

Americans and the American Dream in Obama's 2008 Campaign Speeches

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Abstract

The idea of American Dream has been constantly used to glue the United States together. After two Bush terms (2001-2008) of failed policies and leadership of President Bush in office (2000-2008), the American Dream was slipping further away from American Main Street. This thesis attempts to examine how presidential candidate, Barack Obama, could win by reclaiming the American Dream in his 2008 campaign. Upon content analysis of 21 selected speeches made by Obama in his 2008 campaign, it is demonstrated that as Jim Cullen has argued, the idea of American Dream begins with the Declaration of Independence and is consolidated in the American Constitution. Obama's belief that reclaiming the American Dream begins by reclaiming the White House from Bush, is explainable with this theory; as well as the rationale for his plans and campaign to restore the American Dream based on the preamble to the Constitution of the United States.

Key words: American Dream, Identity, American Constitution, 2008 presidential campaign, Barack Obama.

Introduction

There is a need for a balance and compromise in the American political-legal culture which necessitates a degree of abstraction in defining United States and Americanism. The notion of what constitutes the United States and what elements are included in that definition has had to be revised or reinvented over time for each generation. This reflects the tension between a materialistic practical reality and an idealistic, abstract image of the nation (Mauk, 2009). A few weeks before Election Day in November 2008, the Pew Forum invited two culture of war experts and a group of leading journalists; the speakers invited were Todd Gitlin, Professor of Journalism and Sociology, Columbia University, and Yuval Levin, Hertog Fellow and Director of the Bioethics and American Democracy Program, Ethics and Public Policy Center. During the debate Gitlin referred to the French philosopher Ernst Renan famously saying that a nation was a daily plebiscite. Gitlin argues in America, "they have a quadrennial plebiscite: who are we?

And that's to be determined in a month" (Gitlin, 2008). He reminds the audience that America was defined from the start as the fruit of an ideology, not a nationality. This attempt to revise or reinvent America every four years for the presidential elections and redefining the pillars of "what stands for Americanism and what the American identity constitutes of" has been referred to by Gitlin as "quadrennial plebiscite of who we are" (Gitlin, 2008). Upon probing the presidential campaign speeches of Barack Obama, it was discovered that themes such as 'change', 'hope', 'defining moment', 'values', and the American Dream were often used during 2008 campaign. His focus on America as a nation and as one people, echoing the phrase on the Seal of the United States 'e pluribus unum'³, and his repeated references to the American Founding Documents like the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence were noticeable. This paper attempts to answer the following questions: Does Obama's choice of campaign themes and concepts, led to a new call on reclaiming the American Dream and a new definition for America?

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³ A Latin phrase meaning "One from many," the phrase offered a strong statement of the American determination to form a single nation from a collection of states. "E Pluribus Unum" was the motto proposed for the first Great Seal of the United States by John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson in 1776.

1. The American Dream

The term 'American Dream' is so widely used that it has turned into a powerful metaphor to refer to the main American values. The term 'American Dream' was first printed in the historian James Truslow Adams's 1931 book, *The Epic of America*. Adams (1931) discusses these values in *The Epic of America* and argues that economic success is the first among these values. Adams states American Dream as: That dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position (Adams, 1931, pp. 214-15). Jim Cullen, also argues that the American Dream is a major element of American identity in the twenty-first century.

He asserts that the United States has been essentially a creation of the collective imagination- inspired by the existence of a New World which has been realized in the American Revolution that began with the Declaration of Independence and was consolidated in the Constitution of the United States. Referring to the American Dream as a glue to hold the nation together, Cullen argues this Dream is neither an irrefutable truth nor an empty cliché but rather a complex idea with manifold implications that can lead to different ways (Cullen, 2003). Quoting what Adams called in the epilogue of *The Epic of America* "that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man", Cullen indicates that this American Dream can have numerous and various definitions. He argues sometimes "better and richer and fuller" is defined from an economic point of view but there are also other views like religious transformation, political reform, educational attainment, etc. what is more is that these definitions have changed over time and competed to be the prevailing meaning of the American Dream (ibid). He explores a number of different definitions for the American Dream, discussing their origins, their dynamic, and their ongoing relevance. He begins with religious transformation, proceeds to what he calls the charter of America: the Declaration of Independence.

Then he discusses one of the most familiar themes of American Dream which is upward mobility in terms of economic and social advancement, and later discusses the quest for equality, focusing specifically on the struggle of African Americans. However, in this paper, in order to organize and categorize Obama's statements on the reclaiming of the American Dream, the Founding Documents were incorporated in coding of the selected speeches, since, according to Cullen (2003) the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are the roots of the American Dream. It has also been argued by individuals like Kamp (2009) that the American Dream is rooted in Founding Documents such as the Declaration of the Independence, which proclaims that "all men are created equal" and that they are endowed with certain unalienable rights among which are "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" (Kamp, 2009). The preamble to the Constitution lays down six elements as the main purpose for developing and drafting of the U.S. Constitution which are namely, to make a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to Americans and their posterity.

