"I'm Not the President of Black America": Rhetorical Versus Policy Representation

Pavielle E. Haines, Tali Mendelberg, and Bennett L. Butler

Data Sources and Collection Procedures

2018

Table of Contents

Presidential Rhetoric 3

Identification of Anti-Poverty Programs 3

Identification of Civil Rights Programs 4

The President's Budget 5

Inflation Rate 11

Gross Domestic Product 11

Percent Change in Gross Domestic Product 12

Federal Deficit 12

Poverty Rate 13

Unemployment Rate 13

Partisan Control of Congress 13

Number of People Below the Poverty Line 14

Number of Unemployed Workers 14

Number of African Americans 15

Roll-Call Votes Related to Poverty and Civil Rights 15

Presidential Rhetoric

Data on presidential references to poverty, civil rights, and the middle class come from annual State of the Union addresses (located at the American Presidency Project, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/sou.php, accessed November 10, 2018). To recreate the data used in the rhetorical analyses, follow the detailed instructions outlined in online appendices A, B, and C.

Identification of Anti-Poverty Programs

We define anti-poverty programs as those that disproportionately benefit, either by law or in practice, low-income Americans. At least one of the following criteria had to be met for a program to be coded as anti-poverty: (1) at least 30% of beneficiaries or recipients had to belong to the bottom income quintile; or (2) at least 50% of beneficiaries or recipients had to belong to the bottom two income quintiles; or (3) it reduced the poverty rate by upwards of five percent, as demonstrated by previous scholarly research. Data on benefits by income level can be acquired from the Congressional Budget Office and other relevant agencies. If possible, the beneficiaries of a potential program should be evaluated for multiple years in the dataset. Where raw data is not available, it is acceptable to rely on eligibility requirements (such as means testing) and scholarly analyses that identify a program as important for the alleviation of poverty. The 103 anti-poverty programs reflected in the data and analyses are listed in online appendix F. For each program, key data sources and scholarly references are listed.

Identification of Civil Rights Programs

We identified minority and civil rights programs using the following criteria: (1) it offered cash or non-cash benefits specifically to racial minority groups; or (2) it offered cash or non-cash benefits specifically to racial minority-serving institutions or organizations; or (3) it promoted racial diversity, including the integration of African Americans, in workplaces and communities; or (4) its primary purpose was to promote and enforce civil rights; and, to avoid double counting, (5) it did not meet the criteria for anti-poverty spending. Data on benefits by racial group can be acquired from the Congressional Budget Office and other relevant agencies. If possible, the beneficiaries of a potential program should be evaluated for multiple years in the dataset. Where raw data is not available, it is acceptable to rely on eligibility requirements (such as minority status) and scholarly analyses that identify a program as important for the promotion of civil rights. The 20 civil rights programs reflected in the data and analyses are listed in online appendix H. For each program, key data sources and scholarly references are listed.

The President's Budget

The president's budget is a complex document that provides detailed funding requests for every federal department, agency, and program. While it is a potentially rich source of information about presidential priorities, it is important understand certain basic terminology and concepts before attempting data collection.

Key Terms and Concepts

Discretionary versus Mandatory Spending:

All federal programs outlined in the president's budget are classified either discretionary or mandatory. Discretionary programs require the federal government to allocate funds as part of the yearly budget. If they fail to do so, the program will go unfunded and potential beneficiaries will receive nothing. Mandatory programs continue to be funded regardless of whether the federal government allocates funds as part of the yearly budget. Spending on mandatory programs is set automatically by the number persons who meet the eligibility requirements for a legally defined benefit. For instance, WIC and SNAP are both low-income nutrition assistance programs. However, WIC is discretionary while SNAP is mandatory. If the federal government failed to pass a budget, the WIC program would have no funding and none of the eligible beneficiaries would receive assistance. However, SNAP recipients would continue to receive benefits. Moreover, total spending on SNAP automatically equals $A*B$, where A equals the number of applicants legally eligible for benefit B. In contrast, if the federal government sets spending on WIC to a total of Y, then the benefit received by Z eligible applicants equals Y/Z. During the budget process, the president may recommend whatever amount they see fit for discretionary programs. However, they cannot recommend arbitrary spending amounts for

mandatory programs. Thus, while their proposed spending on discretionary programs could meaningfully impact the final amount spent, their proposed spending for mandatory programs are more akin to estimates that have no bearing on the actual amount spent. See online appendix D for more information.

