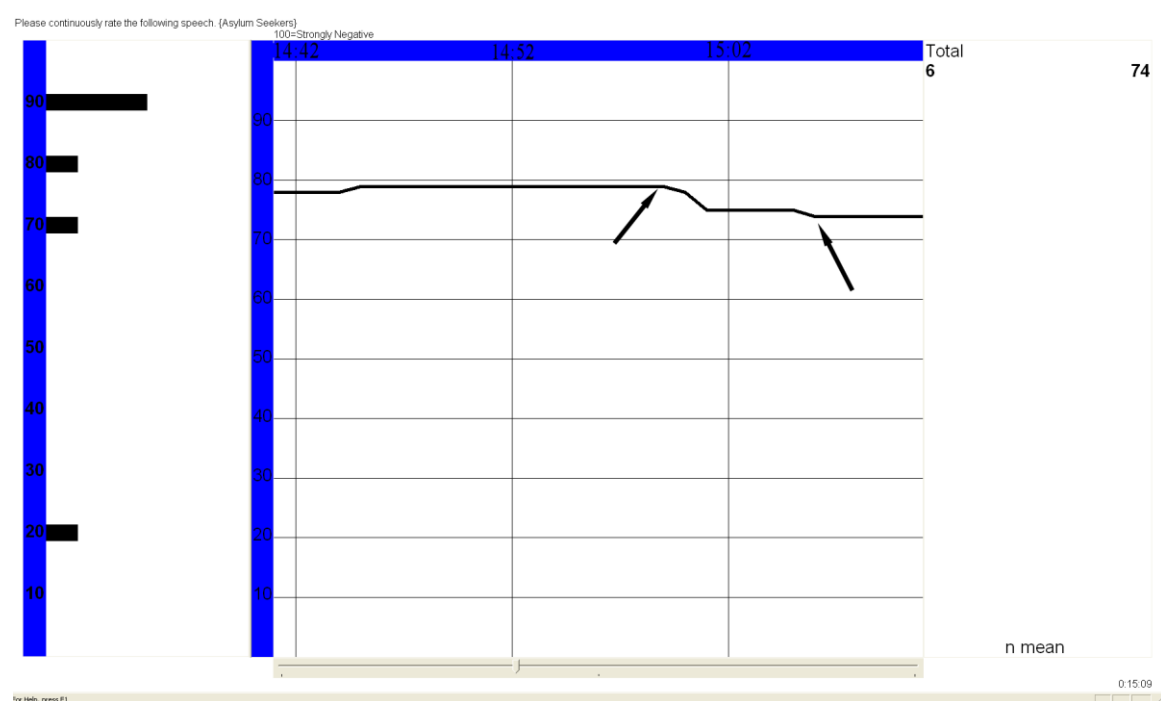
Figure 11.44: Humanist Group
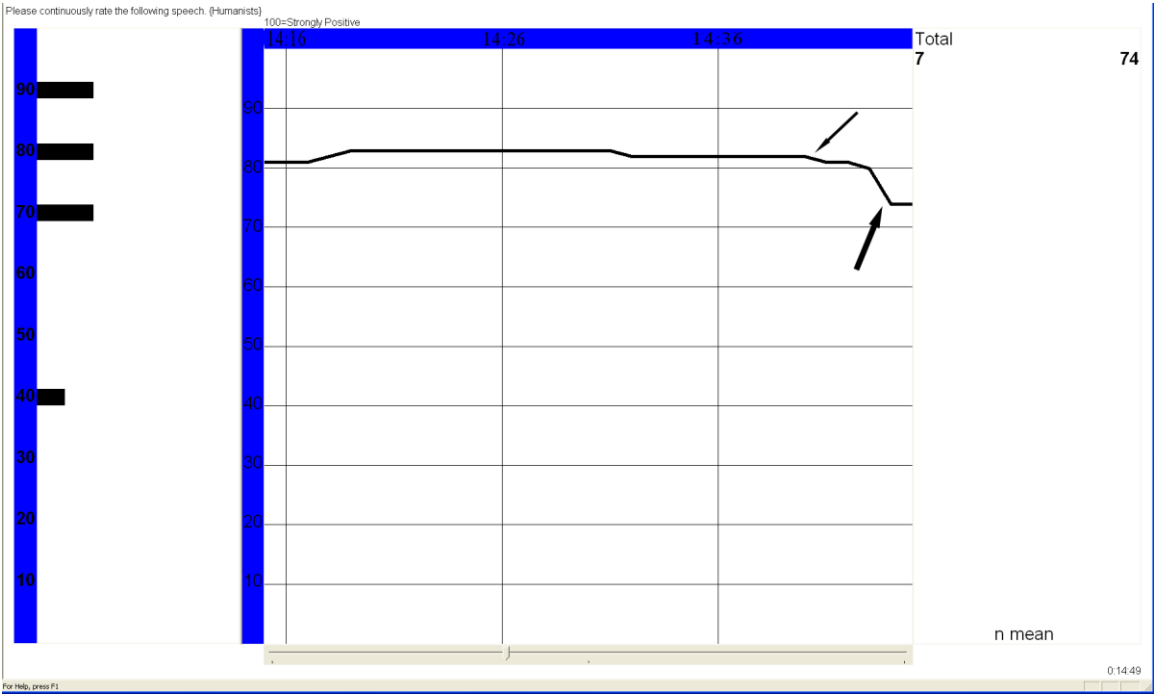
This sentence and the extended section, where Obama uses NATO as an historical example of facing down enemies abroad, also saw a 33-point PNAR decrease with Journalist Group 1:

Figure 11.45: Journalist Group 1
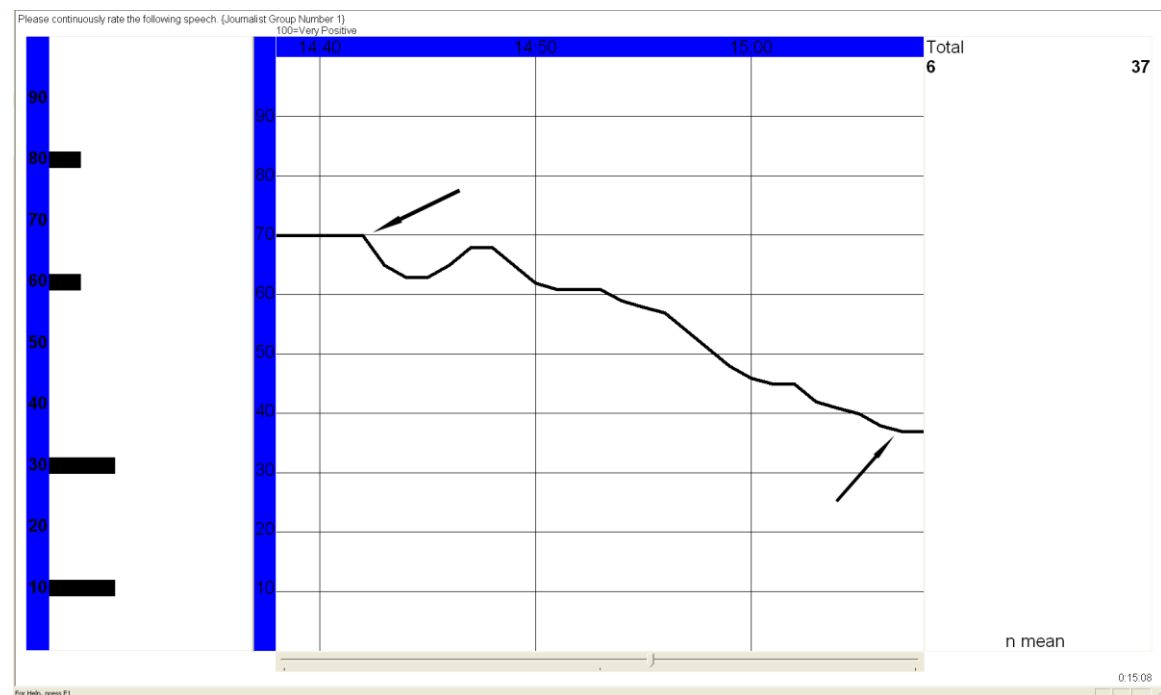
As Obama references specifically the places where terrorists have "struck in Madrid and Armand, in London and Bali, in Washington and New York" saw a PNAR decrease of 5 points with the Asylum Seeker Group:

Figure 11.46: Asylum Seeker Group

Interestingly, Figure 11.47 demonstrates that while Journalist Group 1 experienced a PNAR decrease of 9 when Obama references defeating "the communists" but saw a PNAR increase of 23 from 28 to 51 when Obama talks about the Muslims who "reject hate instead of hope" along with the Asylum Seeker Group who saw a 7-point PNAR increase from 73 to 80 during the ensuing applause:

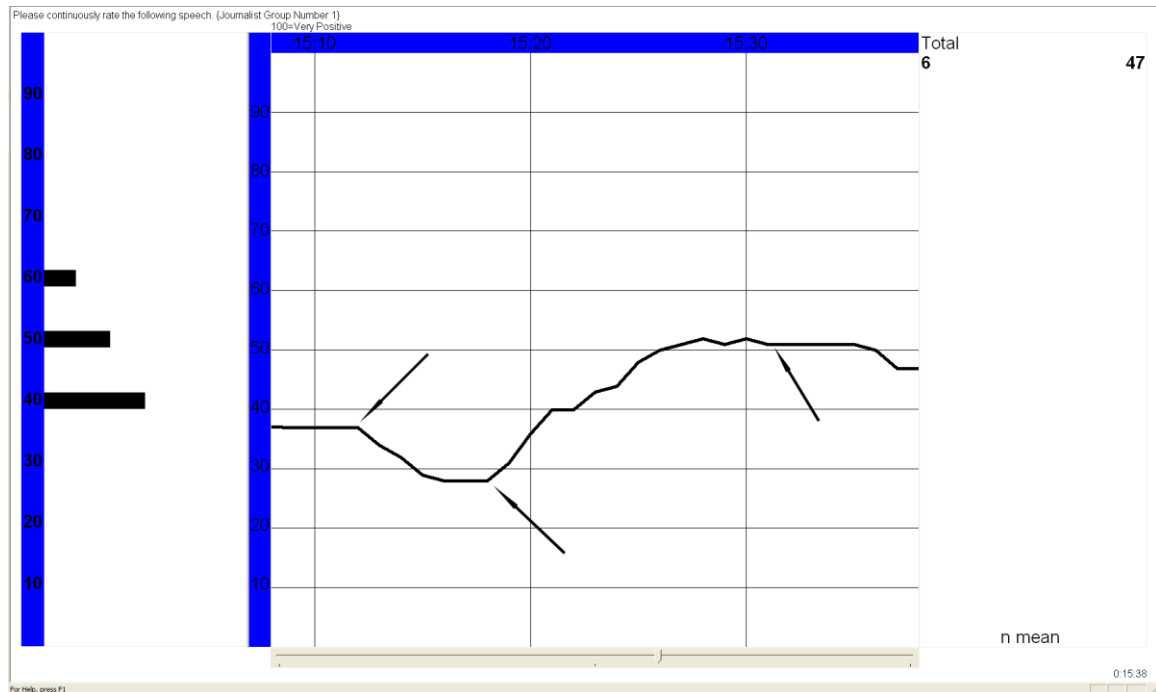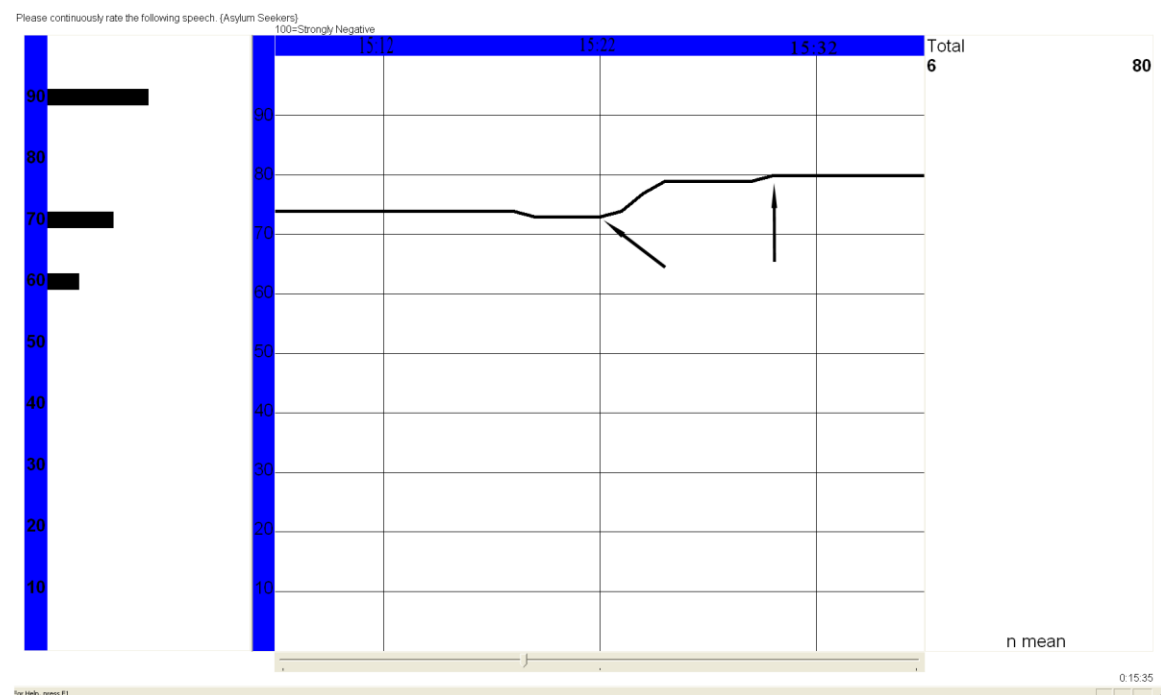**Figure 11.47: Journalist Group 1**