2. Literature on 2008 Presidential Election, Obama and the American Dream

Barack Obama's historic presidential campaign and his presidency reconfigured feelings about the American Dream for many Americans. As the first African American president, the campaign represented a historic development of opportunities and possibilities in America. Obama campaigned on a 'feeling of hope' and an argument for 'change'. He presented himself as the demonstration of the power of the American Dream. In his campaign in 2008, Obama repeatedly mentions his purpose for running for president has been to reclaim the American Dream. Many scholars have discussed and covered the theme of reclaiming the American Dream as related to Obama, or they have traced connection between the two or they have checked whether Obama delivered on his claims and promises regarding the American Dream. For instance a thesis done under the title *How to Make the American Dream Possible Again: A Quantitative Look at Homeownership And Unemployment Rates in the United States from 2005-2009*, the author discusses only one aspect of the American Dream which is homeownership. She argues as the unemployment increases, homeownership decreases, and it endangers the American Dream. She then goes on to suggest that her findings make ground for supporting Obama's job creation policies foreclosure prevention programs (Szubrowski, 2012).

Mosley-Jensen (2014) in his thesis, *Pathos in income tax debates*, argues that Obama's feelings that the American Dream should include equality of opportunity is demonstrated in his arguments for income tax reform, as these arguments emphasize increased rates on wealthy individuals. A significant book about Obama, his rhetoric regarding change, hope and American Dream is James Kloppenberg's *Reading Obama: Dreams, Hope, and the American political tradition*. According to Kloppenberg, Barack Obama's intellectual and political persuasions emerged from a particular matrix, formed not only from his personal experience but also from the dynamics of American history. (Kloppenberg, 2011, p. ix) in other words, as a student of history and a public agent of it, Obama enjoys a unique rhetorical space that allows him to constitute a new American Dream.

Mousavi (2012) shows how Obama under the context of 'change' and 'hope' illustrates a new soft and caring picture of American Dream in foreign policy versus Iran.

Using discourse analysis on Obama's speeches, Young-Johnson (2013) explains that the American Dream trajectory is used in the United States to explain anyone's success, not just politicians. He asserts that Obama was able to convince a skeptical audience largely through his power of rhetoric, narrative of storytelling and reinventing the American Dream.(Young-Johnson, 2013). In another book, *The First Black President Barack Obama, Race, Politics, and the American Dream* written by Jonny Bernard Hill (2009), Hill argues in the introduction chapter of the book that Obama in so many ways is the fulfillment of the American Dream. He believes hopeful idealism of Obama is accompanied with the promise and possibility of the American Dream. He says Obama's campaign, inauguration, and presidency speak loudly about the possibilities and limitations of racial progress in the United States. (Hill, 2009)

3. Content Analysis of Obama's Selected Speeches

Obama's 'American Dream agenda' is arranged and analyzed into a categorization based on the Preamble to the Constitution. Using Nvivo 8, different categories into which Obama's 21 selected speeches were coded and have been categorized are presented with relevant graphs and figures. The following chart demonstrates the frequency of each of the 6 main categories for analyzing the selected speeches; the categories include: to make a more Perfect Union, establish Justice, insure Domestic Tranquility, provide for the Common Defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to Americans and their Posterity:

	Perfect Union	establish Justice	Domestic Tranquility	General Welfare	Common Defence	secure Liberty
1 : spe	128	55	24	101	66	38
2 : spe	149	61	25	101	70	38
3 : spe	145	61	25	103	71	37
4 : spe	145	59	25	94	71	39
5 : spe	151	59	25	104	70	34
6 : spe	139	58	23	105	63	39
7 : spe	152	58	25	87	70	39
8 : spe	145	61	25	103	71	38
9 : spe	149	59	25	100	71	38
10 : sp	147	61	25	98	68	39
11 : sp	150	60	25	97	69	39
12 : sp	136	49	24	104	52	30
13 : sp	152	61	25	106	67	39
14 : sp	140	58	25	102	70	39
15 : sp	143	53	18	104	60	32
16 : sp	146	56	25	100	70	38
17 : sp	153	50	25	97	71	36
18 : sp	151	60	22	103	70	37
19 : sp	154	60	15	105	61	37
20 : sp	154	61	25	103	69	36
21 : sp	152	61	25	104	71	39

