

**American presidents, their personal and psychological characteristics, and their uses of
military force**

by

Brendan Mitchell Lichtenberg

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Program of Study Committee:
Mark Nieman, Major Professor
Mack Shelley
Lawrence McDonnell

The student author and the program of study committee are solely responsible for the content of this thesis. The Graduate College will ensure this thesis is globally accessible and will not permit alterations after a degree is conferred.

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ABSTRACT

The decision by American Presidents to use military force is a decision that is not taken lightly nor whimsically. This study attempted to determine whether any personal or psychological characteristics influence the President's decision to use military force or to refrain from using military force. While other factors could influence the President's decision, I believed that individual factors including personal and psychological characteristics would be able to most effectively explain the use of military force. Uses of military force were collected from a Congressional Research Service report listing all uses of military force from 1798 to 2015. The uses of force by each President were then cross-tabulated with the individual factors I was investigating. Based on the previous findings by Michael C. Horowitz, Allan C. Stam, and Cali M. Ellis that showed correlation between a leader's personal experiences and the use of military force, I hypothesized that there would be similar findings among American Presidents. The results show that individual factors and personal characteristics may give little indication or its effects are overstated as to whether a President is more prone to use military force or less prone to use military force. Many of the results contradict existing literature, but due to the small sample size of American presidencies the results may not be truly representative. At best, it can be inferred that American Presidents aren't as significantly affected by individual factors and personal characteristics compared to other world leaders and that other factors of explanation hold equal importance. Future research areas that may merit investigation include Presidential verbal syntax and operational coding.

CHAPTER 1

OPERATION EAGLE CLAW

November 4, 1979, was the beginning of the end of President Jimmy Carter's political career in public office, although President Carter himself likely had no idea how much the Iranian Hostage Crisis would prove to be his downfall. It was on this day that the American embassy in Tehran, Iran was stormed by a revolutionary student group that had supported the previous year's revolution that toppled the American backed Shah Reza Pahlavi. Fifty-two Americans were now held hostage. Military options were considered almost immediately, ranging from a declaration of war¹, a naval blockade, mining Iranian ports, and even a proposal to send in the 82nd Airborne Division to Tehran and marching on the embassy to free the hostages.² Before any military action was taken, President Carter attempted to free the hostages through peaceful means by releasing a six-point plan, one of which hesitantly offered to address grievances with Iran in exchange for the safe release of the hostages.³ After a deal could not be reached, the United States broke diplomatic relations with Iran. Initially unwilling to take military action Carter now believed a diplomatic solution was impossible.⁴

Three meetings were held in 1980, on March 22, April 11, and April 15, where the decisions to use military force to free the hostages were taken. The initial estimates for the probability of success were literally "zero."⁵ On average, there were nine participants in these meetings. On the orders of the President, a joint operation was undertaken. Despite the Carter

¹ Despite the United States' willingness to actively use force, Congress has only declared war on five occasions. The last time the United States declared war on any countries was during World War II in 1942 when war was declared on the minor Axis powers of Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania.

² Charles G. Cogan, "Desert One and Its Disorders" *The Journal of Military History* (2003): 205.

³ *ibid.* 207.

⁴ *ibid.* 208.

⁵ Steve Smith, "Policy Preferences and Bureaucratic Position: The Case of the American Hostage Rescue Mission" in *The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy: Insights and Evidence* (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield). 345.

administration publicly pressing for a negotiated settlement, the planning process for a rescue mission began two days after the hostages were taken, on November 6, 1979.

Smith describes President Carter as more than just a bureaucratic actor and that he could act in a way based on his personal influences.⁶ Carter wanted to avoid any blatant use of American military force yet the American public was pressuring him to “do something.”⁷ Because 1980 was an election year, he faced intense criticism from the Republican Party and even from within the Democratic Party as he was being challenged by Senator Ted Kennedy in a bitter primary election. Because of Carter’s fears that the hostages would not be freed until after 1980 and therefore after the election in November, Carter decided he could no longer wait. Smith describes Carter’s actions as a response to his desire to be reelected, his perception of responsibility, and protecting American national honor.⁸ He added that “Clearly, Carter’s personality was an important factor.”⁹