Figure 11.48: Asylum Seeker Group

The threat is made a geographic universal through Obama's use of *anaphora* and the sheer geographical distance of each contrasting city both beefs up the term of division as well as emphasizes the need for a truly global partnership. Obama moves from terrorism generally, which is itself an abstract concept, to Afghanistan specifically. Here, Obama links drug trafficking and "our security" as two issues in need of address. As a proposition, it may or may not be true, but "traffickers who sell drugs on your streets" provides a rationale for a militaristic presence in Afghanistan from an entirely different angle. As an argument, it is strengthened for those that share the implicit claim that drugs being sold in Germany is a concern, or bad, and it also "hits home" and is more concrete than "defeating terror" and "drying up the well of extremism." The fact that "no one welcomes war" is a sort of couched maxim; an assertion of consubstantiation quickly followed by a serious qualifier that makes room for continued intervention in Afghanistan. Obama places emphasis and agency with "the Afghan people," that is, they would act but they need "our troops and your troops; our support and your support to defeat the Taliban" and as an *ad populam* proposition it becomes more difficult to reject for anyone who subscribes to Obama's "common humanity" thread of argumentation. This section saw a general PNAR decrease of 11 points from 52 to 41 with Journalist Group 1 but, when Obama frames the conflict as helping "the Afghan people," the group saw a dramatic 26-point PNAR

increase from 38 to 64:
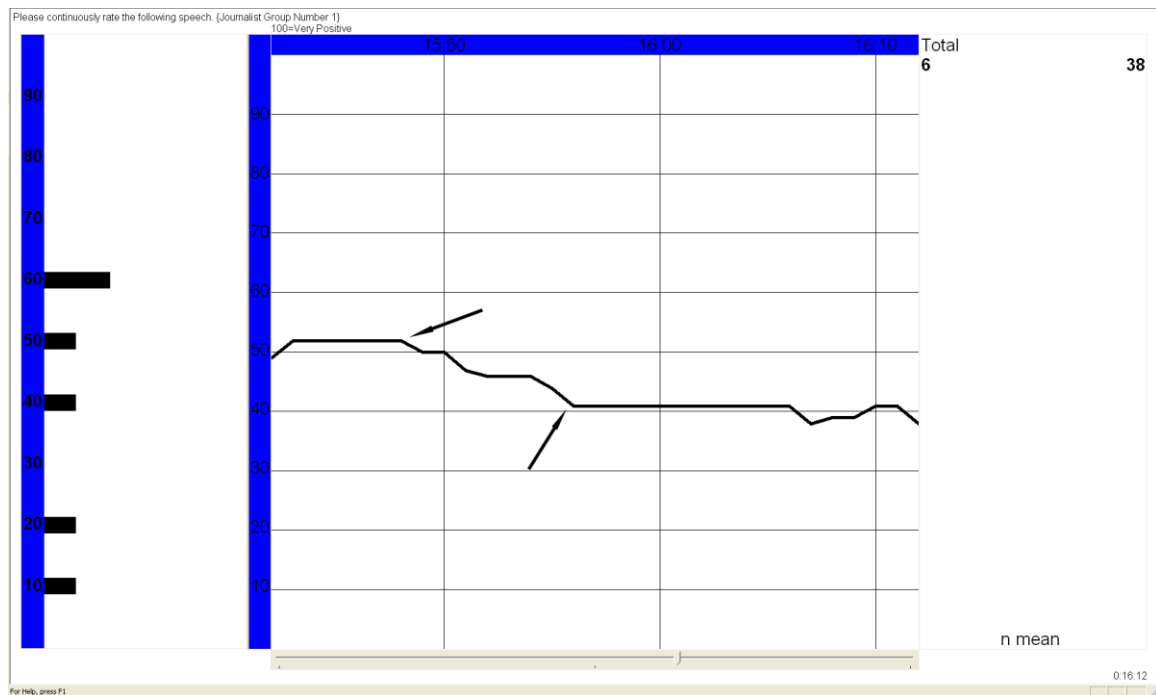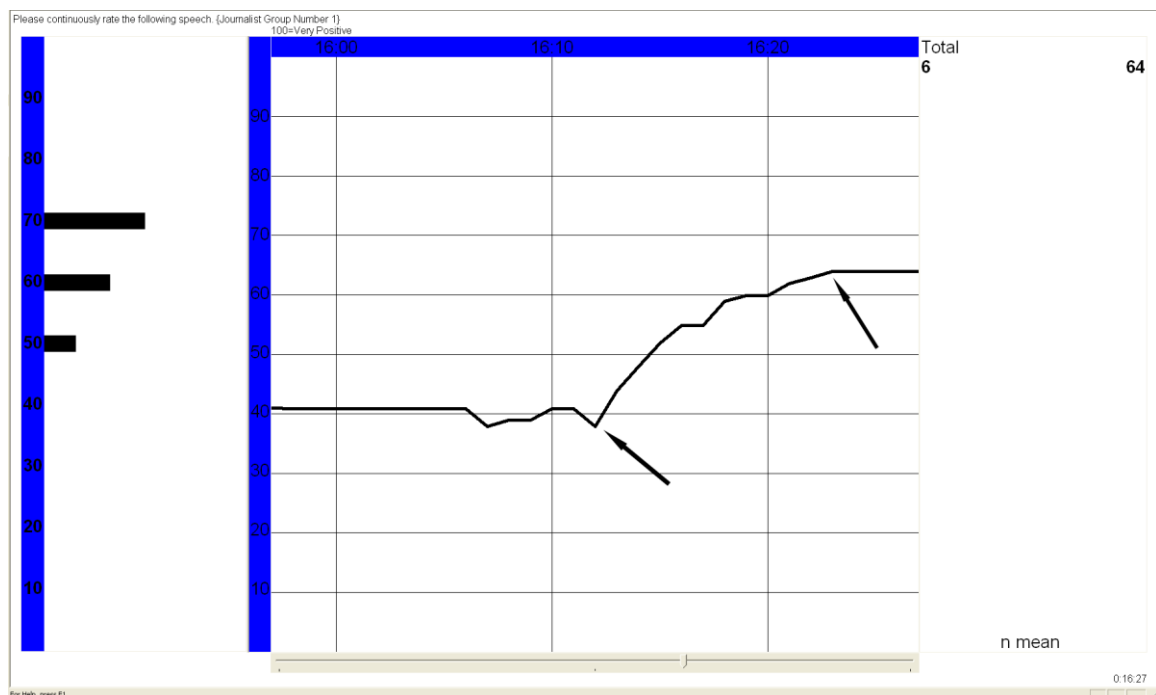
Figure 11.49: Journalist Group 1

Figure 11.50: Journalist Group 1

Textually, Obama shifts to the next policy area, and although he has mentioned the specific nuclear weapons program of Iran, Obama also addresses the need to create "a

world without nuclear weapons" generally, a point raised by a participant and further probed by the moderator of Journalist Group 2:

> *Participant 2*: the funny thing is he hasn't changed his policy on nuclear weapons from the Bush era.
> *Participant 5*: Yeah…
> *Participant 2 and 5*: It's the same
> *Participant 2*: And then I think it's like US foreign policy is asking states like India and Pakistan to sign the CTBT
> *Moderator*: Yeah…
> *Participant 2*: Which is not testing nuclear weapons. They're not a signatory to it. [laughter]
> *Moderator*: Well actually one of the things I wanted to bring up were some of the biggest drops, let's just flesh this out while we're talking about it is when it came to him talking about nuclear weapons. I just wanted to explore: who turned it down? One, two, three, four, five.
> *Participant 1*: Not the whole time! [laughter]
> *Moderator*: So I just want to figure out what was the reasoning when you decided to crank it down when he started talking about nuclear weapons…
> *Participant 2*: It's the same old bull shit.
> *Participant 7*: Yeah, we know, we know
> *Participant 1*: He hasn't done anything…
> *Participant 2*: No one will do anything, like realistically speaking. They'll talk about it, but
> *Participant 7*: [inaudible]
> *Moderator*: So it's not that he's talking about banning nuclear weapons you have a problem with, it's the fact that you don't think he'll actually…
> *Participant 2*: They keep pulling stunts. Russia will say "we've dismantled 15 bombs" and the US will say "we've dismantled 16"
> *Moderator*: Yeah.
> *Participant 2*: So they're not really going anywhere with it, and as long as they're not signing treaties like the CTBT and expecting us just to sign it, which is banning testing in their own countries, in other countries, it doesn't make any sense.
> *Moderator*: You think it's unfair that…
> *Participant 2*: Yeah.
> *Moderator*: That the US doesn't have to sign that treaty
> *Participant 2*: Yeah because they keep asking everyone to do it but they won't do it.
> *Moderator*: Gotcha (Journalist Group 2, 2010).

This is reflected in a PNAR decrease with both Journalist Group 1 (-18 from 64 to 46) and Journalist Group 2 (-11 from 63 to 52) while the Asylum Seeker Group saw a PNAR increase of 9 from 74 to 83:
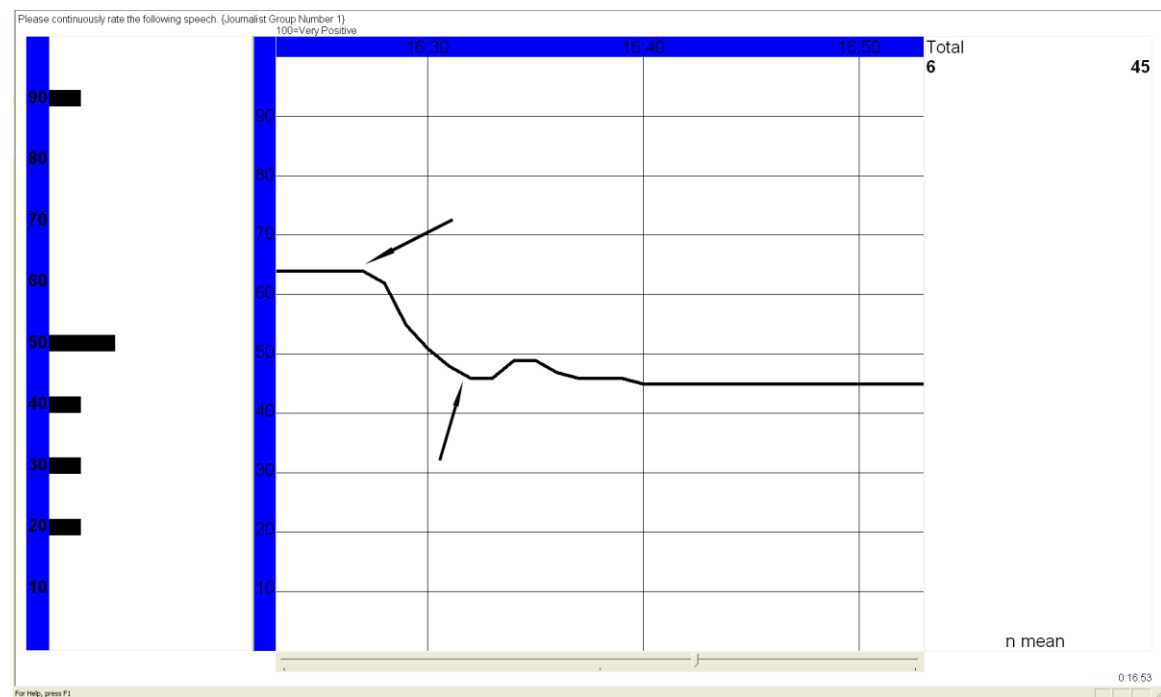
Figure 11.51: Journalist Group 1

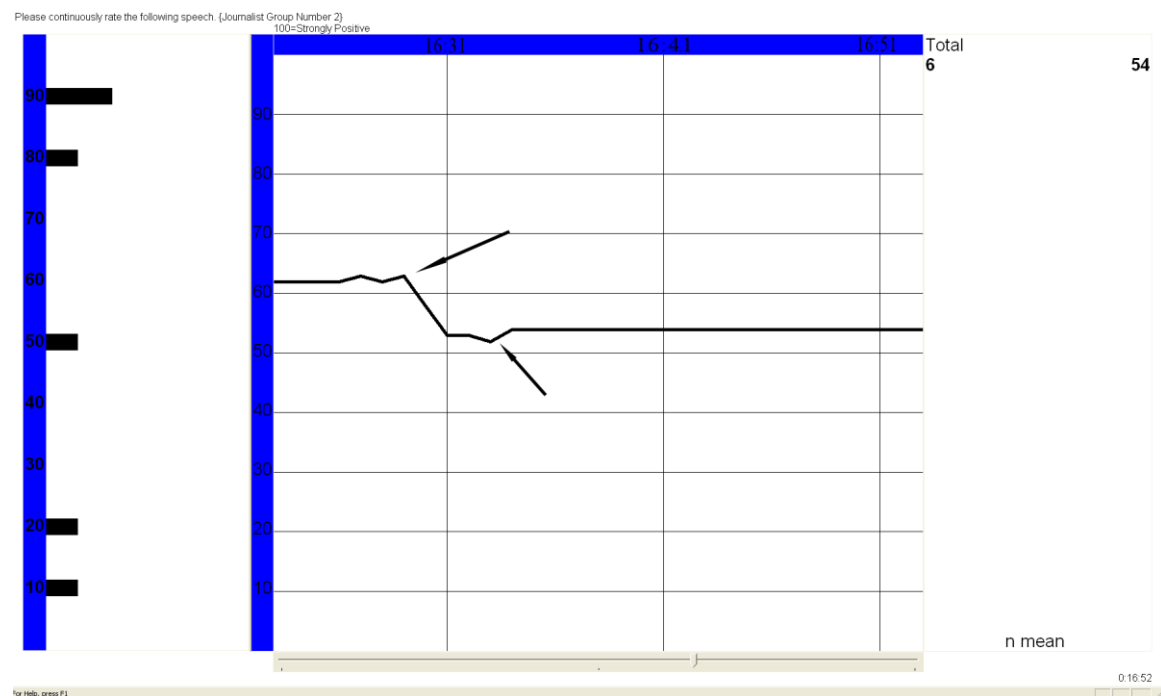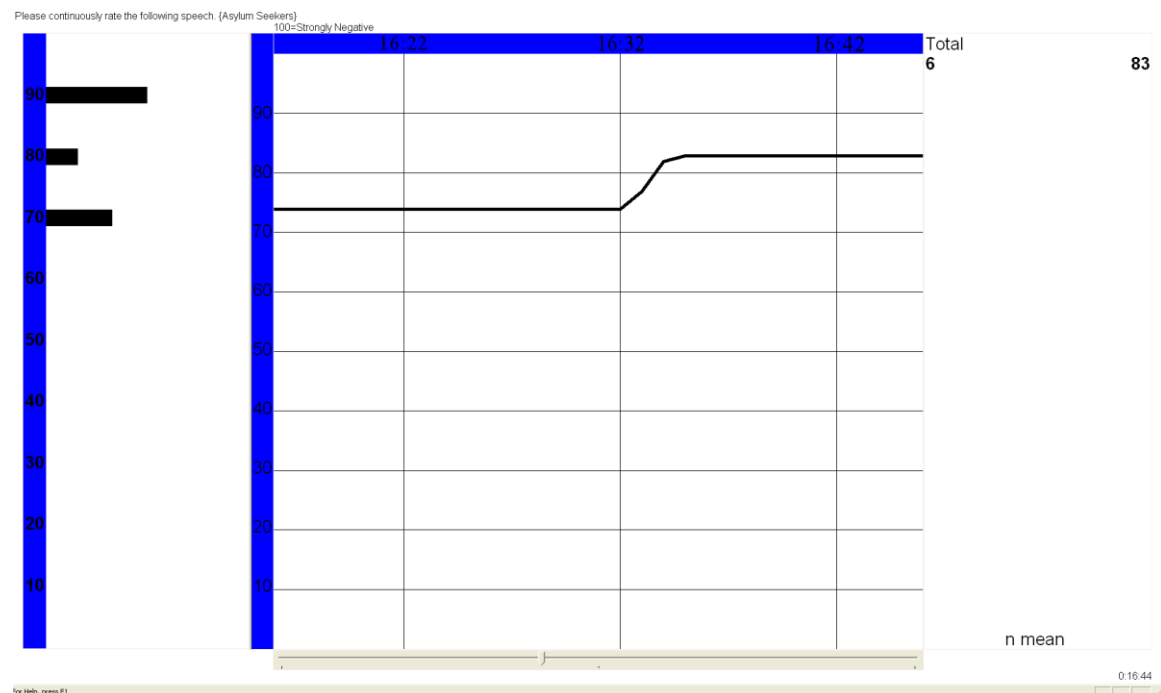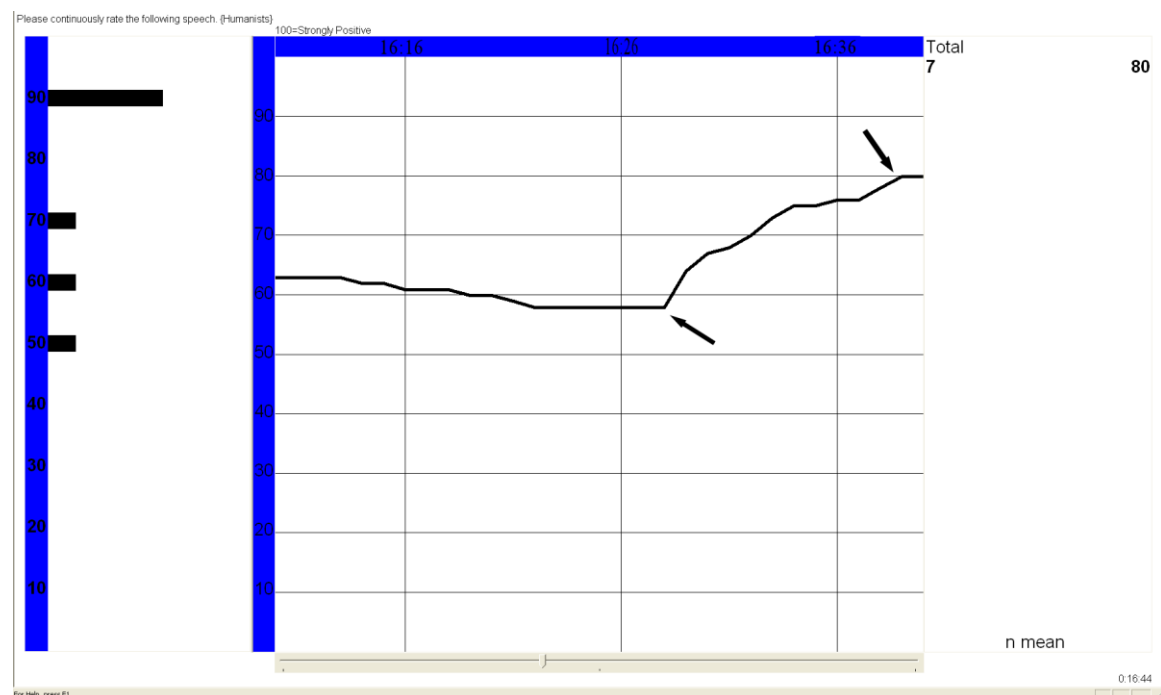
Figure 11.52: Journalist Group 2