Figure 1: Frequency of the main categories

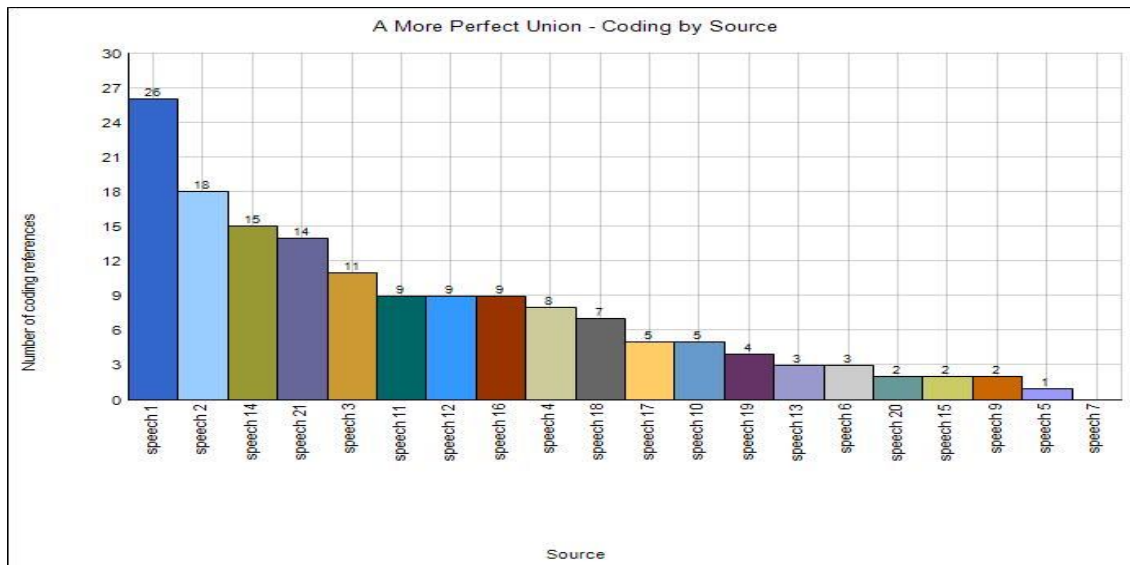
Source: By the Authors

Making a more perfect union, the first category is the most frequent theme in Obama's remarks. The change that he talks about and the new patriotism he offers are intended to make America a more 'perfect union'. The next category with most references is the one on promoting 'general welfare'; it is explainable due to the economic crisis facing the US at the time of the campaign, and numerous American financial and economic problems facing individuals and the government.

In 2008 election, as the American troops were busy in several battlegrounds fighting a global war on terror, the idea of common defense and providing domestic tranquility were the next categories with more frequencies. It is interesting to note that the frequencies of ‘common defense’ (=70), ‘secure liberty’ (=38) & ‘domestic tranquility’ (=25) is almost the same in all 21 speeches, meaning to have consistent equal weight in all presidential campaigning speech of Obama.

3.1. First Category: To Make A More Perfect Union

Senator Obama shares with the audience his personal journey of how he came to the State of Illinois and he proceeds to offer that at the moment they are all in a journey; a journey to make the United States a more perfect union. He says when he came to Illinois as a young black man he was without money or family connection. Then a group of churches offered him a job and he “accepted the job, sight unseen, motivated then by a single, simple powerful idea-that I might play a small part in building a better America.”(Obama, February 10, 2007). In the following graph the frequency of references to a more perfect union is demonstrated; as it can be seen in almost all of Obama’s remarks there have been some references to the theme of making a more perfect union:



Graph 2: A more perfect union
Source: By the Authors

In order to make America a more perfect union, Obama believes they have to make certain changes in the way they conduct affairs in Washington. He also offers a new kind of ‘patriotism’ which helps make America a better place to live in. He also talks about a ‘hope’ which makes the ‘changes’ possible and which makes American Dream a reality. These are considered as Obama’s main campaign themes. Therefore, this category is divided into three other subcategories discussing ‘change’, ‘hope’, and ‘patriotism.’

3.1.1. Change in Economic Foreign Policy

The change theme will be elaborated in several parts here, which cover the answer to questions on how Obama defines change, Obama’s plans for making change, the relevance of change to making America a more perfect union, the relation between change and hope. Since much attention has been given to change in economy and foreign policy, these two aspects would be discussed with more details.

3.1.1.1. Economic change

From an economic point of view, the gist of what Obama focuses on, is that by advancing the Dreams of all Americans, the economy would be advanced and everyone would be better off at the end of the day (Obama, September 27, 2008). In addressing the needed changes in economy, different aspects of the issue should be taken into account; change in attitudes and work ethics, change in tax rules, change in retirement policies and regulations, change in working conditions, etc. According to Obama in so many places and speeches, America needs to undergo real and drastic changes in health care policies, education and unemployment policies to make the country a livable place for the American middle class.

3.1.1.2. Change in foreign policy

In outlining his plans for change in foreign policy, Obama repeats the main items of his plan in so many places: ending the war in Iraq. In one occasion he asserts that: It's time to stop fighting a war that's stretching our Guard, straining our Reserves, and leaving your police and fire stations understaffed (Obama, June 21, 2008). Another pillar of his programs on changing the foreign policy of the United States is focusing on 'change' or return to power of diplomacy. By mentioning former presidents like Roosevelt, Truman, and Kennedy, who courageously engaged in diplomatic relations with other nations, he insists on the need for America to change attitude and reengage with the world to be able to defend the country against new threats in the global era: Change is realizing that meeting today's threats requires not just our firepower, but the power of our diplomacy – tough, direct diplomacy where the President of the United States isn't afraid to let any petty dictator know where America stands and what we stand for. We must once again have the courage and conviction to lead the free world. That is the legacy of Roosevelt, and Truman, and Kennedy. That's what the American people want.

That's what change is (Obama, June 3, 2008). The US foreign policy should change and make an immediate attempt to “defeat terror and dry up the well of extremism that supports it’ (Obama, July 24, 2008). Instead of spending vast and huge resources on Iraq war which not only doesn't make America any safer, but also distract the energy of the military from the supposedly main battlefields in Afghanistan and Pakistan, they have to shift their focus toward more meaningful goals in defending their country and provide for their national security (ibid).

3.1.2. Hope for change to make a Perfect Union

Another significant theme in Obama's speeches is hope which helps Obama build the unity he talks about in his campaign. In most cases, hope comes together with change and dreams, signifying the fact that if Americans be hopeful and hold common dreams and common hopes for future, they would be able to make the changes they need for a new direction for America and a more perfect country (Obama, February 10, 2007, November 7, 2007). In making change a reality, the problem with American people is that they are disillusioned about their government and disappointed about being able to do something to get over the current condition in their country that can be the reason for the concurrence of change and hope in this campaign. Obama's statement about change is inflated with hope (Obama, November 3, 2007). In so many occasions when he talks on change he continues with talking about hope, or vice versa.