The Hawks in Carter’s cabinet included National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski and Defense Secretary Harold Brown. Per Smith they took their positions based on a bureaucratic framework. The Doves included Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, who vehemently opposed the mission, a position Smith believed also was taken due to his bureaucratic position as the hostages were mostly from the State Department. He voiced his objections in the meeting that occurred on April 15 but was met by a “deafening silence” from those in attendance.¹⁰ Brzezinski noted that “In a way, the decision had been foreshadowed by the discussion initiated at the March 22 briefing at Camp David. From that date on, the rescue mission became the obvious option if negotiations failed—and on that point there was almost unanimous consent

⁶ *ibid.* 349

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ *ibid.* 350.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ *ibid.* 356.

within the top echelons of the Administration.”¹¹ As always, the President had made the final decision; the President’s cabinet and advisors serve at his pleasure. Secretary of State Vance tendered his resignation to Carter on April 21 after he had been clearly marginalized by the Carter administration. Per their agreement, the resignation would not become public until after the rescue mission no matter its outcome.¹²

There were two deadlines imposed upon the planners of the mission. By May 1 there would be only sixteen minutes of darkness more than required for the mission and by May 10 the temperature would be too high and likely affect helicopter performance.¹³ The planners recommended April 24 as the mission date. On that date, Operation Eagle Claw commenced. Special forces from 1st Special Forces Operation Detachment-Delta, the Delta Force, would be ferried by Air Force C-130 transport aircraft to an improvised airstrip in the desert known as Desert One. From here, they would be transported by eight Navy RH-53 Sea Stallion helicopters that would have arrived from the USS Nimitz to Desert Two, located about 50 miles southeast of Tehran. Then, the CIA would procure trucks and drivers to transport the Delta operators to the embassy and Foreign ministry, where three other hostages were held, to conduct their assault.

Problems arose shortly into the mission. Of the eight helicopters launched from the Nimitz, one experienced mechanical issues and was forced to land short of Desert One while another turned around after the pilot became severely disoriented after a severe dust storm known as a *haboob* caught the helicopter pilots completely by surprise. Upon arrival at Desert One, one helicopter was determined to be too dangerous to fly. With only five helicopters remaining, the commanders on the ground recommended that the mission be aborted.¹⁴

¹¹ *ibid.* 348.

¹² *ibid.* 356.

¹³ *ibid.* 347.

¹⁴ Charles G. Cogan, “Desert One and Its Disorders” *The Journal of Military History* (2003): 213.

The White House was now aware of the situation. Brzezinski briefly contemplated recommending to the President to proceed with the mission outright but decided to leave the fate of the mission to the commanders on the ground. Per their recommendation, President Carter ordered the mission to be called off. Distraught, Carter put his head down onto the Resolute desk in utter disbelief without the knowledge of what would happen next.¹⁵ Immediately after the mission was aborted, one of the helicopters accidentally collided with a parked C-130 and exploded, killing eight people. Operation Eagle Claw had been a complete failure. The political fallout was immediate, Secretary of State Vance's resignation was made public and Congress and the American public were demanding answers. The hostages were then dispersed to multiple locations to prevent any future rescue attempts by the United States. The resulting aftermath of Eagle Claw, occurring in an election year, produced fatal electoral consequences for the Carter presidency. Former California Governor Ronald Reagan was elected in November 1980 by a landslide, claiming 489 electoral votes to Carter's 49. To add insult to injury, the American hostages were released hours after President Carter left office on January 20, 1981.

The Decision to Use Force – Factors that Influence the President's Decision

As seen by the previous example, the decision by the President to use force and send American servicemen and women into harm's way is not a decision that is taken lightly nor is it taken whimsically. Carter had agonized over the use of force and made several attempts to avoid using it. The decision is a calculated and collaborative decision between the President's cabinet and formal advisors in the Executive Office or the President's long-time trustees who hold no formal political office. If a war proves to be unpopular or the military action proves to be a disastrous failure like Operation Eagle Claw was for President Carter, the electoral consequences would be severe if not career-ending.

¹⁵ *ibid.* 214.

I have identified at least five factors of explanation or analysis that may explain the President's propensity to use force. These five factors are individual, societal, governmental, bureaucratic, and external factors. Each of these factors could be determinants of whether the decision is made to use force. The purpose of my research is not to deny that each of these factors may assist in explaining the President's decision to use force. Instead, I will advance an argument about why individual factors may be the most potent explanation.