Figure 11.53: Asylum Seeker Group

The Humanist Group also increased their PNAR by 22 points, but not until the applause that came after Obama's second call for "a world without nuclear weapons":

Figure 11.54: Humanist Group

After discussing nuclear weapons, Obama shifts from discussing Russia to markets to the Middle East. Obama frames intervention in the Middle East as reactive, which is "answering the call for a new dawn". Such a framing makes intervention more inviting, it lacks hegemonic motivation, and has the potential to make the means of identification more supportable. He once again constitutes Europe's active role in the world as a given; "my country must stand with yours and with Europe in sending a direct message to Iran that it must abandon its nuclear ambitions." Not only is Europe setting the standard for what should be done in addressing Iran, but it is "sending a message," a metaphor that again negates an sense of overt violence or dire consequences of economic sanctions. As Obama began to "talk tough" on Iran, the Humanist Group experienced a 12-point PNAR decrease from 82 to 70, while Journalist Group 1 experienced a 29-point PNAR decrease from 71 to 42 and Journalist Group 2 experienced a 6-point PNAR decrease from 36 to 30:
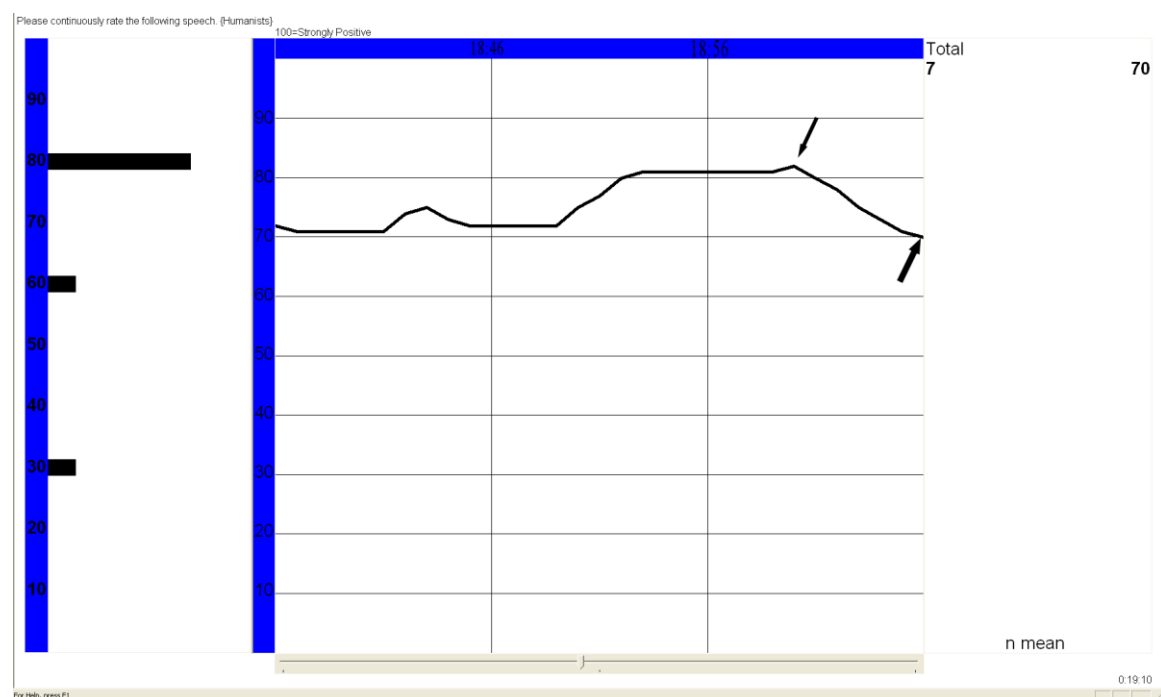
Figure 11.55: Humanist Group
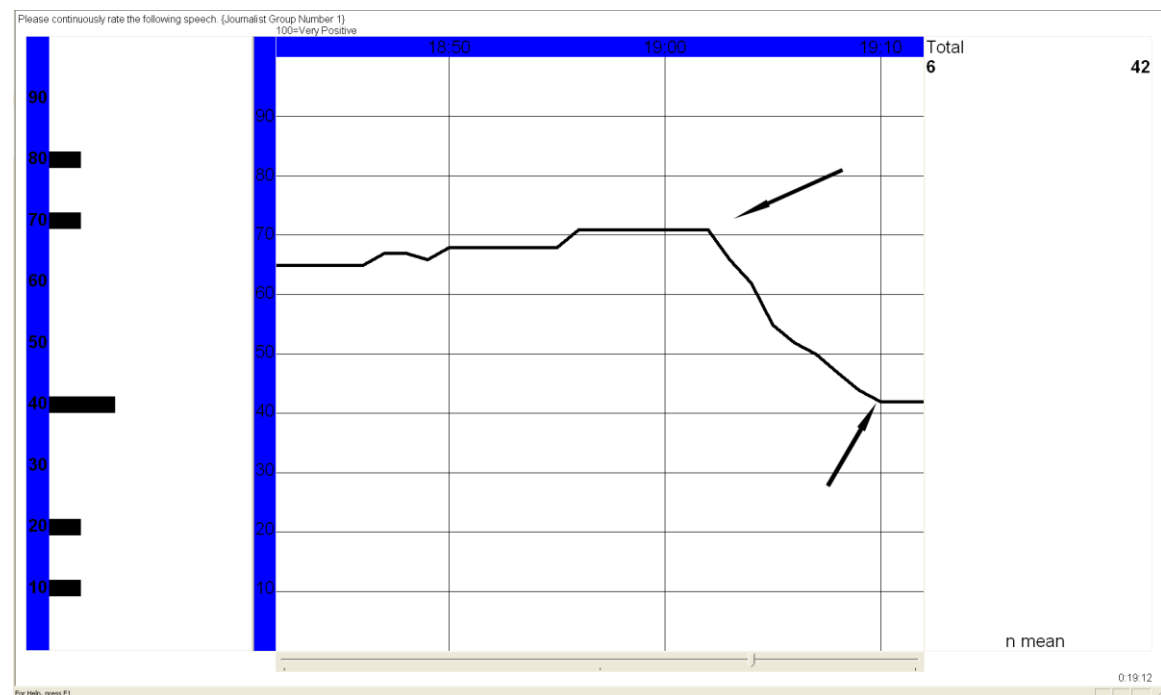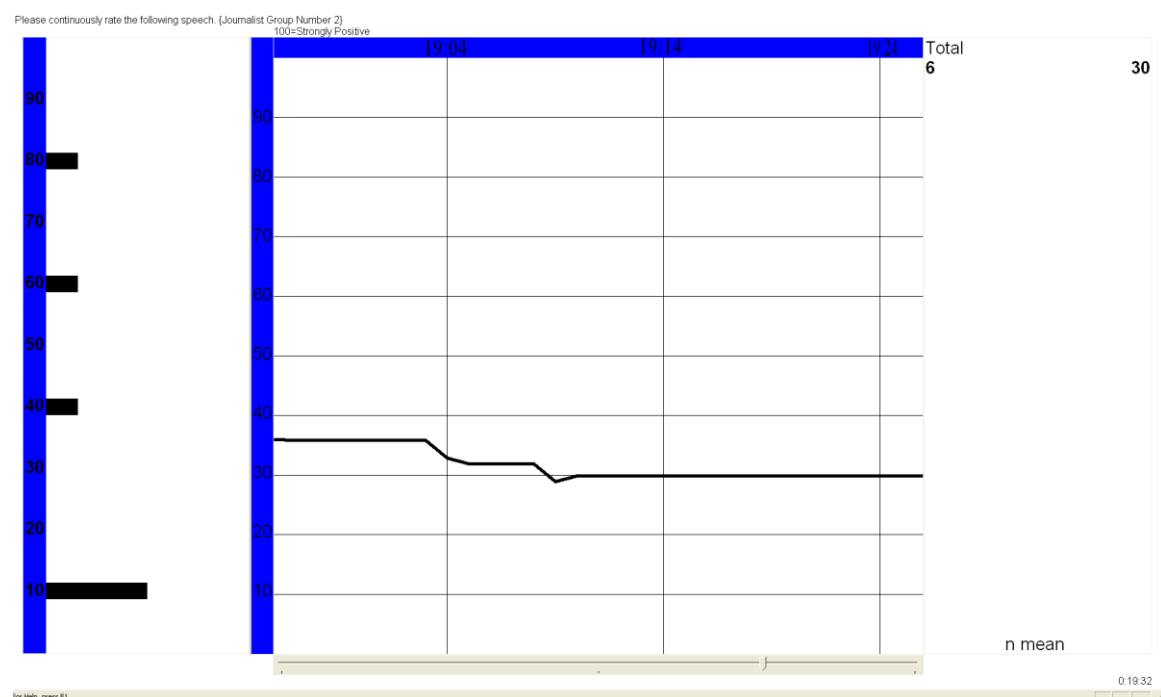
Figure 11.56: Journalist Group 1

Figure 11.57: Journalist Group 2

The issue of Iran generated unanimous discussion with each focus group. In Journalist Group 1, a participant felt positive towards Obama when

Participant 1:…he was talking about denuclearization but then pretty much

down when he was referring to Iran as the one who should not get nuclear weapons and then, ok, I don't want Iran to get nuclear weapons either but I would also prefer them [the US] not to have them. Why Iran should not have it and India can have it? Or Pakistan can have it? Or, that's my point of view I mean...

Moderator: Yeah (Journalist Group 1, 2010)

Due to the PNAR decrease with this group during Obama's discussion of Iran, the moderator further probed the group's feelings about this portion of the speech:

Participant 1: Well, according to me, it's not him who should decide. Because I mean from the Iranian perspective, the US shouldn't have it, or Israel should not have it, so I mean who gives him the right to decide what Iran should have or not? Even though I do not agree with many things about Iranian policies [inaudible] policies or whatever. Still, why the US can have so many around the world and who gives him the power to say "no, this country cannot have it"?

Moderator: OK. What about everyone else? Did anyone turn it down for a different reason?

Participant 2: Because he was speaking about love and peace between all the nations you can use your time and speak about banning nuclear weapons, not this country or this country. You can use your time in a better, in a better, you can speak about a better cause, if you are focusing on love and breaking down the walls (Journalist Group 1, 2010).

One participant in the Humanist Group felt positively towards Obama's call for a world without nuclear weapons and his stance on Iran, despite disagreement from another participant:

Participant 4: I quite like nuclear weapons stuff because it's relatively radical just to say it, that we want a world without nuclear weapons. I mean it's um, um...

Participant 2: But if Iran has them, we'll attack them...[laughter]

Participant 4: Yeah, I like that as well (Humanist Group, 2010).

Later, Participant 4 would articulate further why he liked Obama's position, which sparked a brief exchange on American foreign policy:

Participant 4: I think I went up with the Iran thing because I agree that something has to be done about it, so I mean I wasn't one of the people down. A world without nuclear weapons includes preventing other countries from getting it, um...especially Iran. So, yes I was sort of one of the ones that went up on that. But the world without nuclear weapons thing I thought was relatively radical and hasn't been said enough...

Participant 6: But has he actually done anything with it?

Participant 4: He has, yes...It's one of his few...

Participant 6: What are the...[inaudible[
Participant 4: No, it's a significant amount, and again...
Participant 6: No, but I mean if the US really wanted to push the boat and be radical they could say to small third-world countries "right well if anyone nukes you, we promise to nuke someone else" you know they could...there are radical things they could do nuclear, and including radically reducing the amount (Humanist Group, 2010).

A journalist in Journalist Group 2 likened this portion of the speech delivered by Obama to a familiar rhetoric heard during the Bush Administration, and as Participant 1, an American journalist, attempts to defend Obama, she is labeled "brainwashed" by other participants who are under the impression Obama had unsuccessfully searched for nuclear weapons in Iran:

Participant 5: Yeah I think he's a very good speaker , he had the media with him for a long time, and, but his ideology is no different than Bush's ideology. He said the same things but in a better way.
Participant 7: Yeah…
Moderator: You think in terms of what he said, there wasn't a big difference…
Participant 5: No, no, no…
Participant 7: He has the same intentions but with a better face…
Participant 5: Nuclear war and nuclear weapons in Iran…
Participant 1: No I think, I don't, I don't think so. I mean I think, yeah, like
Participant 5: Where are these nuclear weapons, where did he find them?
Participant 1: He wasn't…They weren't…Barack Obama was never looking for weapons of mass destruction
Participant 7: You've been brainwashed! American! [laughter] (Journalist Group 2, 2010).

Later Participant 1 would raise Iran again, stating:

Participant 1: Also it's frustrating when he starts talking about Iran, it's like there is so much else to worry about right now…I don't think, I think that's when I turned it down about Iran and nuclear weapons? It's like, get over it (Journalist Group 2, 2010).

Another participant in the Asylum Speaker Group similarly compared Obama and Iran to Bush and Iraq:

Participant 4: Yeah I didn't move this down, but I should have, when he was talking about Iran nuclear things, so I think not only Obama but even his predecessors were kind of like hypocrite to Iran. But this nuclear stuff they are talking about like the same mistake, they tried to impress the world that Iraq having WMD. Something like Weapon of Mass Destruction. And actually that was it. They misled which led to catastrophic consequence as we are feeling

now. So I think the same mistake they are creating, they are doing it by telling people that Iran is "yah yah yah" making nuclear things and stuff like that. The campaign they are starting now. So as he claimed himself to be a [inaudible] peacemaker, I think he should handle this in a way that to avoid mistake like they did in the case of Iraq, so people will not get into another war. Because, still they are just talking but they don't have any clear evidence that these people are having nuclear...in fact even if they have, what about the [inaudible], nuclear Israel, that is worse than Iraq. Because we know that country very clearly they are far more [inaudible] than Iran or in terms of talking about the Israel/Palestinian issue. People have been held hostage in their own country for many years now. Palestinians, they have no freedom. It's human rights. It's not correct. What is Obama doing? In two years...

Moderator: So when he brought those issues up, it was way down...

Participant 4: Yes...yes. I didn't unfortunately

Moderator: But you would have...[laughter]. And was there anything positive for you? I know you said the presentation but was there anything else?

Participant 4: Yeah...

Moderator: That was the main positive for you?

Participant 4: Well because he was emphasizing about Iran, Iran, Iran like I feel he is trying to victimize an innocent country, you know? Who just claim that they are building on their power system nuclear capability. But they say the program is all about energy. Not even [inaudible]. But these people speak [inaudible] American allied, Obama is heading to say. So I think he's, he's not a man that we are seeing outside, you know? He is contradicting himself, in my opinion (Asylum Speaker Group, 2010).