And he insures people that if they come together as one nation, as the United States, forgetting their differences and divisions, insisting on their common grounds as a people, then they can answer the call for change and make America a more perfect union (Obama, April 22, 2008). Due to economic crisis and other political and economic hardship, many Americans have been left behind, struggling for their lives each day; they are angry, disappointed and fed up with their leaders and politics (Obama, October 13, 2008, October 29, 2008, September 27, 2008); that is why they need to be given hope to keep going on, and to keep believing in American Dream and in possibility of making a more Perfect Union: “We can do this if we come together; if we have confidence in ourselves and each other; if we look beyond the darkness of the day to the bright light of hope that lies ahead”(Obama, October 13, 2008).

3.1.3. Patriotism

Another noticeable theme here is patriotism. Obama in his arguments on patriotism tries to provide a definition and some instances for the term. He rather defines it in a new way, which is the characteristic of his campaign (Obama, June 30, 2008). He believes the importance of defining the term rests in the division brought about by lack of a specific definition for it in the political arena. Suggesting that patriotism should help as a vehicle for uniting people, he is critical of the fact that patriotism or the conventional patriotism of the moment is actually dividing Americans (Obama, June 30, 2008).

3.2. Second and Third Categories: Establishing Justice and Promoting General Welfare

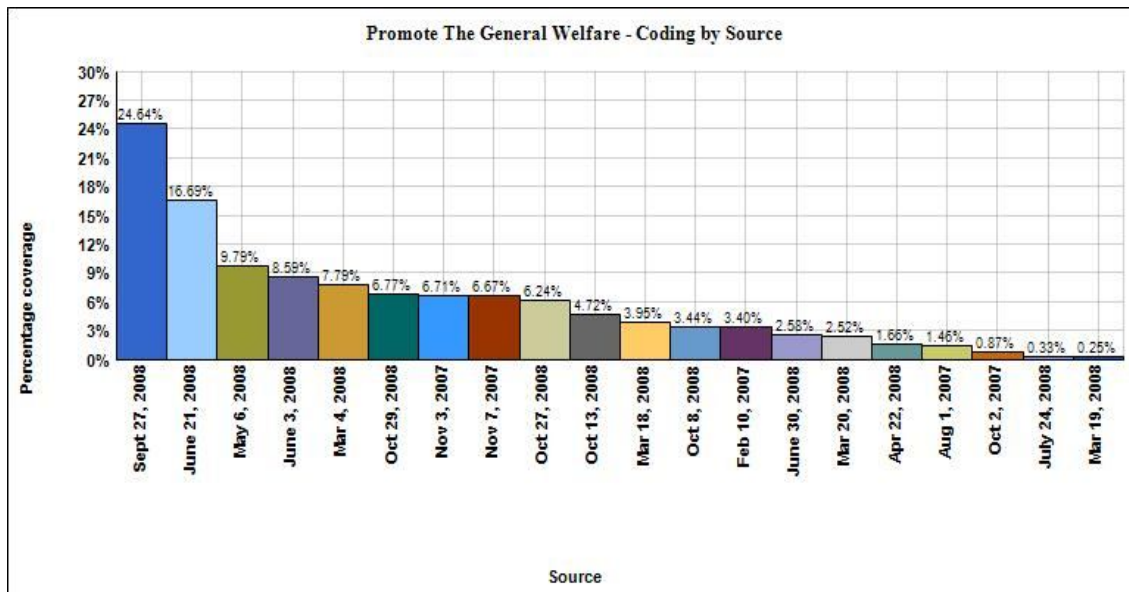
The statements for the second and third category had similar content and meaning in most cases, therefore, they were merged into one category. Reducing the data to some manageable themes is a feature of content analysis method. Obama's statements under these two categories are arranged under themes like economic crisis, education, health care, oil dependence, climate change and environment. The following figure shows the frequency of coding for these two categories after being reduced to one under the name of 'promote general welfare':

	Promote The General Welfare	Climate change and Environment	Economic Crisis	Education	Establish Justice	Health Care	Oil Dependence
10-Feb-07	5	3	0	5	6	6	3
6-May-08	5	0	0	0	0	1	2
3-Jun-08	3	0	0	1	0	1	2
21-Jun-08	12	0	0	1	2	0	0
30-Jun-08	2	0	0	1	2	0	1
24-Jul-08	1	4	0	0	3	0	0
27-Sep-08	19	5	0	2	3	3	0
8-Oct-08	3	1	32	5	0	7	0
13-Oct-08	6	0	55	1	2	1	2
27-Oct-08	8	1	31	4	0	7	1
29-Oct-08	9	1	34	3	1	6	1
1-Aug-07	2	0	0	0	12	0	0
2-Nov-08	0	1	17	4	0	3	1
18-Mar-08	4	0	3	3	3	1	0
2-Oct-07	2	0	0	0	8	0	0
3-Nov-07	6	6	0	8	5	8	3
7-Nov-07	9	0	0	14	11	9	0
4-Mar-08	3	0	0	2	1	1	0
19-Mar-08	1	2	0	2	1	0	1
20-Mar-08	3	1	0	4	0	4	1
22-Apr-08	2	0	0	0	0	3	1

Figure 3: Subcategories for ‘establishing justice’ and ‘promoting general welfare’

Source: By the Authors

As it can be seen in the above graph in all of Obama’s selected speeches there have been some references to one or more of themes and subcategories to promote general welfare and to establish justice. The following graph also presents the percentage of the frequency for each theme under the two categories:



Graph 4: promoting general welfare establishing justice

Source: By the Authors

The percentage coverage of the two categories is depicted; the two issues have been addressed in all speeches during 2008 campaign. Obama offers a number of economic plans for the promotion of general welfare in America and for getting us out of economic crisis. He also mentions that he has worked to make reforms and changes that benefit American middle class families in Senate, by presenting laws he has worked to pass in the Senate. (Obama, November 7, 2007, March 20, 2008, October 2, 2007).