Proposed Spending on Existing Programs versus Proposed Changes:

The president's budget must include a total proposed dollar amount for every program, both mandatory and discretionary, as they currently exist. As noted above, the proposed dollar amount for mandatory programs is more like an estimate than a true proposal. However, the president may also use his budget to propose changes to existing programs. Proposed changes are listed separately from the proposed spending on existing programs. They include the amount that would be added or deducted from total proposed spending on the existing program if the change were implemented. The president can propose meaningful changes to mandatory programs, discretionary programs, and tax expenditures. See online appendix D for more information.

Tax Expenditures:

Tax expenditures are special provisions of the tax code such as exclusions, deductions, deferrals, credit, and tax rates that benefit specific activities or groups of taxpayers. They are analogous to direct spending programs in the sense that they cost the federal government money in lost revenues. They are like mandatory spending programs in that the amount of revenue lost depends on legally defined eligibility requirements and benefit amounts. The president's budget includes estimates of how much the federal government will lose in revenue from tax expenditures as they

currently exist. The president may make a direct effort to influence tax expenditures by including proposed changes to increase or lower their costs.

Budget Authority Versus Outlays:

The president's budget generally lists two proposed values for every program — budget authority and outlays. Proposed budget authority represents the limit on the new financial obligations that a program may incur. Proposed outlays represent actual cash flow out of a program. For example, the Department of Education may receive the budget authority to spend $50 million on creating after-school programs for children living in low-income areas, but the outlays might not reach $50 million until the following year or even later, as facilities are secured and instructors are hired. Proposed budget authority is the more direct measure of presidential policy efforts.

Data Collection for Proposed Spending

1) Download the 2017 President's Budget. Detailed budget proposals for specific anti-poverty and civil rights programs are in the appendix of the President's Budget. The president's budget (including the appendices) from 1996 through the present can be downloaded from: https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=BUDGET&browsePath=Fiscal+Year+1996&isCollapsed=false&leafLevelBrowse=false&isDocumentResults=true&ycord=1453 (accessed November 1, 2018). Earlier budgets can be acquired through ProQuest Congressional.

2) Choose an anti-poverty or civil rights program from online appendix G or I and locate the corresponding line item proposal in the 2017 President's Budget. To make the data collection process quicker for the 2017 budget, each row in OA-G and OA-I indicates the department in which the program was housed as well as the page number where the line item is located. Note that some programs in the list are not included in the 2017 budget, as indicated by an "NA" in the "2017 Proposal" column.

3) Proposed spending for most programs will be included as part of a table. Some programs, such as the Economic Development Assistance Programs, are an umbrella for multiple, smaller anti-poverty or civil rights programs. These umbrella programs can be readily identified because they generally have their own subsection. Other smaller programs represent an anti-poverty or civil rights component of a larger umbrella program that does not meet the criteria for an anti-poverty or civil rights program. For instance, the Advanced Placement program is housed within a larger umbrella program titled "Innovation and Improvement." Innovation and Improvement includes both anti-poverty programs (advanced placement grants) as well as general educational funds (charter school grants).

4) Determine whether the program is mandatory, discretionary, or a tax expenditure. This will generally be indicated in the table or surrounding text. It is also indicated in online appendices G and I.

5) If the program is discretionary, record total proposed spending. To get this amount, refer to the "Program and Financing*"* table (its heading should *not* reference a legislative proposal).

Record for the total proposed budget authority for the program in the relevant year. For smaller programs contained within a subsection, this is the "2017 est" included as a single line item within the table. For larger umbrella programs with their own subsection, take the net budget authority from the section of the table labeled "Budget Authority and Outlays, Net." Do not record proposed outlays for 2017. Do not record proposed outlays, actual outlays, or budget authority for earlier years.