A very similar point was made by two participants in the Humanist Group:

Participant 2: I turned it up when it was getting rid of the nukes stuff just out of a general sense of like, OK that's a very good aim and very difficult for a future president today but then turned it down about Iran not because I disagree that they shouldn't have nuclear weapons, but because I felt like "yeah, but in this context, you're saying 'we're all in it together' then there is still an us and them" thing, perhaps rightly so, it might be the right perspective, but it jarred..

Participant 8: I just thought when he started talking about Iran I just thought "Oh it's George Bush and Iraq again" and just put it straight down and thought "yeah, it's an American President versus a middle eastern country" without really thinking I always go down on that sort of thing because I just sort of associate that with Iraq, which is probably unfair because I imagine there isn't probably a case for them having nuclear weapons, is there? But, yeah (Humanist Group, 2010).

Generally speaking, another participant in the Asylum Speaker Group agreed that Obama's rhetoric represented a continuity in American foreign policy, noting the only difference is his skin color:

> *Participant 2*: If you disregard the color, any other white fucker saying the same [laughter]. Sorry, but every other white politician, and in Berlin of all places. To us from Eastern Europe I mean it means something, because of World War II. But it's just, if you disregard the color, if you didn't know it was him, I'm sorry but I've heard all those...in my fifty years I've heard those speeches so many times (Asylum Speaker Group, 2010).

Like the issue of Afghanistan, Obama attempts to bypass issues of governance by framing the issues of Lebanon and Iraq as "people helping people": "We must support the Lebanese who have marched and bled for democracy" he tells us, and references the peace process between Israel and Palestine. This comment was rated as most positive by a journalist in Journalist Group 2 and revealed a more general admiration of the ability to bring people together:

> *Participant 6*: Um, I think that uh just a second thing to what Participant 1 said, I think the positive thing was when he mentioned Palestine and countries that are in conflict to bring them together, talking about companionship (Journalist Group 2, 2010).

As one participant in the Asylum Seeker Group stated when asked about his general impressions of the speech:

> *Participant 4*: That speech was very uniting, his speech can unite people together. That's one aspect I like it too much about Obama. All the speeches he did, twenty something, I' telling you, I love the way he speaks, you know (Asylum Seeker Group, 2010)?

This concept was categorically rated as the most positive moment of the speech for another participant in the Asylum Seeker Group:

> *Moderator*: And where did you find yourself most positive towards him?
> *Participant 1*: You know he was "we all need to unite, all those people and all those people" that's what he was saying, but to me he isn't uniting anybody all he's doing is [inaudible] whatever, 1,000 American soldiers to Iran or Iraq but he say in the next whatever years stop sending the soldiers, stop the war, but people are still going everyday, so...
> *Moderator*: So no real positives for you...
> *Participant 1*: No (Asylum Seeker Group, 2010).

This theme of measuring rhetoric and reality was continued by another participant in the Asylum Seeker Group, who felt Obama could have addressed the peace process

more, not just in this speech but during the first two years of his presidency:

> *Participant 2*: What did I have...in the states...[moderator] There is a presidential something, he can override anything.
> *Moderator*: A veto...
> [Participant 4 and Participant 1 are both speaking at the same time, making audibility difficult]
> *Participant 2*: Bush always used to use that. What is stopping him...
> *Moderator*: Well up until now he's controlled, his party has controlled both houses...
> *Participant 2*: Yeah but that's gone now...
> *Moderator*: It' gone now, so I'm sure he'll start using the veto, but he hasn't had to yet because
> *Participant 2*: [inaudible] because I think it should be very easy...Israelis, this year, are getting no money because you're misbehaving. Go and sort things out with the Palestinians. Simple. The most powerful country in the world, the most powerful president in the whole world. For fuck sake go and do it (Asylum Seeker Group, 2010).

Nevertheless, the group did see a small PNAR increase of 9 points as Obama references the people of Israel and Palestine:

Figure 11.58: Asylum Seeker Group
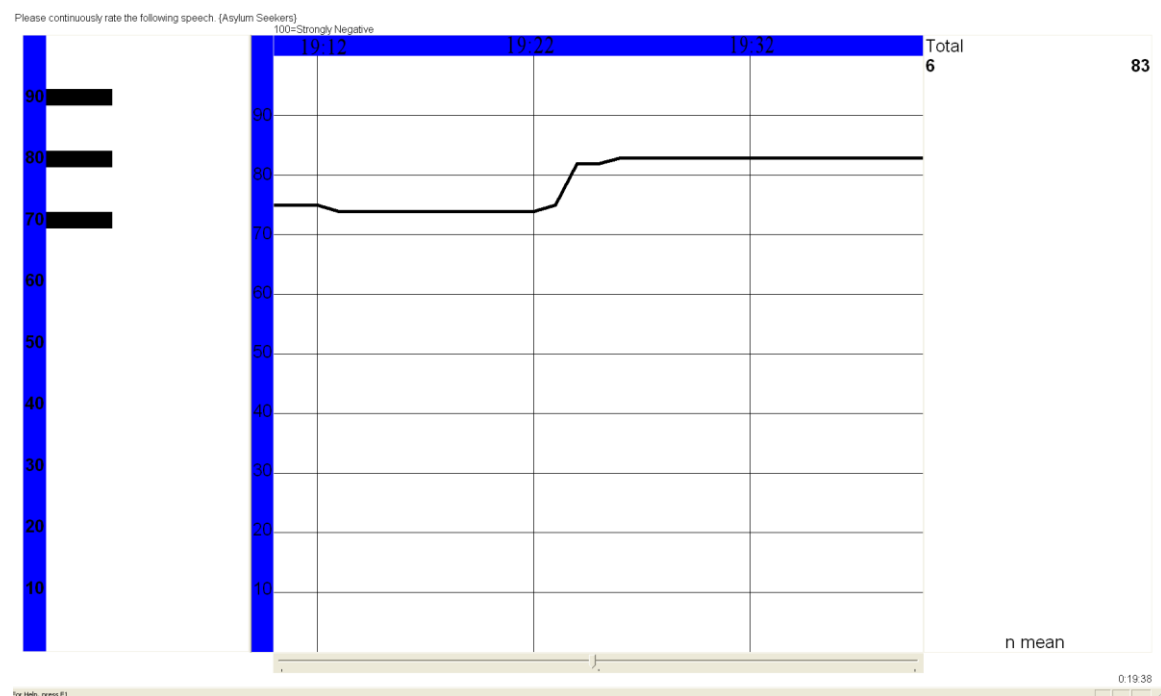
Textually, Obama finally turns to the Iraq war: "And despite past differences, this is the moment when the world should support millions of Iraqis who seek to rebuild

their lives, even as we pass responsibility to the Iraqi government and finally bring this war to a close." On the last note, if Obama's audience cannot agree on the contentious issue of continued involvement in Iraq, the same sort of "audience insurance policy" is at work here as Obama ends with what is popular sentiment in most of Europe: bringing "this war to a close" a statement that brings applause, but to answer whether it is in response to helping Iraqis or ending the war could be, at best, a rhetorical intervention. The applause that came after this line occurred simultaneously with a 16-point PNAR increase from 63 to 79 with Journalist Group 1:

Figure 11.59: Journalist Group 1
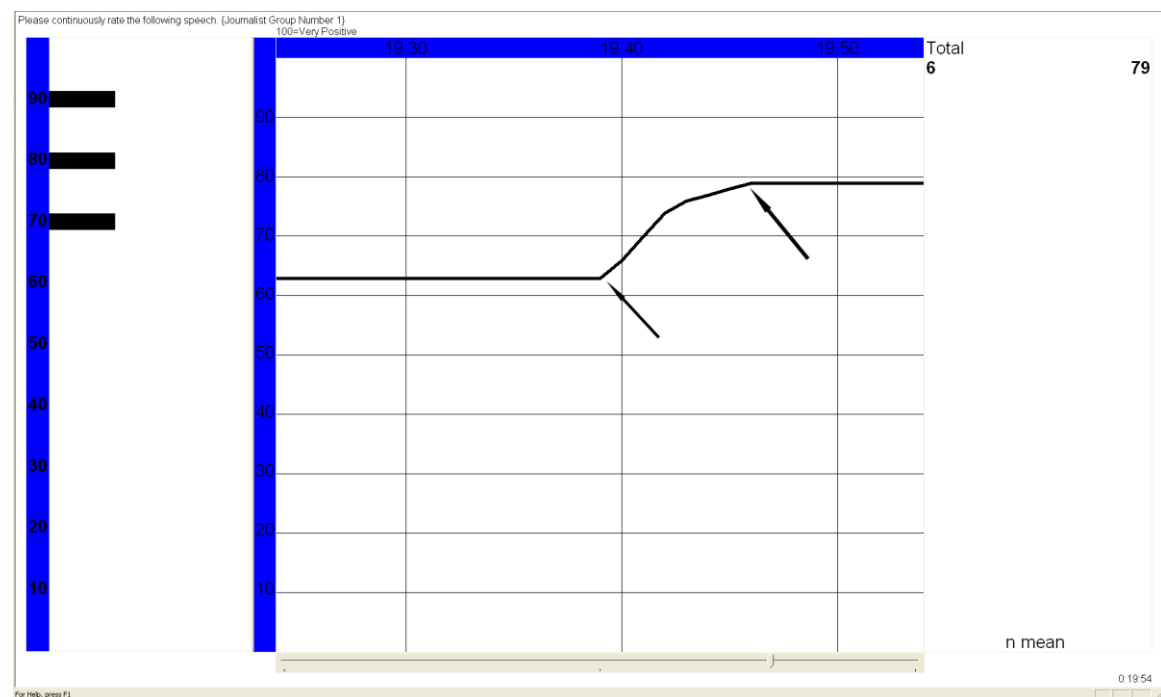
Textually, Obama again follows a more controversial area (Iraq) with something couched, "saving the planet." And again, just ask being firm with Iran, Obama takes a laudatory tone towards what Germany has already done, his immediate audience has set the standard, in past tense, while Obama and his nation "will act" in future tense. Obama also continues variations of the spatial metaphor: oceans rise, famine spreads, we must "stand as one," "we" must "come together" as both terministic screens signify acts of identification. These first few sentences of Obama's "save the planet" section of the speech saw a PNAR increase with the Asylum Seeker Group by 11 points from 75 to 86 while Journalist Group 1 saw a 12-point PNAR increase from 76 to 88 during the applause after "reduce the carbon we send into our atmosphere" and

Journalist Group 2 saw a 7-point PNAR increase from 37 to 44 during the same time:

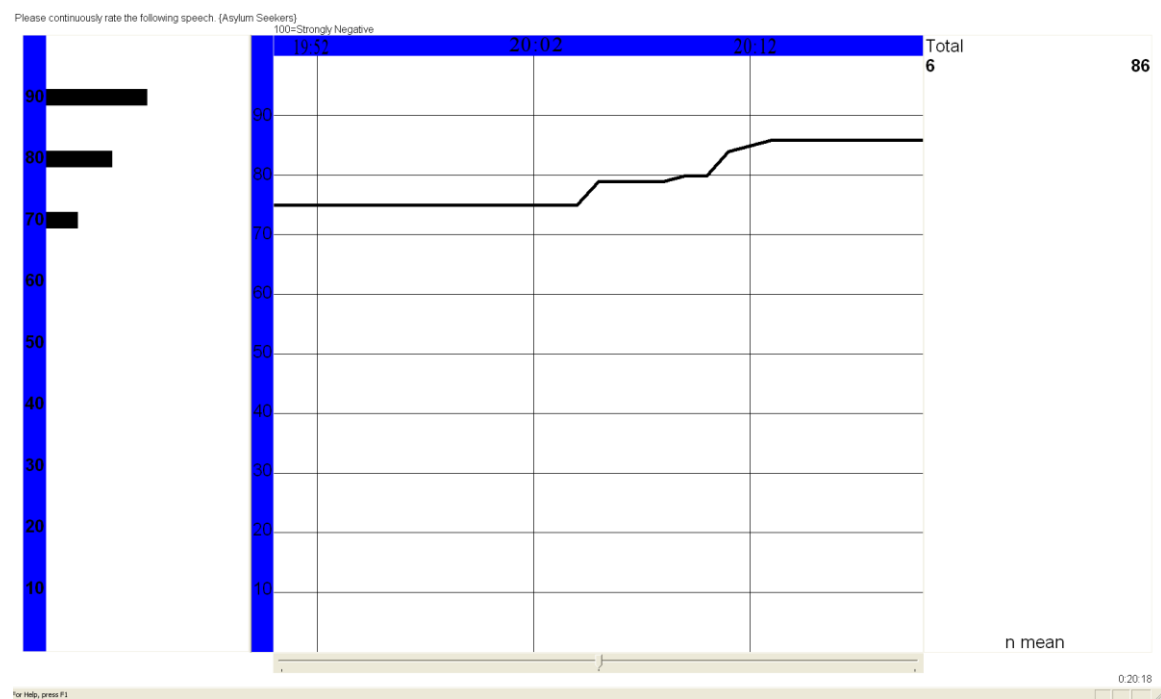## Figure 11.60: Asylum Seeker Group

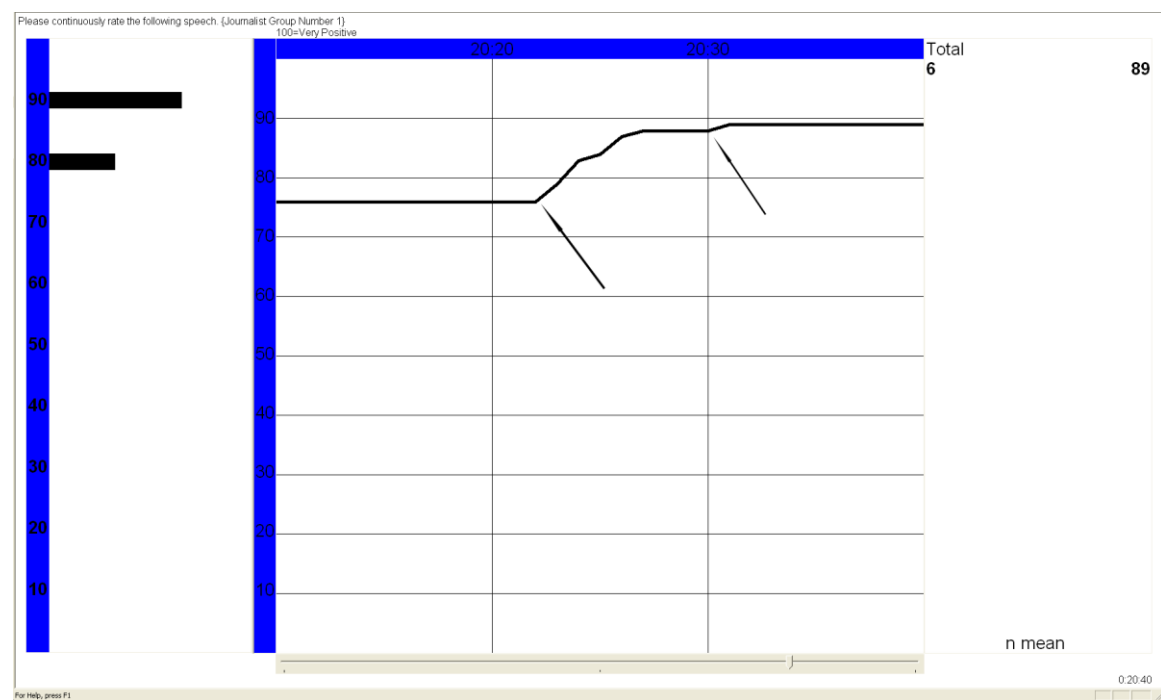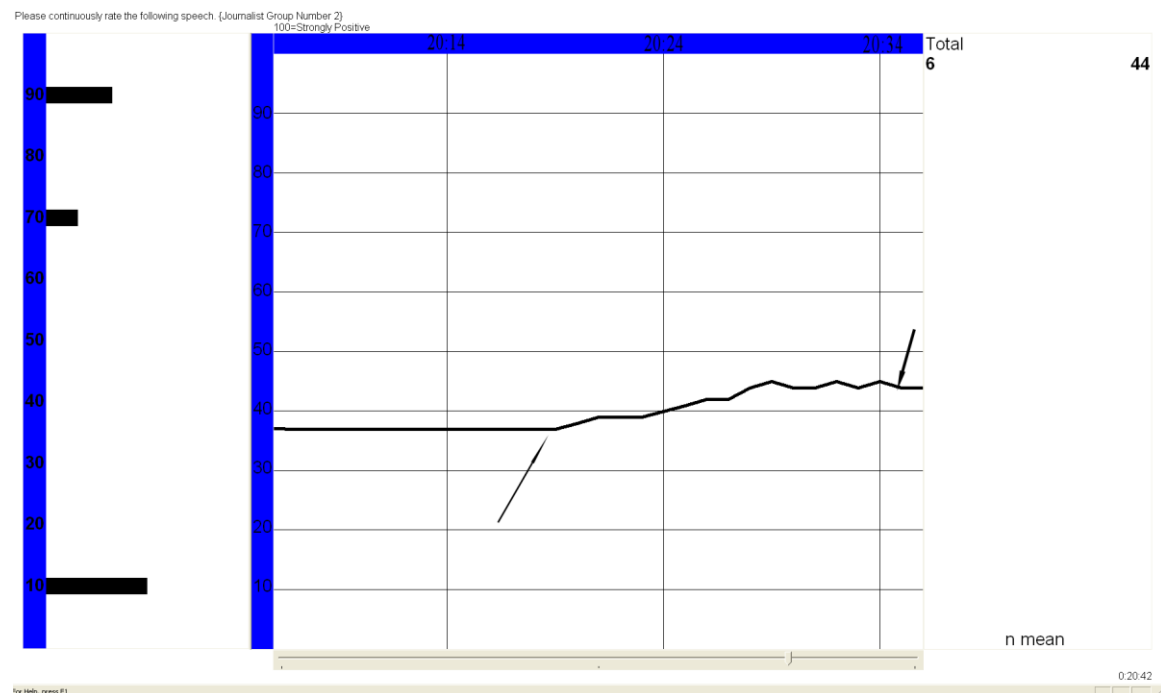

Figure 11.61: Journalist Group 1

Figure 11.62: Journalist Group 2

This section on the environment generated several focus group discussions and several probing follow-up questions posed by the moderator. In Journalist Group 1, the moderator noted that there were significant PNAR increases:

> *Moderator*: Ok. There was actually one more thing I wanted to talk about and then we'll wrap it up. Um, both uh global warming and Darfur, those were two moments where I think most people cranked it up. Did anyone crank it down when he was talking about getting involved to curb global warming or is that something...
>
> *Participant 1*: No I didn't but perhaps I should have cranked it less up. I have the feeling there is more and more concern about that. I'm not totally aware of what happened with the Kyoto Protocols, if in the end he signed it or not.
>
> *Moderator*: I don't know either actually. But that's important to you?
>
> *Participant 1*: Well you cannot say that you want to reduce global warming then if you're not doing anything for that, or at least something for that.
>
> *Moderator*: Yeah, and you don't think he has, or not enough?
>
> *Participant 1*: Well I'm not entirely sure. There has been a change in US policies but I don't know how much deep is that. So I cranked it up because I think that he was more committed than the Bush Administration in reducing CO2 emissions but now I'm not entirely sure how much has been done.
>
> *Participant 4*: Better of the two evils.
>
> *Participant 1*: What's that?
>
> *Participant 4*: Better of the two evils (Journalist Group 1, 2010).

Obama shifts in form (but perhaps not in purpose) from asserting what must be done

to asking couched rhetorical questions, difficult to decline, whether particular challenges will be solved: child poverty in Bangladesh, refugees in Chad and AIDS and asks whether we will "stand for human rights of the dissident in Burma, the blogger in Iran, or the voter in Zimbabwe? Will we give meaning to the words "never again" in Darfur?" This sequence generated positive PNAR increases from Journalist Group 1 (+13 from 77 to 90) and Journalist Group 2 (+11 from 70 to 81). Meanwhile, the Humanist Group saw an overall PNAR increase of 16 from 57 to 73 with the brunt of the increase occurring during the applause at the end of the sequence:

Figure 11.63: Journalist Group 1
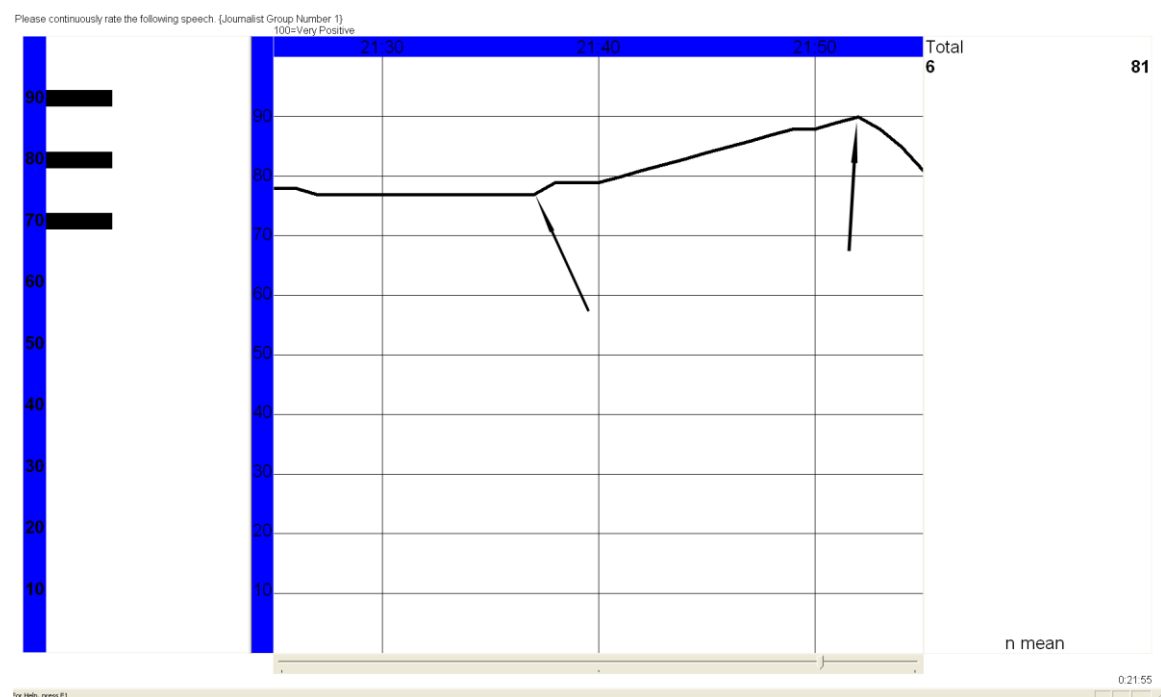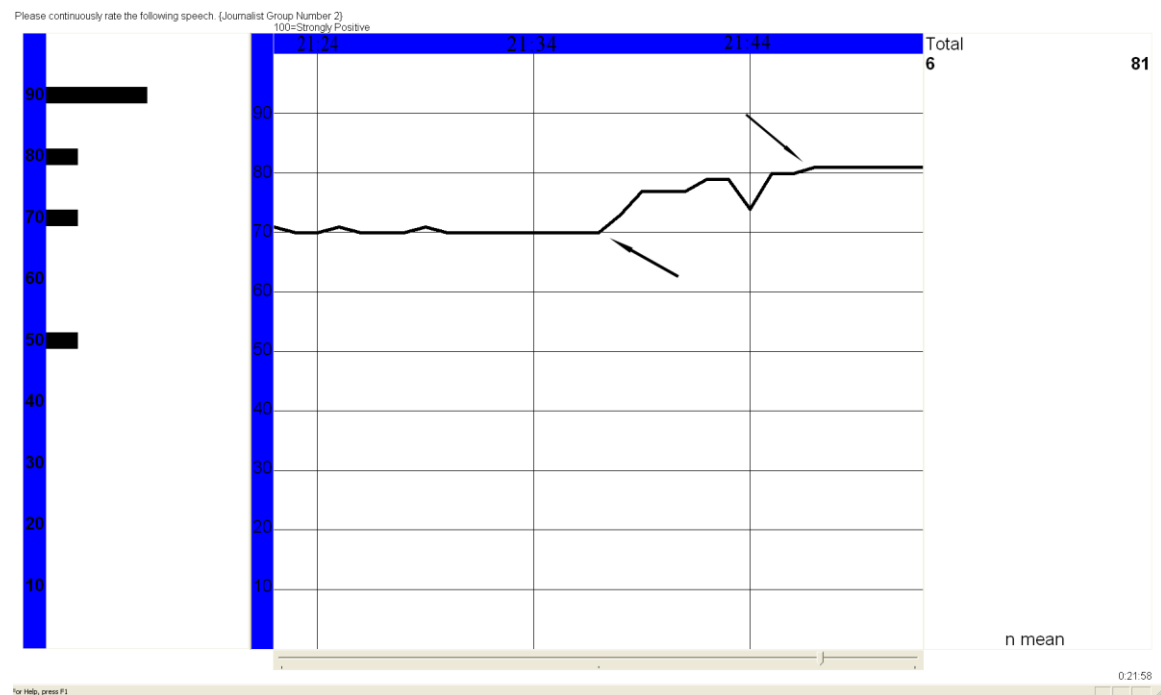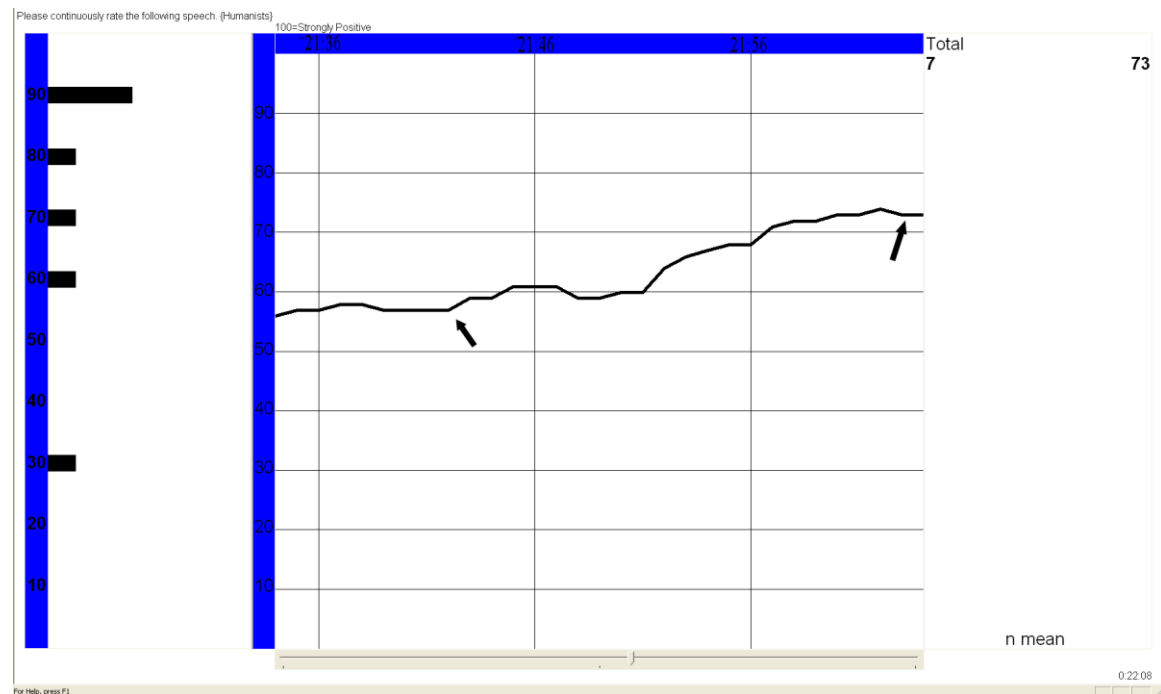
Figure 11.64: Journalist Group 2

Figure 11.65: Humanist Group

The reference to Darfur towards the end of the sequence was raised by several focus group participants. One participant in the Humanist Group, for example, stated that

Participant 4: That's the problem, that he was going on about Darfur, I was going really high when he did that, and then later I was like "aren't you in some kind of position to do something about that" [laughter] (Humanist Group, 2010).

Later in the Humanist Group, one participant would express positive sentiment towards this portion of the speech due to its specificity when compared to the previous Bush Administration:

Participant 8: I did like when he was referring to particular stuff, actually, like he referred to particular countries and particular issues in particular countries. So say things like journalism in Burma, and he was talking about um, uh...
Participant 4: Bloggers in Iran...
Participant 8: Yeah...And that's slightly more [inaudible] than George Bush doing, because George Bush didn't know what was going on...
Participant 4: He didn't even know what a blogger was...
Participant 8: Exactly, yeah. It showed that he did have, well, it showed he had some sort of understanding of what's going on in other countries which um...[inaudible, laughter] (Humanist Group, 2010).

Generally, one participant in the Asylum Seeker Group categorically agreed with the need to address these issues but was doubtful about Obama's desire and/or ability to address them:

Participant 2: As long as you have children in the Congo working in mines for [inaudible] so that you can have a mobile phone, or very cheaply, you know, the life of an African child doesn't mean much. It [inaudible] to work in those mines...Or now in Zimbabwe when they discovered diamonds. You know, a Western consumer is having it nicely, cheaply and nicely. They're dying, and they're black, so it doesn't really matter. You know? Uhh I can understand that he may be [inaudible] himself thinking "oh I'm black I don't want it to be seen as if I am failing black people" or whatever but this is not the question of color, it's a question of justice. And it's not happening. So in that respect I'm not disappointed, I knew it was not going to, I was very, very cynical. Uh what annoys me now more is the Tea Party Movement. No, they are mental, and they can't hide it, they are racist, and I think what really bugs them is the fact that he is black. Nothing else. I mean Sarah Palin, [inaudible] or whatever...she should be shot [laughter]. Because she's disabled. She needs to be put down one way or another. I know you like your freedom of speech but for crying out loud that woman is talking too much (Asylum Seeker Group, 2010).

Rhetorically, Obama chooses to take the proactive, positive frame of standing "for" individuals as representatives of larger problems in each nation while the inverse,

standing "against" an "other" lurks in the sentence: to stand for the dissident in Burma is to stand against those assailing her; to stand for the blogger in Iran is to stand against Iran's Revolutionary Guard, and so on. It might also be said that the rhetorical question (*erotema*; *interrogatio*) goads audience participation as questions need answers and, as it has been argued elsewhere, this participation lends itself to the pleasure of an audience, which lends itself to identification. One participant in Journalist Group 1 noted his approval of Obama's reference to Darfur and other conflict areas:

> *Participant 1*: That's when I cranked it up because he was not only talking about Darfur but a lot of minor spots of [inaudible], or conflict or whatever that's not in the main news but still he was mentioning them as something important. So it was not just Iraq, Afghanistan, which I personally believe was not for humanitarian reasons but mostly for economic reasons, but he was also mentioning some other countries or some other places where there are real humanitarian emergencies and probably not enough economic reasons to go there (Journalist Group 1, 2010).