To achieve his goals to promote general welfare, Obama has presented some major plans in his campaign. Tax relief for 95% of working families is what he always refers to(Obama, September 27, 2008). Ending Iraq war and redirecting budget to improve the infrastructures in America, roads, schools, bridges and etc., a universal system of health care, and recruiting an army of teachers are examples of his plans for promotion of general welfare and establishment of justice. (Obama, March 19, 2008) However, he reminds people that he is not going to make a big government which is responsible for solving all problems people encounter(Obama, May 6, 2008). Obama through his plans for the promotion of general welfare and establishing justice, wants to ‘restore confidence; confidence in America, confidence in America economy, and confidence in themselves.’(Obama, October 13, 2008) The point he repeatedly mentions is that for years the leadership in Washington has distanced American economy and society further away from its ideals of ‘life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness’, and people have been left on their own to struggle for their lives in vain(Obama, October 13, 2008).Obama believes that a functional government in America is the one which is closer to helping people to achieve and realize the American Dream for themselves and for their posterity.

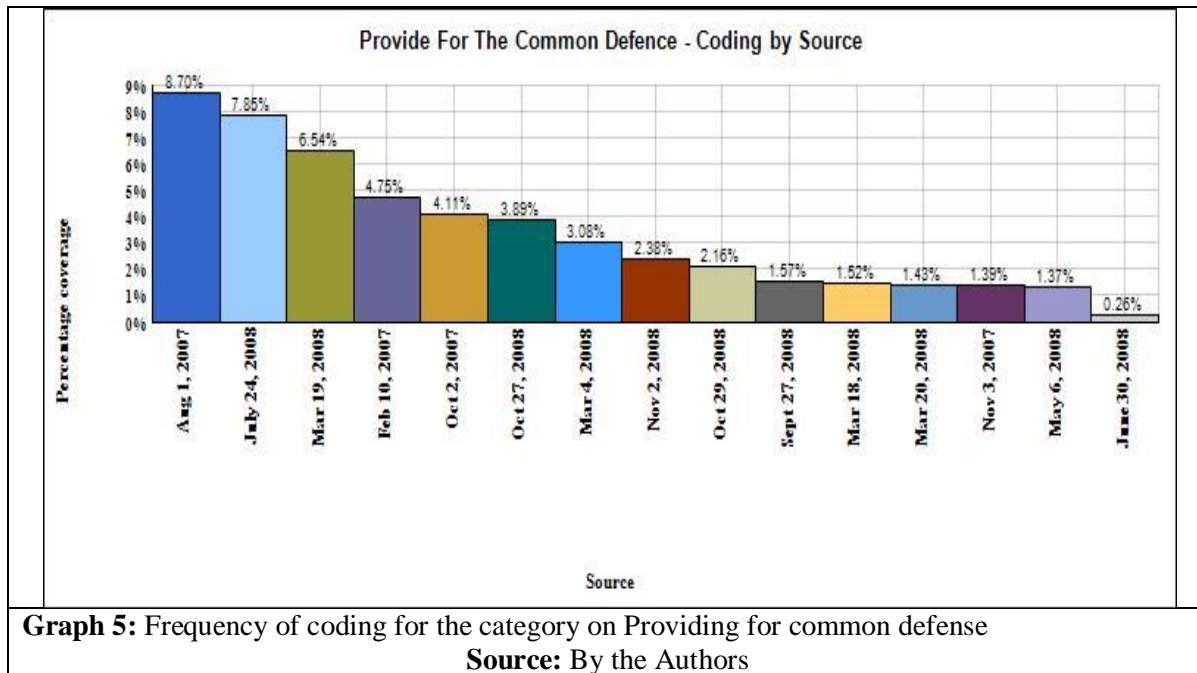
3.3. Fourth and Fifth Categories: Insure Domestic Tranquility And Providing for Common Defense

The paper has discovered that insuring domestic tranquility which is about insuring national security and maintaining peace, is entangled with the category on providing common defense, which is about maintaining the safety of America in the face of foreign threat. In other words, America’s domestic security and its security worldwide are intertwined. The following figure depicts the frequency of the themes under this category. The new category is divided into some subcategories: Iraqiwar, war in Afghanistan and the United States policies toward Pakistan and al-Qaida, national security, and domestic and global terrorism. As the Figure 5 shows the category with the most references is the war in Iraq; since it has national and global significance for the security and safety of the United States.