6) If the program is mandatory or a tax expenditure, do not record total proposed spending.

7) Some larger umbrella programs that qualify as poverty or civil rights may include both mandatory and discretionary components. For these programs, total proposed spending should reflect only total gross discretionary budget authority. It should not include total gross mandatory budget authority.

8) For mandatory, discretionary, and tax expenditure programs, determine whether there are any proposed changes to the program that would impact spending. To do this, scan the subsection for a second table with the heading "Legislative Proposal."

9) For mandatory, discretionary, and tax expenditure programs, record the dollar amount associated with the legislative proposal. Note that this may take a negative value. For smaller programs within a subsection, review the "Legislative Proposal" table to determine whether it is listed as a line item. If it is, take the "2017" estimate. If it is not, record nothing. For larger programs with their own subsection, record the total net budget authority, including

both mandatory and discretionary funds listed as part of the “Legislative Proposal.”

10) For discretionary programs with both total proposed spending and a legislative proposal, add the two values. This is the total amount proposed by the president for that program in 2017.

11) For mandatory and tax expenditure programs, the amount associated with a proposed legislative change is the amount proposed by the president for that program in 2017. If no legislative proposals were made, then the proposed amount for that program is effectively zero. This does not mean that spending on the existing program will be cut, only that the president did not use their power to adjust baseline spending on the mandatory program.

12) If the program is related to housing, standardize the proposal using the method used in online appendix H.

13) Repeat this process for each program in the 2017 budget. Then repeat again for each budget year in the dataset. It is most effective to locate the line item for each program using a keyword search. However, note that programs are regularly renamed, moved to different agencies or departments, separated from larger programs, or clumped together with additional programs during the budget process. For instance, “Food Stamps” was renamed “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance for Needy Families” in 2000. Thus, while online appendices G and I list all the years that a program was included in the budget, its name or department may have been different in previous years.

Inflation Rate

Much of the fiscal data used in the analyses must be adjusted for inflation so that it is in constant 2016 dollars. This can be done by multiplying the raw value from each year by the inflation rate between that year and 2016. The inflation rate to convert each year to constant 2016 dollars can be calculated using the United States Bureau of Labor Statistic's CPI Inflation Calculator located at: https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl (accessed November 1, 2018).

Gross Domestic Product

The gross domestic product from 1964 through 2016 was taken from the United States Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis. GDP data can be found at: https://www.bea.gov/national/xls/gdplev.xls (accessed November 1, 2018). Take the annual GDP in billions of current dollars (column B as of November 1, 2018). Note that since the time of analysis, the BEA corrected several minor errors in the years 2014, 2015, and 2016. The original BEA estimates — reflected in the replication data — for these years were $17,393.1, $18,036.6, and $18,566.9 billion, respectively. Use these values for exact replication of the results. Adjust each year for inflation so that the resulting values are in constant 2016 dollars. To do this, get the inflation rate between each year and 2016 as instructed in the "Inflation Rate" subsection of this document. Multiply the GDP in each year by this value.

Percent Change in Gross Domestic Product

The percent change in gross domestic product from 1964 through 2016 was taken from the United States Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis. Raw GDP data can be found at: https://www.bea.gov/national/xls/gdplev.xls (accessed November 1, 2018). See the instructions from the "Gross Domestic Product" subsection of this document to calculate GDP in constant 2016 dollars before calculating percent change in GDP. To calculate percent change in GDP, first subtract constant GDP in the preceding year from the current year. Next, divide this value by GDP in the preceding year. For instance: % Change in GDP in 2016 = (GDP in 2016 – GDP in 2015) / GDP in 2015.