This portion of the speech was probed by the moderator of the Asylum Seeker Group because several participants had mentioned they were from some of the countries Obama was addressing in this section of the speech:

> *Moderator*: Well let me ask you this, there was a specific moment in the speech where he was saying "will we..." and I think he was talking about global citizens or the United States and Europe "will we say never again in Darfur, will we help the voter in Zimbabwe, the blogger in Iran, immigrants..." What was interesting to me is that the line, the graph of your response was pretty steady, there wasn't a lot of movement. So I just wanted to see what you guys thought about that...
> *Participant 2*: Well, Zimbabwe, Darfur...here you are! [Participant 2 points to two participants]
> *Moderator*: Well I know I just thought there would have been some movement and there wasn't any so I just...
> *Participant 2*: They know what' going on...
> *Participant 1*: It was, for me, as a Zimbabwean, I don't know how the thing started, but the problem is if they go and say every year they say "oh we send some people to Zimbabwe" and "oh [inaudible], we give them another sanction" or whatever. Nothing changes, it always remains the same, probably changes using what, the American dollar?
> *Moderator*: And when you say "they" are you referring to the United States, or the EU
> *Participant 1*: Yeah, the United States. 'Cause they do [inaudible] or whatever. Obama says "oh we are giving them another year of sanction" and Mugabe won't be traveling or whatever but at the end of the day Mugabe was

in Singapore and whatever and whatever. So, if they are giving them sanctions to stop them traveling why don't they tell the whole world "he's not going to go anywhere" but because there is no unity, America is just giving him sanctions, he won't come to America, if he is able to go somewhere else, what's the point?

Moderator: What could America do?

Participant 1: Work with other countries and say "whoever allows this guy to come in to your country" then they are probably out of the commonwealth, or whatever. At least they know "oh we will lose this just because of one person." And then at the end of the day, they don't work together, America is working on its own, or Britain or whatever. So at least if they work together you know, something might come up...But because they don't

Participant 2: They can't tell us that they can't do it, or that they can't work together because they could in the past.

Participant 1: Yeah...

Participant 2: I mean for some reason, they are just refusing to resolve the problems in other countries, or their countries, they just aren't doing it. Iraq, in their case it's the oil. Or you know Sudan, diamonds over there. I don't even know what you have in [inaudible] apart from the crazy president. You've got nothing else...[laughter] (Asylum Seeker Group, 2010).

The rest of the rhetorical question sequence, formally set up as an *anaphora* to build excitement, is as follows:

Will we acknowledge that there is no more powerful example than the one each of our nations projects to the world? Will we reject torture and stand for the rule of law? Will we welcome immigrants from different lands, and shun discrimination against those who don't look like us or worship like we do, and keep the promise of equality and opportunity for all of our people?

This passage received PNAR increases from Journalist Group 1 (+8 from 85 to 93) and Journalist Group 2 (+5 from 64 to 69):

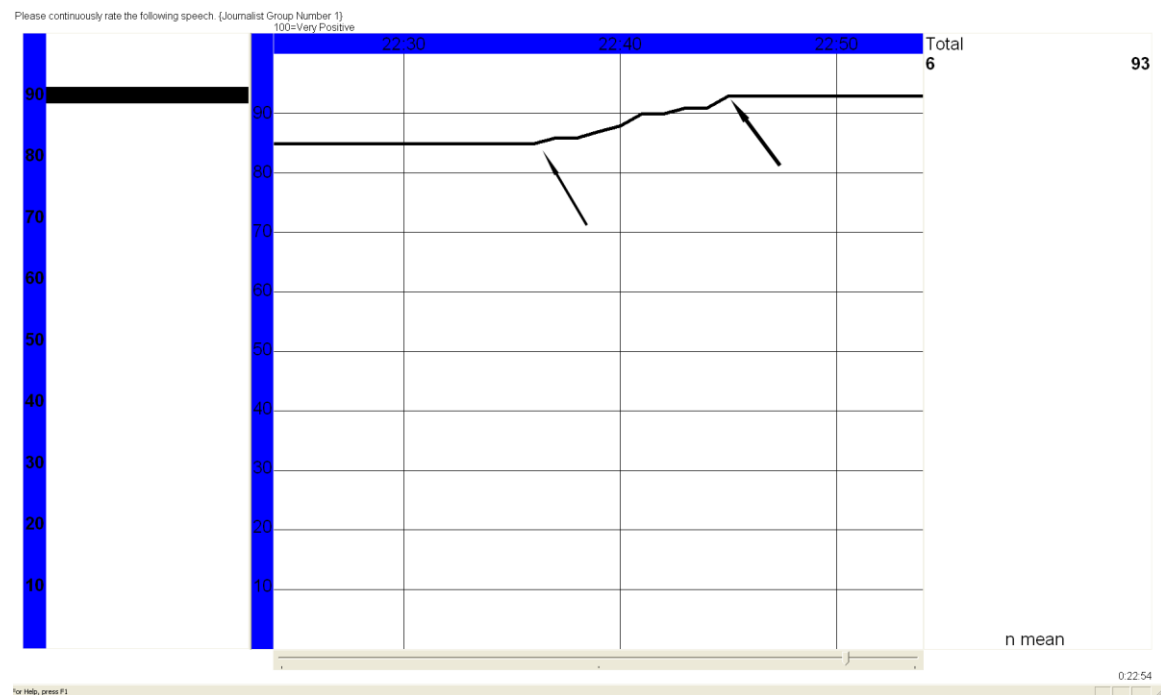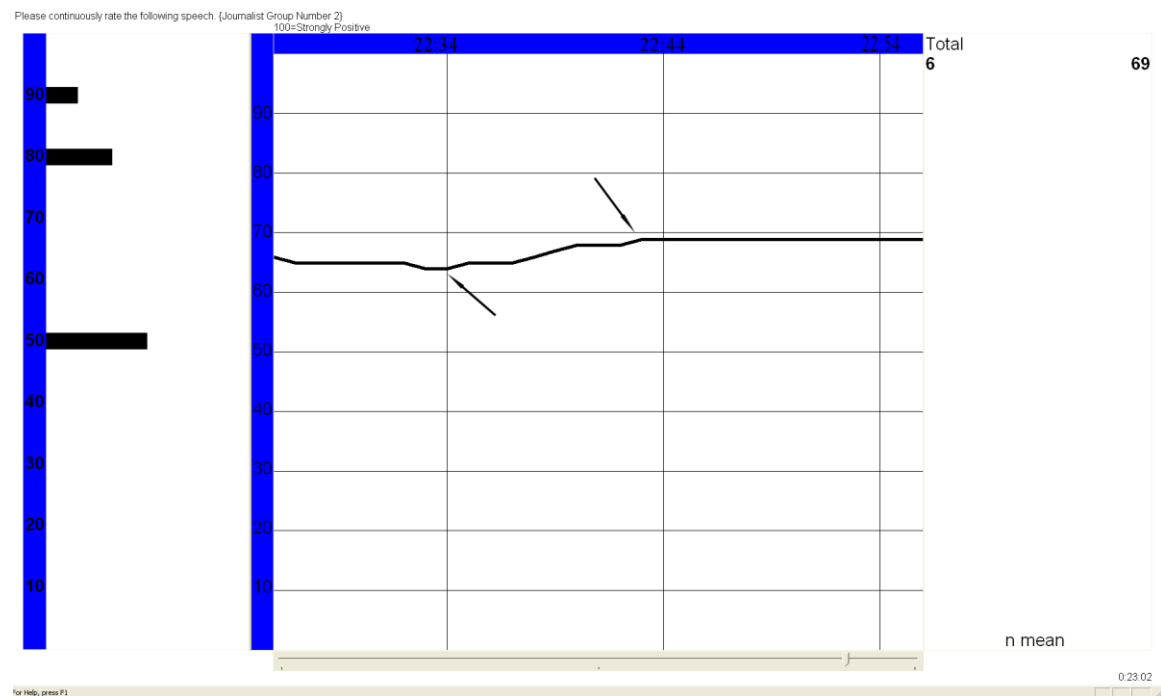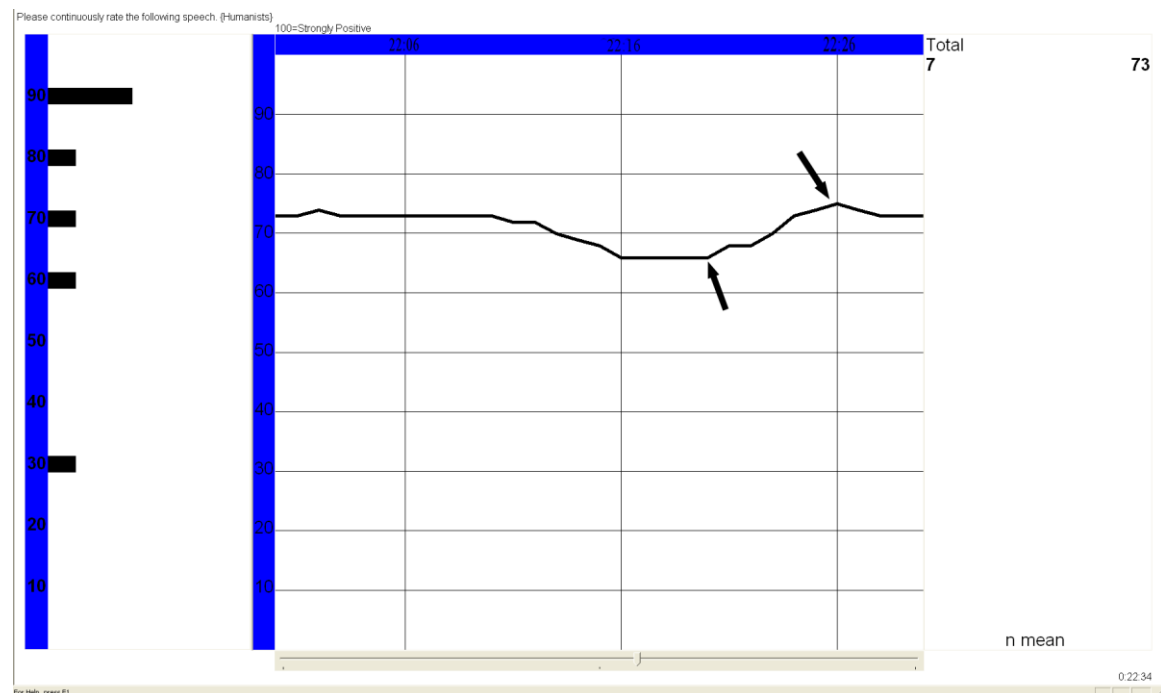**Figure 11.66: Journalist Group 1**

Figure 11.67: Journalist Group 2

More specifically, Obama's reference to rejecting torture saw a 9-point increase from 66 to 75 with the Humanist Group:

Figure 11.68: Humanist Group

The moderator and participants also raised Obama's reference to torture during the focus group sessions. In Journalist Group 1, for example, a participant admitted he turned his dial down during this portion of the speech, and when asked why, he responded:

> *Participant* 1: It's because of Guantanamo, mostly. Like, you can not say that you want to reject torture and then keep something like that open. OK, I think he said he wanted to close it, reduce it or whatever they did, but still. Uh, that's not how it works (Journalist Group 1, 2010).

Another journalist in Journalist Group 2 rated this portion of the speech as her most negative moment:

> *Participant 1*: I was going to say when he was talking about closing prison camps and ending torture? I felt most negative because I thought he hasn't done anything about that…
> *Moderator*: You felt negative…
> *Participant 1*: Yeah, well I mean he has started to close Guantanamo, but yeah he hasn't really done anything, he has been notoriously bad about that kind of thing. And…(Journalist Group 2, 2010).

For the Humanist Group, this portion of the speech represented a truly polysemic moment, with several participants disagreeing about what it was Obama was actually saying:

> *Participant 3:* One of the things I turned it down quite heavily for was when he was talking about freedom and a world without torture and the wonderful example of America and I kept thinking Guantamo, and the extraordinary rendition and...
> *Participant 4*: Which hasn't stopped...
> *Participant 6*: Mmm. Exactly.
> *Participant 4*: But again that's part of how I was meant to be thinkin' about it, it was uh...
> *Participant 3*: He was talking about American values and not just "I'm going to stop this" but almost as though "We don't torture people in America, we haven't done..."
> *Participant 4*: I'm not sure, I'm not sure he was sayin' that
> *Partiipant 6*: [inaudible] Iraq, too. Sorry.
> *Participant 4*: I was thinkin' he was sayin' that we, we shouldn't torture, um, we should stand against it, it was a dig at his opponent, it was a dig at the Republicans I mean I don't think it was sayin' "we don't torture" it was sayin' "we do and we shouldn't", so I sort of disagree with you on that, but...
> *Participant 1*: Also the criminal justice system in some places in the States would be classified as torture under the Geneva Convention, so...
> *Participant 4*: Yeah, execution is considered torture because of the amount of stress you go through, um, but that's, yeah (Humanist Group, 2010).

In terms of identification, each issue can be seen as an attempt by Obama to normatively surround himself with the signs that his audience sees as an admirable or worthy or virtuous cause; each new challenge Obama lists would establish a connection of identification between him and any auditor who sees the challenge as worthy. Obama references the need to "reject torture and stand for the rule of law" a direct attack on Bush Administration policies, feeding into Obama's own *ethos* as he represents a departure from these policies. Such policies could hamper America's ability to claim the moral authority to address these new terms for division, and so Obama both anticipates and addresses this thread of argumentation directly:

> I know my country has not perfected itself. At times, we've struggled to keep the promise of liberty and equality for all of our people. We've made our share of mistakes, and there are times when our actions around the world have not lived up to our best intentions. But I also know how much I love America. I know that for more than two centuries, we have strived - at great cost and great sacrifice - to form a more perfect union; to seek, with other nations, a more hopeful world. Our allegiance has never been to any particular tribe or kingdom

- indeed, ever language is spoken in our country; every culture has left its imprint on ours; every point of view is expressed in our public squares. What has always united us - what has always driven our people; what drew my father to America's shores - is a set of ideals that speak to aspirations shared by all people: that we can live free from fear and free from want; that we can speak our minds and assemble with whomever we choose and worship as we please. These are the aspirations that joined the fates of all nations in this city.

The first portion of this paragraph, Obama admitting to America's past mistakes, generated inverse PNAR movement with Journalist Group 1 (-22 from 93 to 71) and the Humanist Group (+19 from 62 to 81):

Figure 11.69: Journalist Group 1

Figure 11.70: Humanist Group
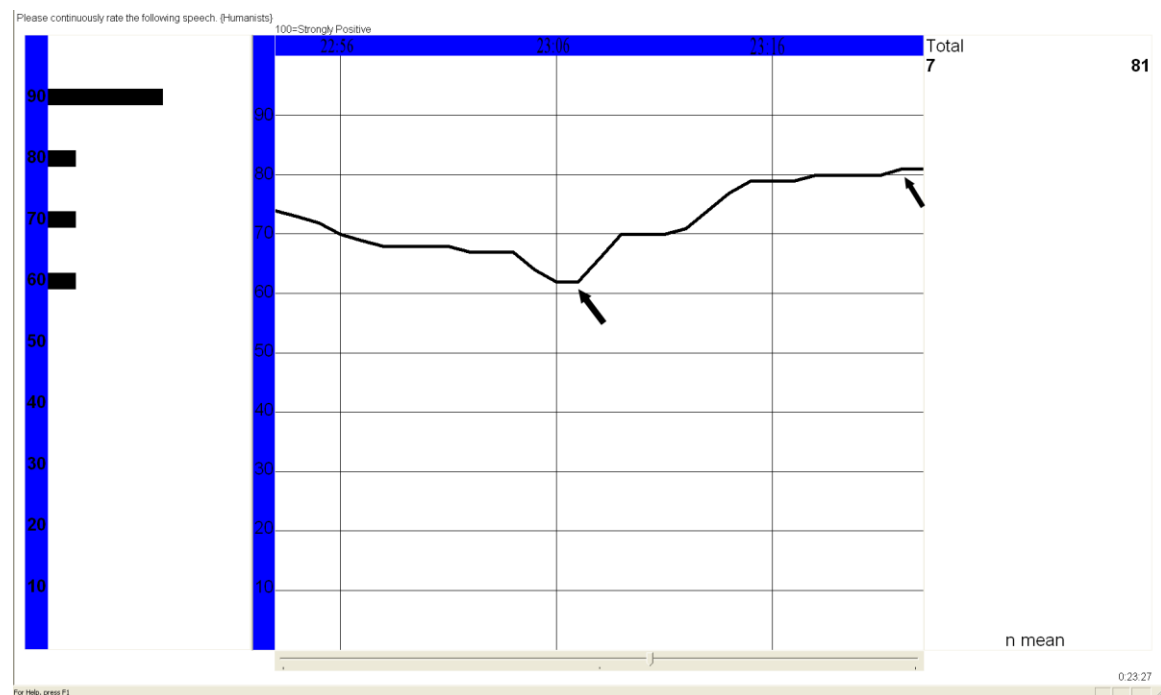
Rhetorically, it might be said that, in this paragraph, defending past "American" actions by giving meaning to actions and events not only constitutes American identity, but also strengthens his own *ethos* as he weaves his own story with his construction of American ideals. The "we" has shifted from America and Berlin, to America and Europe, to all global citizens, but now the "we" reverts back to Obama speaking as an American on behalf of Americans. Obama yields to the view that America has done wrong in the world but offers a significant qualifier, a rhetorical move which seems to fall somewhere between *paromologia* and *antangoge*. The former might incorporate any kind of "spin doctoring" while the latter is more about admitting "a weaker point in order to make a stronger one (Rhetoricae Silva, 2010)" or simply balancing an unfavorable aspect of a substance with a favorable one (Lanham, 1991). Obama's admission of past mistakes in American foreign policy was, for many participants, one of their favorite parts of the speech. In Journalist Group 1, for example, the information was voluntarily raised at the end of the group:

> *Moderator*: Gotcha. Anyone else? Anything else that was not raised?
> *Participant 1*: A good one was 'the US was not perfect and we make mistakes"
> [laughter].
> *Moderator*: You like that? [laughter]. You like that too?
> *Participant 5*: Yeah..