Individual Factors

The individual influences on the office are made possible by the Constitution's deliberately vague wording. The framers were fearful of creating a tyrannical government that they had previously fought to rid themselves of in the Revolutionary War. The powers of the Presidency are succinctly described in Article II of the Constitution. Article II, Section 1, Clause 1 states that "The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same Term..." Article II, Section 2, Clause 1 designates the President as the "...Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of several States." Article II, Section 2, Clause 2 grants the President the power to make treaties with foreign countries with advice and consent of the Senate. Article II, Section 3 concludes by declaring that "...he shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed, and shall Commission all the Officers of the United States."

There are many other clauses in Article II that detail how the President is elected, when the election of the President will occur, who is eligible to hold the office, a plan of succession in case of a vacancy, how much the President will be paid, the oath of office that must be taken, appointing judges and officers, the ability to grant pardons and reprieves, and delivering a State

of the Union address. The only reference to the powers and duties of the President were in Section 1 Clause 1, Section 2 Clauses 1 and 2, and Section 3. This leaves the powers of the Presidency open to differing interpretations.

How exactly the President can operate has been debated over the entirety of American history by the court systems, academics, and even by the Presidents themselves. Then a Professor at the time, Woodrow Wilson believed the President “has the right, in law and conscience, to be as big a man as he can” and that “only his capacity will set the limit.”¹⁶ In a similar vein, President Theodore Roosevelt stated his belief was that it was his right and duty to do anything that the nation needed unless it was unconstitutional or forbidden by law. President William Howard Taft, however, had a strict constructionist view of the office and how the President could operate, by writing “The true view of the executive functions is, as I conceive it, that the president can exercise no power which cannot be fairly and reasonably traced to some specific grant of power... Such specific grant must be either in the federal constitution or in an act of Congress passed in pursuance thereof.”¹⁷

There are numerous factors at an individual level that could influence the decision to use force. The nature of the office, having no formal requirements or qualifications other than those laid out in the Constitution in Article II Section 1 Clause 5, allows for the office to be personally tailored to the personality of the President. The forty-four men who have served as President came from many different backgrounds and upbringings. The previous career paths of Presidents have ranged from farmers, lawyers, soldiers and officers, academics, and businessmen among

¹⁶ Woodrow Wilson, *Constitutional Government in the United States*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1908), 202, 205.

¹⁷ William Howard Taft, *Our Chief Magistrate and His Powers* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1916), 139–140.

many others. It may be plausible to suggest that a President's previous political history and personal experience would shape the decision to use force.

Societal Factors

For force to be used, the President may find it necessary to cite public opinion as a reasoning to use force or cite public opinion as a reason to not use force. In *How Public Opinion Constrains the Use of Force*, Matthew A. Baum argues that public opinion and scrutiny could inhibit Presidents from using force as a foreign policy tool.¹⁸ The American public views direct military involvement only as a last resort reserved for extreme circumstances.¹⁹ The American public also tends to make a decision on support for use of force on a case by case basis, supporting use of force against Iraq if Saudi Arabia were to be invaded yet disapproved the potential use of force against North Korea if South Korea were to be invaded.²⁰ The President, by nature of his office and the platform that he has, has the potential to make his case to the American public and shape public opinion in his favor.

I do not believe that societal factors are the most important considerations in the use of force, but I readily admit that certain risk-averse trends such as the Vietnam Syndrome could have resulted in fewer instances of the use of force. My reasoning for societal factors not being as important is that ultimately the President does not require the approval of the public to use force. The use of force in fact can retroactively raise public support; 32% of the American public supported President George H.W. Bush's use of force against Panama in 1989 prior to the invasion. After the invasion, public support skyrocketed to 82.5%.²¹

¹⁸ Matthew A. Baum, "How Public Opinion Constrains the Use of Force: The Case of Operation Restore Hope." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* Vol. 34, No. 2 (2004): 187.

¹⁹ Catherine M. Kelleher "Soldering on: U.S. Public Opinion on the Use of Force." *The Brookings Review* Vol. 12, No. 2 (1994): 27.

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ Bruce W. Jentleson, "The Pretty Prudent Public: Post Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Military Force." *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 36, No. 1 (1992): 55.

Governmental and Bureaucratic Factors

Institutional support, namely from Congress, may be another determinant in the use of force. The President may be more willing to use force when his party has a majority in the House and Senate. Article I, Section 8, Clause 11 grants Congress the sole power to declare war. There have been only five declared wars in American history: the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II.