Federal Deficit

The federal deficit from 1964 through 2016 was taken from the Office of Management and Budget. The deficit can be found at: https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/hist01z1-fy2019.xlsx (accessed November 1, 2018). Look for the total surplus or deficit (column D as of November 1, 2018). Adjust each year for inflation so that the resulting values are in constant 2016 dollars. To do this, get the inflation rate between each year and 2016 as instructed in "Inflation Rate" subsection of this document. Multiply the deficit in each year by this value.

Poverty Rate

The poverty rate from 1964 through 2015 was taken from the United States Census Bureau. At the time of analysis, poverty data for 2016 was unavailable. Instead, the poverty rate from 2015 was also used for 2016. The poverty rate can be found at: https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-people.html (accessed November 1, 2018). Click on the link for Table 2 and look for the percent of all people, of all races, living below poverty (column D as of November 1, 2018).

Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate from 1964 through 2016 was taken from the United States Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Monthly averages for each relevant year can be found at https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNS14000000 (accessed November 1, 2018). These monthly averages can be used to calculate annual unemployment averages.

Partisan Control of Congress

The Senate tracks partisan divisions in their chamber at: http://history.house.gov/Institution/Party-Divisions/Party-Divisions/ (accessed November 1, 2018). The House tracks partisan divisions in their chamber at: https://history.house.gov/Institution/Party-Divisions/Party-Divisions/ (accessed November 1, 2018).

Number of People Below the Poverty Line

The number of people living below the poverty line from 1964 through 2015 was taken from the United States Census Bureau. At the time of analysis, poverty data for 2016 was unavailable. Instead, the number of people living below the poverty line in 2015 was also used for 2016. The number of people living below the poverty line can be found at: https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-people.html (accessed November 1, 2018). Click on the link for Table 2 and look for the number of all people, of all races, living below poverty in thousands (column C as of November 1, 2018). These values should be divided by 1,000 to get the number of people living below the poverty line in millions.

Number of Unemployed Workers

The number of unemployed workers from 1964 through 2016 was taken from the United States Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. The average number of unemployed workers in thousands for each year can be found at: https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNU03000000 (accessed November 1, 2018). These averages should be divided by 1,000 to get the number of unemployed workers in millions.

Number of African Americans

The number of African Americans from 1969 through 2015 was taken from the United States Census Bureau. At the time of analysis, racial demographics for 2016 were unavailable. Instead, the Census Bureau's projection of 46.8 million African Americans was used for 2016. The number of African Americans in thousands can be found at: https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-people.html (accessed November 1, 2018). Click on the link for Table 2 and look for the total number African Americans (column B as of November 1, 2018). For the years 2002 through 2015, take the total from the sub-table titled, "Black Alone or in Combination." For the years 1969 through 2001, take the total from the sub-table titled "Black." These numbers should be divided by 1,000 to get the total number of African Americans in millions.

Roll-Call Votes Related to Poverty and Civil Rights

Roll-call data was downloaded from Nominate's Voteview website using the R package Rvoteview (available on GitHub at https://github.com/voteview/Rvoteview, accessed November 1, 2018). This package interfaces with the Voteview website to download a subset of roll-call votes with user-specified characteristics. Use Rvoteview to download every roll-call vote from the 1st through 113th Congress. Once these roll-call votes are downloaded, export the data frame to a .csv file. In Excel, identify roll-call votes with issue codes related to poverty or civil rights. Roll-call votes related to poverty were those with the following issue codes: (1) Welfare and Medicaid; (2) Food Stamps/Food Programs; (3) Unemployment/Jobs; (4) Minimum Wage; or (5) and Housing/Housing Programs/Rent Control. Roll-call votes related to civil were those with the following issue codes: (1) Slavery; (2) Voting Rights; or (3) Civil

Rights/Desegregation/Busing/Affirmative Action. Create a “poverty” variable that is set equal to one for roll-call votes with issue codes related to poverty and zero for all others. Create a “civil” variable that is set equal to one for roll-call votes with issue codes related to civil rights and zero for all others. Read this updated .csv file back into R. Create a subset that includes only roll-call votes where either “poverty” or “civil” are equal to one. The code for this procedure is provided in full in “obamareplication.R.”