Participant 2: Yeah...
Participant 4: Yeah (Journalist Group 1, 2010).

This point was the most positive point for an American journalist in Journalist Group 2:

> *Participant 1*: Most positive was when he started saying you know we haven't done everything right. You know "my country has done bad things" so when he starts making amends with things, you know, with what the US has done by saying that, but um, I think just sort of the theme of working together (Journalist Group 2, 2010).

This portion was observed by one journalist as a strategy, an observation which generated disagreement from Participant 1 of Journalist Group 2:

> *Participant 4*: Um I think there was, when he said that we also made mistakes, I actually went down there, went a bit negative, not much, but I thought he was playing emotional there, it's like, even I am human being, even I can make mistakes, that's not what we're….you know?
> *Moderator*: You were looking past it saying that was a strategy?
> *Participant 4*: Obviously, obviously. Saying that now it's time to change, now we made mistakes but I love America, it was….
> *Participant 3*: [inaudible]
> *Participant 1*: I love that. The contrast between saying yeah we haven't done everything right but I love my country, as an American I love that.
> *Participant 4*: Awww [laughter]
> *Participant 1*: Because Americans have this really intense sense of patriotism but during the eight years of GWB you're like we hate your country, we hate it so much and you're like finally you can say, because for those eight years, anytime I went abroad I would say I was Canadian. [more here]
> *Moderator*: And so do you tell people you're Canadian now?
> *Participant 1*: No (Journalist Group 2, 2010).

Another participant in the Asylum Seeker Group felt similarly to Participant 1, telling the group that

> *Participant 1*: I think at least he admitted, you know, Americans have done things which are really wrong, at least he admitted, he knows most of the things [inaudible] or whatever, but then at the end of the day the won't be able to rectify what they have started. He admitted...
> *Moderator*: And at that point when he admitted it were you turning it up, or were you...
> *Participant 1*: Yeah, definitely turning it up because he was telling the truth. See they start things they won't be able to fix, which is true (Asylum Seeker Group, 2010).

One participant in the Humanist Group felt a similar positive sentiment towards Obama's admission of past US imperfections:

> *Participant 2*: There were two or three times when he really specifically kind of knocked America and I found myself turning it up then, probably higher than anything because it's just so...but I think it's almost seeing it like "I wonder if he'd say that now" um, but, um, I did turn it up not because I have a particular anti-American thing but I was just like it's so unusual to hear an American politician saying stuff that would be very, very easy for, you know, the media back home to be like "oh, you're anti-American" um, so that honesty was good.
> *Participant 4*: I occupy this weird political space where I'm between the people who absolutely hate the West, I'm quite proud to be, sorry to be part of, I'm quite proud of Western values. Um, so I'm quite, I'm supportive of western values and I think there's a lot of stuff we should be proud of and as well a lot of stuff to be ashamed of, and he did sort of tow the line on that, that way, he did acknowledge that we'd done bad, we've done bad but then also there's promise in the West and ideologically we've got a lot to offer to the world which I think other people who occupy the left-wing in this country, for example, don't necessarily agree with that idea that we've essentially got the better system. I think, you know, he towed the line between bein' apologetic but not being too apologetic, if you get what I mean. He wasn't um, yeah I think he towed that quite well (Humanist Group, 2010).

Textually, Obama "knows how much he loves America," which would seem to transfer to "Americans" and serves as not only corporate but vicarious boasting. Obama's patriotic appeal saw a PNAR decrease with the Humanist Group of 26 from 81 to 55:

Figure 11.71: Humanist Group
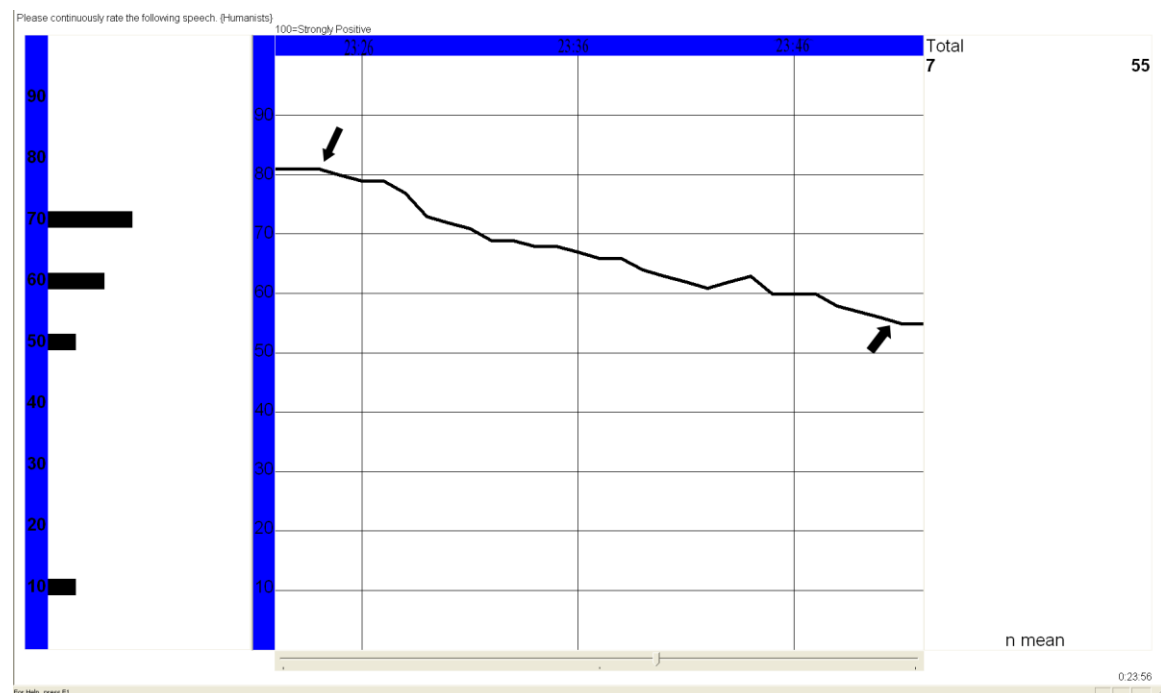
Interestingly, one journalist in Journalist Group 1 from China admired Obama's patriotism:

> *Participant 3*: I think that if I'm American I will vote for him because he shows his patriotism. He said I'm very patriotic and a lot of things about the USA.
> *Moderator*: And you think if you were an American you would...
> *Participant 3*: Yeah, I would certainly vote for a patriotic person. [laughter]. Very patriotic person.
> *Moderator*: So for a candidate to be patriotic, that's something that...that's important to you?
> *Participant 3*: Yeah.
> *Participant 2*: Sarah Palin is. [laughter]
> *Participant 6*: Especially when he made a lot of commitment in front of so many people, and his words make people believe that he will do something to contribute to his country. And so people would like to vote for him.
> *Participant 3*: And that's also the inspiration that joins (Journalist Group 1, 2010).

Obama shifts to historical time and briefly recalls American history and constitutes Americans on behalf of Americans while addressing Europeans; Obama uses several series of the *anaphora* ("every," and "what") to strengthen the constitutive claims. There is also a moment of intertextuality as Obama draws upon President Franklin D. Roosevelt's idea of America's "four freedoms," a relatively more obscure, or at least

dated, reference than the more immediate Reagan and Kennedy Berlin quotes, but for those who are familiar with the "four freedoms," Obama gains an additional associative link with yet another Titan of the Presidency, for those who find Roosevelt as an admirable character in American history (whether they be American or European) or value these four freedoms, Obama's argument is strengthened. Finally, Obama moves from the general to the particular, from abstract aspirations to pragmatic experience by linking these "universal" aspirations with his personal story ("what drew my father to America's shores"); as a personal story, it is more difficult to refute or disagree with, it is Obama's "truth. Immediately, Obama shifts from echoing Roosevelt to echoing Reagan; from what America is as a thing in itself (the "four freedoms") to what America is contextually, that is, what it is compared to the rest of the world. Obama universalizes American values, or, finds universal values in the American experience; these four freedoms are aspirations held "by all people" and "by all nations in this city [of Berlin]".

Rhetorically, American exceptionalism is perpetuated but with a twist as America is not quite a "shining city on a hill"; such a metaphor creates distinction. Obama finds these aspirations as universal and, addressing the tension of multiple audiences, places them specifically within the American experience and the Berliner experience. Either way, both audiences are lauded and praised. These aspirations "are bigger than anything that drives us apart" Obama tells us as he nearly mentions identification and division by name, and these aspirations, this consubstantiality, predicates action ("It is because of these aspirations that the airlift began. It is because of these aspirations that all free people - everywhere - became citizens of Berlin. It is in pursuit of these aspirations that a new generation - our generation - must make our mark on the world."). Using hindsight, one journalist read this sentence as a detachment from reality:

> *Participant 2*: The funny thing is that he mentioned that, like all free citizens are citizens of Berlin, and just two weeks ago Angela Merkel said they failed as a multicultural state, Germany. That's just hilarious (Journalist Group 2, 2010).

Obama ends the speech shifting back to this universal "we," addressing the "People of Berlin – and people of the world" and quite literally offers a summary of his

preceding points that include a constituting of global citizenship, a reminder of historical continuity and the need to use that (constructed) history as a guide and of a "destiny," which for Obama is a very particular course of action complemented with a new goal, that is, terms of division (aforementioned "challenges") and a final act of consubstantiation between himself, Berlin, America, Europe and the world in what might be titled "The American Dream 2.0: America Goes Global":

> [we] are heirs to a struggle for freedom. We are a people of improbable hope. With an eye toward the future, with resolve in our hearts, let us remember this history, and answer our destiny, and remake the world once again.

One participant from the Humanist Group, echoing other participants in other groups, expressed positive sentiment towards Obama's attempts to identify audiences in relation to this last section of the speech:

> *Participant 1*: I kind of like the idea, where I was going was kind of like worldly ideas and the idea that we're kind of in it together, we need to work together, there's like hard work to be done, because it's like, in some sentence, possibly a throw away line, but at least it's acknowledging it's not going to be easy, whereas everyone's like "oh yes! We must solve global warming" and like "it's going to be a breeze!" No it's not, uh, and that sort of thing (Humanist Group, 2010).

E. Text: Conclusion

Obama develops an argument that transcends differences within and between his American and European audiences. He begins with his own particular family experience. He uses the values his father aspired to as a way of bringing himself into favor with a particular vision of what it means to be a Berliner. Obama shifts from the first person singular "I" to the first person plural "we" and in so doing, seeks to stretch this "we" from him and Berlin, to America and Berlin, to America and Germany, to America and Europe and finally peaking at a crescendo at the end of the speech where the "we" includes a newly constituted form of global citizenship, a term present from the beginning of the text but only fully developed (by fully I mean given the constraints of time Obama faced) at the end of the text. Throughout, Obama identifies his story with Berlin, both rhetorical constitutions of identity; addresses current sources of division; seeks to channel a post-Cold War cacophony towards a new order of division by shifting from transatlanticism against the Soviet Union towards transatlanticism as a model for global citizenship against new common

challenges. The various mergers of the first and second persona are accompanied by extensive use of metaphor in the speech, stylistic devices and argumentative structures. It is worth singling out specifically the extensive use of metaphor and how the use of metaphor in this speech might fall under the remit of this *teleological* reading. In other words, how might Obama's use of metaphor here serve the assigned purpose of identification and division? First, there are four series of, to varying degrees, stable metaphors throughout the oratorical performance: metaphors of identification (consubstantiality), metaphors of division, spatial metaphors, and metaphors of time. While the time metaphors are of less interest here, Obama's use of spatial metaphors reinforce the construction of the imagery of identification and division. In terms of identification, Obama speaks of "building bridges," he recalls when Germans and Americans "came together to work, and struggle, and sacrifice," he speaks of NATO as "the greatest alliance ever formed to defend our common security," a "globalized world," one that is "more intertwined" than the 20th Century. Rhetorically, Obama tells us Europe and America have "a shared destiny" and we must "cooperate" and "build new bridges" across the world. To address the world's challenges, global citizens must "join together, through constant cooperation, strong institutions, shared sacrifice, and a global commitment to progress."

In terms of division, Obama recalls how Germans and Americans "faced each other on the field of battle," and the fall of the Berlin wall as an event that would reduce "barriers to opportunity and prosperity." In the absence of a common threat of the Soviet Union, "on both sides of the Atlantic, we have drifted apart." There have been "past differences" between the US and Europe, but "the greatest danger of all is to allow new walls to divide us from one another" which is why neither the United States nor Europe can "turn inward." There are also a series of spatial metaphors that work with identification and division. Some cannot be divided from each act of division ("drifted apart" and "come together" being two examples) but the stability of Obama's construction of space on a horizontal and vertical axis and then the global village, as a new hallmark for global citizenship, that Obama erects towards the end of the speech is striking. In the post-war world, the Soviet shadow "swept" across Eastern Europe, had it not been for Berlin Communism would have "marched" across the whole of Europe, while the fall of the Berlin wall led to the "spread of information and technology." This new "closeness" gave "rise to new dangers that cannot be

contained within the borders of a country or by the distance of an ocean," indeed "[in[this new world," Obama tells us, "such dangerous currents have swept along faster than our efforts to contain them." The Cold War and nuclear proliferation threatened too often to destroy "all we have built" which is why Obama calls for an end of the "spread of the deadly atom [...and] the spread of nuclear weapons." To address these and other challenges, Europe must "deepen the security and prosperity of the continent" while "extending a hand abroad." Once security is deepened, Obama shifts back to the vertical axis of spatial metaphors: we must "build on the wealth that open markets have created" while "trade has been a cornerstone of our growth" but "we must forge trade" that truly rewards everyone. Obama asks whether we will "extend our hand" to others, whether we will "lift the child in Bangladesh" out of poverty or whether we will "shelter the refugee in Chad" or "banish the scourge of AIDS" in our time while "welcoming" immigrants and "shun" discrimination. In sum, Obama tells us, the "scale of our challenges" is great. In each case, the use of metaphor, especially of "walls" and "bridges" interact with Obama's construction of space; one can see how "bridges" are beneficial and "walls" are, for the most part, harmful or outdated or both.