But the powers of the Presidency seemed to always make the Congressional responsibility to declare war unnecessary. Chief Justice Roger Taney, in his opinion of the 1850 Supreme Court case *Fleming v. Page*, made a clear distinction between the power of the Presidency and the power of a monarchy with regards to war making and conquest, as there is to be a distribution of power between the various departments as well as Congress. Initially Congress was designated the power to “make” war during the debates at the Constitutional convention until it was realized that Presidents in times of emergency may need to direct the military without being able to consult with Congress.²² One may cynically determine that a President could in fact interpret “emergencies” as he so pleased to suit his motives. Such an interpretation did in fact occur in 1818, as a “defensive war” was conducted without Congressional approval by President James Monroe in the First Seminole War. The Supreme Court later affirmed the President’s authority in *Martin v. Mott* to “...decide whether exigency has arisen.”²³ Congressional power had already been ceded.

In a well-meaning attempt to reign in Presidential war powers and the use of force, the War Powers Resolution was passed by Congress in 1973 and made law after overriding President Richard Nixon’s veto. The Resolution’s stated purpose was to “insure that the collective

²² Louis Fisher, *Presidential War Power: Third Edition, Revised*. (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2013), 8.

²³ *Martin v. Mott*, 25 U.S. 12 Wheat. 19 (1827)

judgment of both the Congress and the President will apply to the introduction of United States Armed Forces into hostilities.”²⁴ The War Powers Resolution in fact strengthened the ability of the President to use force as Congress had no enforcement power to stop him. It requires the President to notify Congress within 48 hours of deployment of the armed forces. If not approved by Congress, the President is given a 60-day time limit to direct the armed forces essentially however he sees fit and then has 30 days to withdraw them from action.

Institutional support may give the President the political capital he needs to use force. But the President, just as the case is in my review of societal factors, will often act without the approval or support of Congress by instead citing his constitutional powers or the bylaws and resolutions of international bodies such as the United Nations. I do not believe government and bureaucratic factors alone explain the use of force.

External Factors

Without question, there have been times in the history of the Presidency where external factors and events have strongly influenced the President to act in self-defense and use force as a retaliatory measure. The United States bombing of Libya on April 15, 1986, was ordered by President Ronald Reagan as retaliation for the bombing of a Berlin discotheque frequented by American servicemen ten days previously by agents of the Libyan government. President Bill Clinton also ordered a missile strike on June 26, 1993 against the Iraqi Intelligence Services headquarters in Baghdad in response to an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate former President George H.W. Bush in April 1993.²⁵ Perhaps there could be some personal characteristics in both President Reagan and President Clinton that would have further provided reason for them to use force in these situations, but when there are significant attacks against Americans or American

²⁴ War Powers Resolution, 50 U.S.C Chapter 33 (1973).

²⁵ Congressional Research Service, United States of America, *Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2015*, Washington D.C., United States of America, 2015, 18.

interests even the most passive of Presidents would be provoked into responding. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 that drew the United States into World War II and the terrorist attacks perpetrated by Al Qaeda on September 11, 2001 that saw the United States launch the Global War on Terrorism would be the two most obvious examples where the President would face overwhelming political and public pressure and have no choice but to retaliate with force or ask Congress to declare war.

Investigation of Individual Factors

I believe individual factors would be able to most effectively explain the use of force, and the overall goal of my research is to determine the President of the United States' propensity to use force. Many questions could be asked including whether psychological characteristics, previous military experience, previous foreign policy experience, previous occupation, previous higher education status, age, and political party membership play a role in determining when the President will use military force. I have used the Congressional Research Service's report "Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad" to determine what actions taken by Presidents are considered uses of force. I have selected a few instances listed in the article that I believe were significantly influenced by individual factors.

"Mr. Madison's War" – The War of 1812 and Congressional Cooperation

On June 18, 1812, the United States declared a state of war between themselves and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Among the issues leading to the war were British interception of neutral ships and blockades of the United States during British hostilities with France.²⁶ Another major issue was the impressment of Americans into the British Navy.

²⁶ Congressional Research Service, *Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2015*. 2.