	Provide For Common Defense	Afghanistan	Insure Domestic Tranquility	Iraq war	National Security	Terrorists
22-Apr-08	0	0	0	3	0	0
Aug 1, 200	19	20	1	29	20	70
10-Feb-07	5	0	1	11	1	0
24-Jul-08	8	6	2	1	0	2
21-Jun-08	0	0	0	4	0	0
3-Jun-08	0	1	0	6	0	0
30-Jun-08	1	1	0	5	0	0
18-Mar-08	1	0	0	0	0	0
19-Mar-08	10	17	10	63	7	13
20-Mar-08	2	3	0	56	2	1
4-Mar-08	1	0	3	2	0	0
6-May-08	1	0	0	3	0	0
2-Nov-08	4	1	0	4	0	1
3-Nov-07	1	1	0	7	0	1
7-Nov-07	0	0	0	0	0	0
13-Oct-08	0	0	0	0	0	0
2-Oct-07	11	2	7	67	10	12
27-Oct-08	3	0	0	3	0	1
29-Oct-08	2	0	0	3	0	0
8-Oct-08	0	0	0	1	0	0
27-Sep-08	1	0	0	1	0	0

Figure 5: frequency on providing common defense and insuring domestic tranquility
Source: By the Authors

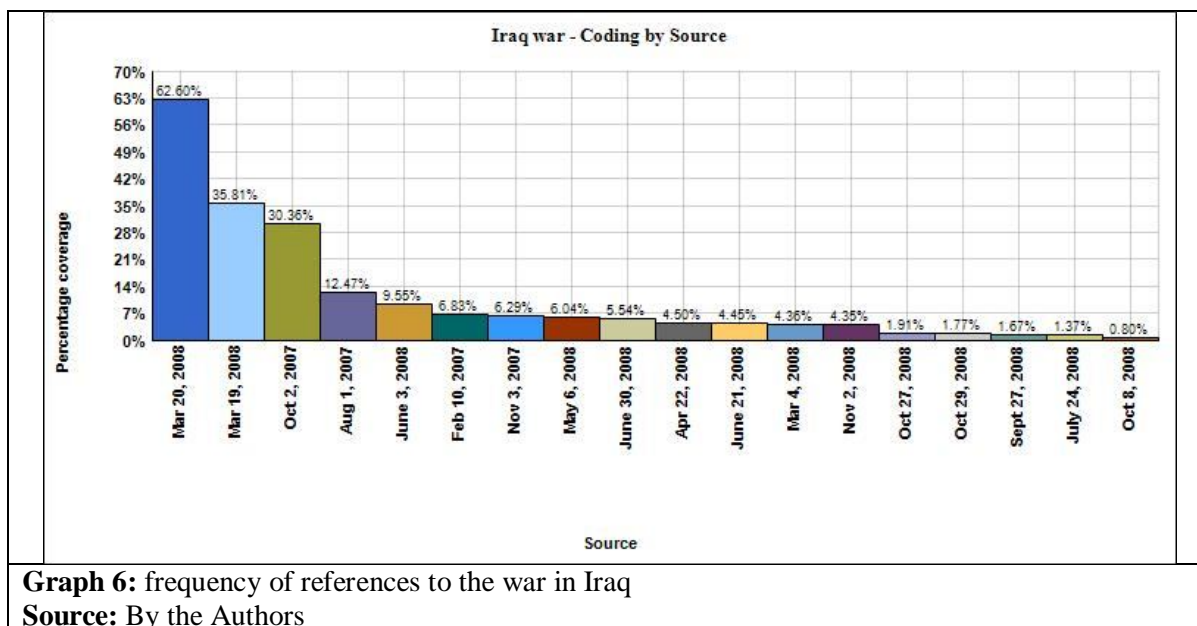
Graph 5 also represents the percentage for the frequency of each node under the two merged categories.



Lamenting on the current situation regarding homeland security and domestic tranquility, Obama believes sensible measure had not been taken to respond to 9/11 terrorist attack on US soil. He regrets that new strategies were not devised, and new alliances were not built to secure American homeland and safeguard American values (Obama, August 1, 2007). Some of the subcategories are discussed in details below.

3.3.1. The war in Iraq

More than two hundred direct references have been made to the war in Iraq in Obama’s selected speeches. There was also an event in which Obama specially addressed the issue of the war in Iraq with a speech he made in August 1, 2007, ‘The War We Need to Win.’ In that occasion he states that the war on Iraq was a misrepresentation of 9/11, since Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11; moreover he calls it a ‘dumb war’, ‘a rash war’, ‘a misguided war’, ‘a war with no end’, and ‘a mistake’; he observes that he had been worried about a " U.S. occupation of undetermined length, at undetermined cost, with undetermined consequences" in the heart of the Muslim world. (Obama, August 1, 2007). Since this issue has been repeated more often than not, the chart for the percentage of references to the Iraq war is provided below:



To summarize his campaign views, the Iraq war has been started on wrong premises; there were no evidence of Iraq having weapons of mass destruction; and Iraq had no operational ties to al-Qaida (Obama, March 19, 2008). Keeping the American armies and troops in Iraq for so long, on the other hand, has had grave consequences for the nation. The military is overstretched and thousands have given their lives or been wounded; billions of tax payers' dollars are spent in Iraq and America is not even better off or safer as a result of it (Obama, March 19, 2008). So, Obama offers a plan for ending this war in a responsible and more cautious way than waging it, and he offers bringing back the troops to the United States and giving the veterans the care they need and deserve (Obama, August 1, 2007).