Beyond the use of metaphor and its relation to identification and division, the text serves deliberative and epideictic functions as a variation on the classic American jeremiad: the corporate body is given a *telos*, a destiny, the speaker warns that the community has strayed from that path and offers concrete action to return to a secular/spiritual covenant, thus reaffirming the collective destiny (Procter and Ritter, 1996; Ritter, 1980; Bercovitch, 1980; Beasley, 2004: 31). The text combines the classic rhetorical devices of *paranesis* and *protreptic*; of celebrating transatlanticism and warning that this constructed celebratory standard is in jeopardy and in need of reaffirmation. As such, it can be seen as an attempt to praise and address audiences of multiple nationalities and most of all act as a sort of oratorical surgeon, removing a former term of division (the Soviet Union) and implanting new terms of division (new "common" challenges) to spur cooperation and give meaning to Obama's view of global citizenship. In doing so, Obama draws upon a topic of argumentation listen in Aristotle's rhetoric: redefinition. Here, transatlanticism is redefined from what is was and how it is to what it should be (Aristotle, 1991: 200). The lavish praise Obama gives to Berliners, Germans, Europeans, Americans and all "global citizens" would

serve the purpose of identification for those that would participate in the praise with Obama and move forward to address Obama's constituted world of new challenges and new others.

XII. The Obama Model: Domestic Identification, Global Audiences

The argument presented in this thesis went like this: Barack Obama needed voters in 2008 to win the presidency; Barack Obama could win voters through strategic identification; in order to identify with voters, Barack Obama needed to engage in the doxological process; a focus group, a poll, audience response technology, a thought, a hunch, all fall under the heading doxology; with the doxological process complete, Obama attempted to identify with needed voters through symbolic communication utilizing the Obama Model; symbolic communication via the Obama Model reached voters in the United States; symbolic communication via the Obama Model also reached non-American audiences; each audience will read symbolic communication and the Obama Model in a variety of preferred and oppositional ways. The question was: where were these points of convergence and divergence between audience interpretation and the rhetorical interpretation of the scholar; were there points of overlap between what was read to be the preferred effects of the intentional rhetorical design of the text, designed to persuade a specific audience, and the actual interpretation of unintended, non-American audiences? The original motivation for showing Obama's speeches to British audiences was to understand how the quadrennial ritual of the American political campaign, exported to non-American audiences, is interpreted by audiences who may not find American *doxa* as common sense as some Americans addressed in the intentional design of the speech.

This chapter serves as the distilled and condensed template abstracted from the close reading and audience reception of three key speeches given by Barack Obama during the 2008 presidential campaign. In each speech analysis, the exigency for each speech analyzed here required Obama to overcome some sort of division between him and the various audiences he addressed. In the Democratic National Convention Address, Obama needed to overcome divisions created during the primary campaign against Hillary Clinton as well as undecided and independent voters who were unfamiliar with his story, voters who might be startled by attempts by both Clinton and the Republican Party to place Obama outside American cultural norms. "What's with his name and why is he wearing a turban in that picture? Is he a Muslim? Why won't he wear a flag lapel like the other candidates? Why does he think I cling to guns and religion? Is he an American citizen? He went to Harvard, how could he possibly know what I'm going through?" In an attempt to both accept the nomination and address

some of these questions, this address was an opportunity to insert Obama's personal story and larger political philosophy into the familiar settings of American *doxa*.

In Philadelphia, Obama faced a large portion of startled and angry voters who saw Obama's association with the Reverend Jeremiah Wright as both troubling and a violation of candidate decorum. "Did Obama share Wright's worldview? Would Obama govern in the same way as Wright speaks in his sermons? If he disagreed, why hadn't he left the church?" His speech in Philadelphia would be a chance to save a hemorrhaging presidential campaign and bring himself back into favor with those offended by Wright's views and Obama's intimate relationship with him. In Berlin, Obama purposefully addressed separate national audiences, both an immediate audience in Berlin and an American audience at home. For his American audience, could Obama, with no executive experience, perform on the world stage? "What does the Obama Doctrine look like? How would world leaders and audiences receive him?" In addition to these questions, a global audience might have asked whether Obama would mark a departure from the Bush Administration. "What might "change" mean for us as international auditors?" Obama's trip abroad during the election, and this speech specifically, was his campaign's chance to address these challenges. In the pre-test portion of the focus group, it became evident that there were a range of divisional sources that existed between each audience and Barack Obama, ideological, political, spiritual, and national, before rhetor and decoder went through the rhetorical transaction. Would The Obama Model be able to overcome these divisions?

This template found in each speech, The Obama Model, contains three interlocking and mutually reinforcing parts. First, in each speech, Obama reconstitutes his audience under a new transcendent term, grounded in history and with a destiny. In his "More Perfect Union" address, Obama sought to unify various racial viewpoints, divided by the "racial lens" with shared values and a shared history under each ethnicity's common challenges and common national identity under the transcendent term "American". The same is present in Obama's DNC address, where he used the concept of the American Promise as an infallible historical standard by which to judge current governmental policies and as a source of ingratiation for those who would identify with his interpellative appeals. These terms act as a unifying principle from which to view American history unfold; each are grounded in Obama's construction

of American history and each contain a logic that necessitates a particular course of action, in this case Obama's policy platform. In Berlin, Obama sought to infuse geopolitical realities with this same sense of history and purpose: individual nation-states became "the West" and "the West" would be stretched to identify all ethnicities, nationalities and religions under a new model of global citizenship. These appeals are supported by Obama with a range of historical and contemporary examples, the most prominent being the extraordinary ordinary American or in the case of his speech in Berlin, the extraordinary ordinary citizen that serve as sources of symbolic identification whereby the auditor is able to see themselves in each example.

In articulating each new mode of identity, Obama is no outsider. The second part of the Obama Model is an intertwining of the first persona (*ethos*) with the second persona. This surgical process of identity suture can be best seen as an intricate process of identification and ingratiation that can be further subdivided into form and content. Formally, the metaphors, *anaphora*s, climaxes, rhetorical questions, *enthymeme*s and other devices work towards ingratiating the audience through the pleasure of participation and collaboration between the audience and the speaker. That is, at least theoretically, we as audiences would anticipate and round out formal appeals, draw parallels and associations with metaphors and underlying concepts, and by doing so, become active participants in the speech instead of mere recipients, fulfilling Aristotle's assertion that human nature "delights in learning something with ease" (Burke, 1961: 582-583; Atkinson, 1984; Moran, 1996: 387-396; Aristotle, 1991: 234-241; May and Wisse, 2001: 271). Obama uses these formal appeals often. In Berlin and Denver, for example, he groups policies that enjoy popular support together with policies that are more controversial with different audiences: Second Amendment rights with LGBT rights, curbing global warming with deterring Iran that in effect creates an audience insurance policy whereby the applause for one or the other, or applause for the excitement of the form, becomes applause for both policies. The pleasure derived from the excitement of the form has the potential to neutralize any negative sentiment or opposition towards the content. These formal appeals can also be seen as reinforcing the content that addresses identification and ingratiation.

In terms of content, these appeals include a constant praise being heaped on each audience, their actions, histories, values, attitudes and beliefs he infuses into each. In

Denver, Obama praises ordinary Americans for keeping the American Promise alive under immense pressure caused by an array of antagonists. In Philadelphia, Obama praises black Americans and white Americans for facing economic adversity. Only by forming an interracial alliance, culminating in the Obama Coalition, can that adversity be not just met, but overcome. In Berlin, Obama praises Germans for preventing World War Three, maintaining European cohesion and praised his American audience for their sacrifice in defending freedom around the globe and the neo-liberal order created by Americans at the end of the Cold War as a system that has brought relative peace and prosperity to hundreds of millions of people.

Barack Obama surrounds himself with symbols and politicians that have, in popular narratives, gained a degree of authority and respect of large voting segments: the Constitution, past presidents, the Founding Fathers, their intentions and ideals, Martin Luther King Jr., and the Berlin Senate. Obama embodies a continuation of the post-war mayor of Berlin and graciously thanks the Chancellor of Germany. He often constructs himself in a way that embodies the values of his audience through his instrumental use of *ethos*. His story becomes the story of his audience. In Denver, Obama tells his audience that his story and the American Promise are interchangeable. He identifies, literally sees his story, in the audience narrative he is at pains to construct. And while focus group participants did not identify with every appeal, most indicated, either through the PNAR score or verbal focus group data, a range of complex views. For example, most expressed a vehement disagreement on society's right to own guns, creating additional sources of division between encoder and decoder, but strong support for LGBT equality and Barack Obama's specific economic reforms, especially when framed as a personal story. While Barack Obama's speeches were not intended for British audiences, could it be that the central task of the effective global communicator in the Twenty First Century will be to maximize the sources of identification between speaker and fragmented receiver(s) and, for better or worse, maximize common ground? Findings articulated here indicate this is, in fact, the case.

In Philadelphia, the ideals present in the American Constitution, upheld by generations of Americans, are what enable Obama to run for president. In Denver, Obama intertwines the stories of soldiers, women and workers who struggle with his

own family background. It should be noted that while it was overwhelmingly the case that participants could not identify with Obama's appeals to consubstantiality through a shared religious identification, many could broadly identify themselves with Obama's social reforms. Some participants felt uncomfortable with the racial discourses present in the speech and insisted Obama not specifically discuss race while others identified with his message of racial reconciliation and saw overwhelmingly positive PNAR scores. At the very least, these nuanced and complex reactions to Barack Obama's appeals should give rhetorical scholars pause when discussing message effects. At best, perhaps, we can analyze the situation and reconstruct the speaker's intention.

In Berlin, Obama emphasizes his mother's Kansas roots and his father's Kenyan heritage to tout his global citizen credentials. In each, he sutures his identity to the identity he constructs for his audience. For any who would identify with his construction of Americaness or global citizenship, they would see Obama as "one of us," an "American" or "fellow citizen of the world." In each focus group, what was most striking was the dominant theme of convergence between participants and the text: Obama's attempts at identification became something in itself that participants were drawn to; many participants identified with the strategy of identification and delighted in Obama's constitutive appeals to find common threads of consubstantiality running through fragmented global audiences. While participants often rejected discourses of American exceptionalism, they expressed a preference for internationalism and equality; values Barack Obama extolled through his constitutive appeals.

These two interlocking parts, constituting one's audience in rhetorically advantageous ways and then suturing one's constructed *ethos* with the construction of one's audience, offer powerful rhetorical potential: they would work together not only to overcome the division between Obama and his audience but the division and fragmentation between his audiences themselves. In each speech, Obama creates a "you" and that you becomes a "we" through identification. But who are "they?" If, as Burke argues, each act of identification is a simultaneous act of division, who or what is the new Other?

The third interlocking part is identification through antithesis. Inevitably, when Obama creates a "we," a new "Other" is established, a rhetorical appeal noted for its powerful appeal since at least Aristotle's treatment of *antithesis* in the *Rhetoric* (Burke, 1961). In each of his speeches, Obama offers his audience a strong dose of antithetical reasoning by providing his auditors with a range of antagonists on which to place society's ills. In each speech, common challenges provide the mainstay of Obama's appeals of consubstantiation insofar as "we" are all affected by "common" challenges. But, just when the rhetorical critic might assume Obama has done away with factional Othering by substituting an enemy to defeat with a goal for mankind to overcome, enemies indeed are explicitly singled out. In Denver, Obama lays these ills firmly on the back of George W. Bush and a "broken politics in Washington," both of which Obama would tie his opponent John McCain. Many focus group participants felt the use of John McCain as an antithetical device was superfluous and proved to be ineffective, probably due to the amount of time that had passed and, subsequently, the loss of immediacy of John McCain's potential candidacy.

In Philadelphia, Obama unites various ethnic factions against a common threat: corporate greed, special interests, questionable accounting practices, and economic policies that "favor the few over the many." In Berlin, Obama follows the same pattern. The former antithetical device, the binary world of "The West" versus a monolithic "Other," the USSR, was no longer a sustainable rhetoric due to changing geopolitical realities; indeed, many focus group participants went out of their way to reject this Cold War mindset. Obama unites various nationalities against challenges that transcend the nation-state and calls for solutions able to overcome national differences: global warming, unfair trade and economic qualities, famine and genocide caused by Iran, Mugabe, Sudan, Russia and even the United States. In each speech, Obama creates new identities capable of a renewed emphasis of addressing economic inequality, challenging militaristic intervention, and fighting climate change and disease.

In each speech, this destiny is one in which ordinary Americans, and global citizens, would address these national and international challenges based on a provisional understanding of common values and common understanding against common challenges caused by provisional antagonists. Kenneth Burke wondered whether

people, in their human frailty, may require an enemy as well as goal but it is worth noting Stuart Hall's assertion that difference is itself ambivalent (Gusfield, 1989: 229; Hall, 1997: 238). By stretching the "we," Obama re-Others by de-Othering. He diverts attention from intra-audience differences and directs attention towards a commonality, towards common ground, towards consubstantiation. In so doing, he creates new antagonists, new enemies and new goals. We need not deny the darker moments of Obama's rhetoric, a sometimes hawkish stance on foreign policy and an emphasis on individual responsibility that has too often been the mask of small state conservatism to acknowledge other policies Obama grounds in the patriotic duty of citizens everywhere. A world without nuclear weapons. Strengthened global institutions that fight poverty and genocide. A nation, standing with the world, committed to fighting climate change and disease. A renewed, and *patriotic*, sense of duty to fight economic inequality and racial injustice. There is an overwhelmingly strong degree of certainty that this model stretches beyond the three speeches analyzed here. Obama's Victory Speech on 4 November 2008 in Grant Park in Chicago, his speech on patriotism in Independence, Missouri, Obama's 30 minute campaign commercial, his speech in Cairo after becoming President along with his second State of the Union and his address in response to the shooting in Tucson address transcend genre with every element of this template.

An emphasis on audiences sought to understand whether this model was beyond *theoretically* effective. The moment-to-moment data and verbal focus group data demonstrate a range of interpretations and fell into three broad categories of convergent and divergent interpretations: shared (and distinct) values, shared (and distinct) policy positions and shared (and distinct) views about the United States and other communities. In addition to this, focus groups showed a propensity to see increased PNAR scores during applause lines in the speech stimulus which fell across each of these, and other, categories. In attempting to stretch the "we" in America, Obama sometimes, however temporarily, could stretch the "we" beyond the nation state through these broad categories and create common ground between himself and his constituted American and global audiences. At other points, however, the focus group and audience response data indicate that Obama, and America, were indeed the "Other." While there were certain argumentative structures that appealed to a few participants in form (rather than content), such as a like of Obama's patriotism or

appeal to tradition (Journalist Group 1, 2010; Aberystwyth Conservative Future Group, 2010), most encounters with American exceptionalism were decoded through a negotiated or oppositional reading. As Obama told individual stories or spoke in globalized and universal terms with couched phrases and maxims, his speech received generally positive feedback. While presidential campaigns have long served as an invented ritual in reflexive identity assessment, this study indicates that the American presidential campaign serves as a source of both identification and division through which global audiences come to understand America, Americans, and the American experience. Indeed, a close reading of the focus group transcripts reveals a British audience that is more than familiar with the American political system and that use the American presidential campaign speech as a source of how America, Americans and American politicians are represented. It would seem, by triangulating pre-test and post-test polling data with these focus group findings, that the American presidential campaign is a source of enticement, attraction and persuasion on the world stage. Conversely, many participants regularly laughed and ridiculed the Tea Party and Sarah Palin, indicating that the American presidential campaign could just as easily be a source of disgust with the global public. While this study hypothesizes that The Obama Model was effective with large portions of the American electorate precisely because it, as Aristotle stated in the *Rhetoric*, "grasped the real or apparent properties" of Obama's American audience, it provides a strong case for utilizing each component of The Obama Model as a paradigm for engaging fragmented audiences generally, and global audiences participating in the quadrennial ritual of Amerian identity specifically

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XV: Acknowledgements

Appendix 1: Moment-to-Moment Key