Brien Hallet writes that the congressional power to declare war could not be exercised without strong and insistent presidential leadership and decision making.²⁷ It's without question that Congress was very reluctant to declare war on Great Britain; the final vote tallies were 79-49 in the House and 19-13 in the Senate to declare war. President James Madison, a Democratic-Republican, had to intensely lobby Congress to declare war. While Hallet writes that the interception of neutral ships was a very real issue, he asks why anyone would care about this issue outside of New England since this issue rarely affected other states and regions.²⁸ President Madison along with other war hawks attempted to frame the approaching war as a "second revolutionary war."²⁹

While President Madison was 58 years old when he took office in 1809, it is important to note that Congress was composed mostly of members who were of young age during the Revolution. Hallet describes that these young Congressmens' desire for war was not based on any knowledge and was a spontaneous expression of youthful enthusiasm and optimism which resulted in a burgeoning nationalism of the new young America.³⁰ James Madison himself was 25 years old when the Declaration of Independence was signed, making him one of the youngest Founding Fathers. This is in stark contrast to John Adams, a Federalist who was 41 years old at the time of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, who paid a dear political price for his decision to avoid a major war with France during his Presidency. This could explain Madison's enthusiasm for pursuing war like the other war hawks. Despite neither side losing any major pieces of territory, President Madison's rush to war resulted in few positives as the United States lost numerous battles and saw the capital of Washington DC and the White House burnt to the

²⁷ Brien Hallet, *Declaring War: Congress, The President, And What The Constitution Does Not Say*. (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 12.

²⁸ *ibid.* 15.

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ *ibid.* 22-23.

ground by the British. All Federalist Congressmen and Senators voted against the declaration of war and derisively referred to the war as “Mr. Madison’s War.”

The Korean War – Congressional Indifference

“We are not at war.” Said President Harry S. Truman in response to a question by a reporter asking whether the United States was at war in Korea.³¹ President Truman instead characterized the Korean War as a “police action.” Truman had ordered the United States to intervene in the Korean peninsula in June 1950 after North Korea invaded South Korea by citing UN Security Council Resolution 84 that called for all UN members to assist South Korea by all necessary means.³² President Truman did not seek the approval of members of Congress for his military actions in Korea.³³

The reaction by Congress was largely indifference. Senator Scott Lucas of Illinois stated on the floor of the Senate in 1950 that in the past Presidents had frequently used force without Congressional authorization.³⁴ Louis Fisher, in *Presidential War Power*, states that these past actions were not even close to the magnitude of the Korean War.³⁵ Presidential interpretation of the Constitution had slowly transformed from the ability to repel sudden attacks to what Edward S. Corwin described as an “Undefined power ... to employ without Congressional authorization the armed forces in the protection of American rights and interests abroad whenever necessary.”³⁶ The war proved to be very unpopular for the Truman administration and he did not seek reelection, ending approximately twenty years of Democratic control of the White House.

³¹ Fisher, *Presidential War Power: Third Edition, Revised*, 245.

³² *ibid.* 96.

³³ *ibid.* 97.

³⁴ *ibid.* 99.

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ Edward S. Corwin, “Who Has the Power to Make War?” *New York Times Magazine*, July 31, 1949. 14.

The Gulf War – *Fait Accompli*

On August 9, 1990, President George H.W. Bush reported that he had ordered the deployment of US Armed Forces to the Persian Gulf region to defend Saudi Arabia after the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq one week prior; he continued to report on the buildup of forces.³⁷ Congress would eventually authorize the use of force against Iraq on January 12, 1991. On January 18, 1991, US and Coalition forces began their air campaign followed shortly afterwards by the ground campaign that saw the Iraqi Army, the world's fifth largest at the time, routed in a mere one hundred hours.

One might observe that the fact that the Gulf War was authorized by Congress discredits my belief that individual characteristics of the Presidents most effectively explain why force is used and instead should be tallied as an example of a bureaucratic factor due to institutional support. I disagree, as does Michael J. Glennon in “The Gulf War and the Constitution.” Glennon describes the process as jury rigged and as a unilateral commitment by President George H.W. Bush to defend Saudi Arabia and then liberate Kuwait.³⁸ After President Bush announced an offensive troop buildup on November 8, 1990, Glennon argues that Bush's actions may have been a *fait accompli* for Congress as Bush was dead set on war no matter if Congress approved it or not.³⁹

Obama and Libya – Congressional Irrelevancy

On March 21, 2011, President Barack Obama submitted to Congress a report “consistent with the War Powers Resolution” stating that US military forces commenced operations in Libya on March 19, 2011, in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973.⁴⁰ The

³⁷ Congressional Research Service, *Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2015*. 14.