3.3.2. Afghanistan and Pakistan

Contrary to the war in Iraq, Obama very strongly supports the war in Afghanistan and believes their job in there is not yet over and they have to send more troops and resources to Afghanistan to fight against al-Qaida (Obama, August 1, 2007). He believes that parts of Afghanistan are falling into the hands of the Taliban, and a mix of terrorism, drugs, and corruption threatens to overwhelm the country (Obama, August 1, 2007). He goes on to offer his plans as president regarding the issue of Afghanistan: As President, I would deploy at least two additional brigades to Afghanistan to re-enforce our counter-terrorism operations and support NATO's efforts against the Taliban. ... We must also put more of an Afghan face on security by improving the training and equipping of the Afghan Army and Police, and including Afghan soldiers in U.S. and NATO operations (Obama, August 1, 2007). Obama is concerned that in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, America's strategies are flawed and he emphasizes that in order to provide America's security they have to start fighting the war that needs to be won on the central front of war against al-Qaida in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Obama, March 19, 2008).

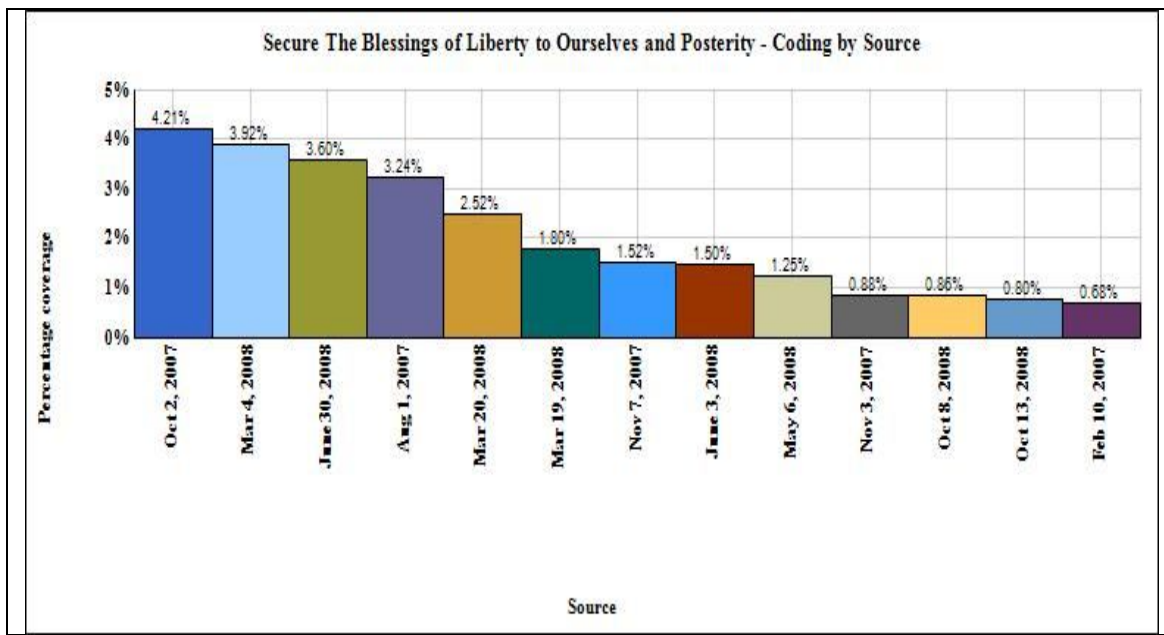
He also asserts that America's success in Afghanistan is dependent on America's policy toward Pakistan: For years, we have supported stability over democracy in Pakistan, and gotten neither. The core leadership of al Qaeda has a safe-haven in Pakistan. The Taliban are able to strike inside Afghanistan and then return to the mountains of the Pakistani border. Throughout Pakistan, domestic unrest has been rising. ... A child growing up in Pakistan, more often than not, is taught to see America as a source of hate - not hope (ibid). Therefore, he believes, by supporting Pakistan president and neglecting the interest of the Pakistanis, America's security would not be maintained. He offers that America's military counter-terrorism assistance to Pakistan must be conditioned on Pakistani action to root out al-Qaida sanctuary. "U.S. aid not directly needed for the fight against al Qaeda or to invest in the Pakistani people should be conditioned on the full restoration of Pakistan's democracy and rule of law" (Obama, March 19, 2008).

3.3.3. National Security and Terrorism

At the core of all remarks on national security, rests Obama's references to the events of 9/11 and US government responses to them (Obama, August 1, 2007). He promises that as president he will create a Shared Security Partnership Program to forge an international intelligence and law enforcement infrastructure to take down terrorist networks from the remote islands of Indonesia, to the sprawling cities of Africa (Obama, August 1, 2007). To summarize, Obama believes in order to address global terror and violent extremism, they need the kind of comprehensive US counter-terrorism strategy that he had offered before. He suggests that they need to strengthen security partnerships to take out terrorist networks, while investing in education and opportunity. (Obama, March 19, 2008)

3.4. Sixth Category: Secure the Blessings of Liberty to Americans and Their Posterity

Since, securing the blessing of liberty to Americans and their posterity is the sixth reason stated in the preamble to the Constitution of the United States, for which the Founding Fathers have drafted the text of the Constitution, many statements made by Obama during his speech deliveries in 2008 campaign can be categorized under this theme. In defining freedom, Obama argues freedom must mean freedom from fear, not the freedom of anarchy. And, freedom must also mean freedom from want, not freedom lost to an empty stomach (Obama, August 1, 2007). That is why he promises to make poverty reduction a key part of helping nations to reduce anarchy. In the Graph 7, the frequency of references to this theme is depicted:



Graph 7: frequency of references to secure the blessing of liberty to ourselves and posterity
Source: By the Authors

In explaining his plans for securing the blessing of liberty in the United States, Obama promises once he is president, no more illegal wire-tapping of American citizens would occur. No more national security order to spy on citizens who are not suspects of a crime would be issued. No more tracking citizens who do nothing more than protest a misguided war would be reported. And, no more ignoring the law, when it is inconvenient, would happen. Then Obama admits his faith in the Constitution and the rule of law in the United States: our constitution works (Obama, August 1, 2007). What is noticeable in Obama's suggested plans for changing America and for securing the blessings of liberty to the next generation is that, like the great leaders he refers to such as George Washington, Lincoln and Truman, has an eye to the posterity in his plans. For instance criticizing the war in Iraq he argues: Instead of fighting this war, we could be freeing ourselves from the tyranny of oil, and saving this planet for our children (Obama, June 30, 2008). Or criticizing Bush-McCain policies of ballooning debts, he comments: that debt also places an unfair burden on our children and grandchildren, who will have to repay it (Obama, March 20, 2008).

In one occasion he even goes as far as claiming that his purpose for running for president is give his children and American children the same chances that he was given by the previous generations. (Obama, November 3, 2007) He also promises that he would be honest with American people and would tell them the truth. He is rather, determined to turn the page on a growing empire of classified information, and restore the balance they have lost between the necessarily secret and the necessity of openness in a democratic society by creating a new National Declassification Center (Obama, October 2, 2007).

Conclusion

A look back to the American history and its Founding Fathers makes it clear that the initial reason for the establishment of this country has been making a more perfect union. According to Obama, this task of forming a more perfect union is an everlasting process which constantly calls on American generations to be answered. Hence, for him, the 2008 election is one of those defining moments for America to become a more perfect union. Obama representing the typical American man of the twenty first century speaks for the "we" in the preamble; as the US Constitution states "we the people of the United States of America, in order to make a more perfect union... ." Obama, accordingly, states that he believes in their ability to perfect this union because it's the only reason he is running his campaign. He knows the promise of America, as he states that he has lived it (Obama, May 6, 2008). As discussed earlier, forming a more perfect union has been repeatedly mentions as Obama's stated reason for running for president. In so doing, he needed to convince his audience to get together and unite as a nation. He draws on the change theme, introducing it as contingent and urgent and encouraging people to believe that they can bring change about if they unite, once more at that moment.

But, since Americans are mostly fed up with politics and disappointed with their leaders, Obama uses the theme of 'hope' to light up people and give them the necessary inspiration they need to answer the call of change. On the other hand, people should have in mind a certain mindset which makes following 'change' and hoping for change and making a better union in their country, as meaningful as possible. That vehicle or mindset for Americans to opt for the formation of a more perfect union is 'patriotism': The intrinsic quality of willingness to sacrifice one's values for the sake of a higher cause. Besides, according to Obama, patriotism is something higher and more than mere loyalty to one's country or its values, but is what gives meaning to the American identity.

The change in this campaign with all its components is changing in policies and politics, change in ethics and life principles, change in government, in rules and regulations, and is mainly intended to lead to the fulfillment of America dream. That is to say, as Founding Documents of America, like Declaration of Independence demonstrates or the Constitution of the United States embodies, American government and political system should enable individuals to follow their dreams and enjoy the rights of 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness' (Obama, March 19, 2008).

Therefore, when a government which was meant to be 'of the people, for the people, by the people', is distracted from the main road and does not serve the needs of people, it should go through fundamental change or in the case of Bush Administration, it should be replaced with another one. And, these changes, as repeated throughout the campaign so many times, should come from bottom-up and not from top-down. According to Obama, this is claimed to be the way Americans acted throughout their history. What Obama does, is portraying the current time as a particular time in the US history, which he several times refers to it as 'the defining moment', which should be faced with certain strategies to enable America to go back to its, supposedly, glory and success; Obama, as a first step suggests that America cannot get rid of the present undesirable situation, once it is divided. So the change theme becomes a big part of the category for making a more perfect union; as if the power of America is in its being united. He emphasizes that for change to happen, it is necessary to put aside divisions and differences. And encourages people that: "This is our moment and our time for change" (Obama, October 13, 2008).

What was discovered during the conduct of the content analysis for this thesis was that in every era one aspect of American Dream would become bold as a result of circumstances prevailing that era. During the campaign of the 2008, since America was suffering from a failed leadership and a failed economy, the economic aspect of the American Dream was bolded to draw people's attention. This could be a reason for Obama's offering 'the American Dream agenda' or for stating that his purpose is reclaiming the American Dream; then focusing on economics as the main issue in his campaign; offering change in aspects which would alleviate the pain of the ordinary Americans; saving them a fulfillment of the American Dream. It seems as if Obama or those who have composed his speeches for delivery have put the definition of American Dream before them and wrote Obama's suggested plans based on that. Also Obama's knowledge of the Constitution, since he is a constitution lawyer, can explain the fact that his speeches can be categorized based on the reasons for drafting the Constitution. Nation building in Obama's presidency and his attempts is also worthy of attention. He has been echoing Lincoln in many ways, and his focus on making a more perfect union remains at the center to this day. Obama's ultimate success in reclaiming the American Dream remains to be proved based on his performance as the president of the United States.

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