³⁸ Michael J. Glennon, “The Gulf War and the Constitution” *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 70, No. 2 (1991): 84.

³⁹ *ibid.* 97.

⁴⁰ Congressional Research Service, *Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2015*. 28.

resolution authorized all necessary means to protect civilians and civilian populated areas from the Libyan government led by Muammar Gaddafi.

The Republican-controlled House of Representatives and Democratic-controlled Senate failed to pass any authorizations for the use of force in Libya and by May 2011 the 60-day time limit to conduct military operations that the War Powers Resolution imposed had expired. By June 2011, the 30-day time limit that allowed for the withdrawal of armed forces also expired. The House passed a resolution that called for President Obama to submit a report to the House within 14 days describing US national security interests in Libya, including the “President’s justification for not seeking authorization by Congress for the use of military force in Libya.”⁴¹ The White House responded with a lengthy statement which said that “...the President had constitutional authority, as Commander in Chief, and Chief Executive and pursuant to his foreign affairs powers, to direct such limited military operations abroad.”⁴² Fisher notes that “Presidents go to great lengths to explain to Congress and the public their reasoning’s to circumvent constitutional principles.”⁴³

When Force is Not Used and “The President as King”

Just as the Presidents from prior examples showed they had the means to use military force with or without Congressional approval, they can also choose not to use military force. While inferences from some of these examples can be made to support the viewpoint that uses of military force are decisions made by institutions and not the leaders of those institutions, there is literature to suggest otherwise. Richard E. Neustadt, in *Presidential Power*, noted that despite the rise of what has been described as the “institutionalized Presidency” by the introduction of the Executive Office of the President, the “...sporting chance to do the chores of office will not

⁴¹ Louis Fisher, *Presidential War Power: Third Edition, Revised*. 242-243.

⁴² *ibid.* 243.

⁴³ *ibid.* 245.

automatically turn doing into influence.”⁴⁴ Furthermore, the presence of a National Security Council did not further deter President Harry S. Truman’s handling of the Korean War.⁴⁵ That is not to suggest the President rules absolutely without input from his cabinet and other advisors but that the President “...must become his own director of his own central intelligence.”⁴⁶ However, Stephen D. Krasner describes Neustadt’s approach in *Are Bureaucracies Important* as portraying “...the American president as trapped by a permanent government more enemy than ally.”⁴⁷ In essence, a President is no longer able to control the organizations around them for they have “...incompatible national, bureaucratic, political and personal objectives.”⁴⁸ Krasner disagrees stating that the bureaucratic interpretation of foreign policy is “misleading, dangerous and compelling: misleading because it obscures the power of the president; dangerous because it undermines the assumptions of democratic politics by relieving high officials of responsibility.”⁴⁹ Krasner states that if elected officials like the President are not responsible for the decisions they make then it makes little sense that voters would vote them out of office. Why vote someone out of office, Krasner asks, “...when his successor, regardless of his values, will be trapped in the same web of only incrementally mutable standard operating procedures?”⁵⁰ He continues to note that if the “machine” were responsible for all uses of military force that turn into disasters, the voting public would have feelings of sympathy and not feelings of vengefulness.

Even in his book *Essence of Decision*, a work that analyzes the decision-making processes of the Kennedy administration during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Graham Allison wrote

⁴⁴ Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1990.), 128.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ *ibid.* 129

⁴⁷ Stephen D. Krasner, “Are Bureaucracies Important? A Reexamination of Accounts of the Cuban Missile Crisis.” in *The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy: Insights and Evidence*, ed. Eugene R. Wittkopf and James M. McCormick (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999) 303.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ *ibid.* 303

⁵⁰ *ibid.* 304

decisions weren't made entirely on the basis of bureaucratic positions but also on personal interests.⁵¹ Despite Allison's belief that Kennedy's decisions during the crisis were mostly determined by the Executive Committee of the National Security Council or ExComm, he does state that President Kennedy did in fact veto a decision to bomb a SAM base.⁵² Krasner believes that "In general, bureaucratic analysts ignore the critical effect which the president has in choosing his advisers, establishing their access to decision making, and influencing bureaucratic interests."⁵³

Because the President can pick his advisors, he could therefore in theory compel them to do as he wishes or find someone else who will. As it relates to individual personalities of the Presidents and decision making, Krasner writes that "The President may even resort to his own knowledge and sense of history to find options which his bureaucracy fails to present. Even when Presidential attention is totally absent, bureaus are sensitive to his values. Policies which violate presidential objectives may bring presidential wrath."⁵⁴ Krasner believes the President defines his own role and that a different man can choose differently and that to say the office of President determined Kennedy's decisions or any President's decision to use force is "to both underrate his power and to relieve him of responsibility."⁵⁵ Krasner concludes that the final decision was with the President because "the elimination of the non-forcible options was a reflection of Kennedy's values."⁵⁶

Direction of the Research

In the forthcoming chapters, I will further investigate individual factors. I will investigate

⁵¹ *ibid.* 307

⁵² *ibid.* 308

⁵³ *ibid.* 308-309

⁵⁴ *ibid.* 309

⁵⁵ *ibid.* 311

⁵⁶ *ibid.* 315

whether there is any impact on their war-related decisions from their political party, average age, last political office, previous foreign policy experience, previous military experience, completion of higher education, occupation, and psychological characteristics from the NEO Revised Personality Inventory including neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. I will explain why such individual factors are important through existing literature.

CHAPTER 2

THEORY – DO INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS MATTER?

Existing literature does express support that individual characteristics matter with regards to the decision to use military force. In *Why Leaders Fight*, Michael C. Horowitz, Allan C. Stam, and Cali M. Ellis state that “New research in behavioral psychology...suggests that individuals’ early experiences profoundly shape their choices later in their lives.”⁵⁷ This is particularly important with regards to American Presidents, and the authors note the differences between the candidates from the 2004, 2008, and 2012 Presidential elections. The authors also state that leaders reason by analogy through their background experiences especially in cases regarding foreign policy as information is not always readily available in times of crisis, thus forcing leaders to rely on past experience.⁵⁸ They dispute the institutionalist arguments that state leaders are prisoners to the end-goals of institutions and they provide an extreme example to highlight their disagreement. They state that per institutionalist theory, the institutions of Germany in the 1930s were “...so powerful as to overcome the potential preferences of any leader who would come to power during that time.”⁵⁹ This line of reasoning from institutionalists could imply that Adolf Hitler was a victim of the existing institutions in Germany and had no hand in the actions taken that would eventually trigger World War II. A less extreme and more contemporary example, the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, is also viewed skeptically by Robert Jervis who argued in “Do Leaders Matter and How Would We Know?” that the invasion would have preceded as planned even if George W. Bush wasn’t President.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Michael C. Horowitz, Allan C. Stam, and Cali M. Ellis, *Why Leaders Fight*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 8.

⁵⁸ *ibid.* 10.

⁵⁹ *ibid.* 21.

⁶⁰ Robert Jervis, “Do Leaders Matter and How Would We Know?” *Security Studies* Vol 22, Issue 2 (2013)

Risk and the “Big Five” Psychological Characteristics

Horowitz et al. use the psychological definition of risk that says “individuals who are more likely to make choices in which high costs as well as high potential gains are at stake in situations where others would hesitate to act.”⁶¹ To explain what makes someone risk-averse or risk-acceptant, the authors cite the five-factor model of personality. These “big five” factors include neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness, and agreeableness. These factors, along with personal life experience, are well established in psychology literature as being influences on individual behavior and attitudes.⁶² These big five psychological can be quantified via the Revised NEO Personality Inventory.

Neuroticism is a personality trait that attempts to determine levels of anxiety. Facets of neuroticism include anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability.⁶³ Extraversion measures how social an individual is. Facets of extraversion include warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement seeking, and positive emotions. Openness to experience “contrasts poets, philosophers, and artists with farmers, machinists, and ‘down-to-earth’ people.”⁶⁴ Facets of openness to experience include openness to fantasy, openness to aesthetics, openness to feelings, openness to actions, openness to ideas, and openness to values.⁶⁵ Openness to experience is the only dimension of the “big five” that is related to intelligence. Agreeableness measures how individuals work with others. Facets of agreeableness include trust, straight-forwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty, and tender-

⁶¹ *ibid.* 29.

⁶² *ibid.* 32.

⁶³ Steven J. Rubenzer and Thomas R. Faschingbauer, *Personality, Character, and Leadership in the White House: Psychologists Assess the Presidents* (Dulles: Brassey’s Inc, 2004), 10.

⁶⁴ *ibid.* 9.

⁶⁵ *ibid.* 12.

mindedness.⁶⁶ Conscientiousness measures inner thought. Facets of conscientiousness include competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, and deliberation.⁶⁷

As no former or current American President would even consider participating in a psychological study for a research article, psychological scores of the big five factors are open to interpretation by those who attempt to assign scores to the Presidents. As Paul A. Kowert notes in “Where ‘Does’ the Buck Stop?: Assessing The Impact of Presidential Personality,” there is difficulty in establishing “relationships between personality, performance, and political outcomes.”⁶⁸ However, I’ve found the work of Rubenzer and Faschingbauer to be the best approximation of psychological characteristics of the Presidents. Only thirty Presidents were assigned psychological character scores as Rubenzer and Faschingbauer required that each President have at least three experts assign them percentile scores in the various categories. Rubenzer and Faschingbauer did not link these psychological characteristics to the use of military force but they did state that certain percentile scores could predict a successful presidency.

The Importance of Military Experience

Horowitz et al. believe military experience has a “...powerful and systematic impact on leaders’ behavior once they reach office.”⁶⁹ By serving in the military, future leaders become familiar by personally leading military operations that they themselves may have to order when they later become civilian leaders. Military service can also be a very traumatic experience if one experiences combat. Because of the stark differences between civilian and military leadership during the Cold War, the authors believe this provides evidence to support their claims that

⁶⁶ *ibid.* 13.

⁶⁷ *ibid.* 14.

⁶⁸ Paul A. Kowert, “Where ‘Does’ the Buck Stop?: Assessing the Impact of Presidential Personality” *Political Psychology* Vol. 17, No. 3 (1996): 446-447

⁶⁹ Horowitz, Stam, and Ellis, *Why Leaders Fight*, 35.

military experience matters as a determinant for the decision to use military force.⁷⁰ Military experience may make an individual more comfortable in using military force while combat experience may temper a leader's decision to use military force.⁷¹ Military experience in turn may also cause leaders to become more cautious citing General Dwight D. Eisenhower's belief that war was a last resort in extreme circumstances.⁷²

Peter D. Feaver and Christopher Gelpi also wrote extensively on military experience and the propensity to use force in the book "Choosing Your Battles." They argue that "...service in the U.S. military is an important socialization experience that shapes individuals' attitudes" and that they "do not appear to be forgotten when individuals leave the military and enter civilian life."⁷³ They concluded that American policymakers with military experience would be less likely to use military force and those that did use military force would be likelier to use higher levels of force.⁷⁴

The Importance of Education

Horowitz et al. write that education can influence the behavior of leaders but note there are conflicting results for whether education levels influence the decision to use military force. However, they cite a survey that shows "...a clear linear trend with higher levels of education making respondents less likely to view China as a threat and less likely to think that the use of military force against China would be an effective policy action."⁷⁵ Assuming the survey data are

⁷⁰ *ibid.* 35.

⁷¹ *ibid.* 36.

⁷² *ibid.* 37.

⁷³ Peter D. Feaver and Christopher Gelpi, *Choosing Your Battles: American Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 92.

⁷⁴ *ibid.* 94.

⁷⁵ Horowitz, Stam, and Ellis, *Why Leaders Fight*, 44.

correct, the authors are led to believe that “The higher a leader’s educational level, the lower the probability that the leader will use force against his or her neighbors.”⁷⁶

The Importance of Prior Occupation

Horowitz et al. write that “A leader’s occupation before his or her entry into politics is one of the clearest ways to conceptualize the socialization of a leader.”⁷⁷ They cite the work of psychologists Caspi and Roberts but also note the potential of a selection effect since most people will pick an occupation that aligns cleanly with their personality. As it relates to risk-taking, there isn’t any compelling literature to suggest there is a correlation. The authors argue that lawyers could be less likely to use military force owing to the belief that a lawyer may be more aware of opposing opinions; however, lawyers could also be more inclined to use military force owing to confidence in their own abilities.⁷⁸

The Importance of Age

Citing previous research, Horowitz et al. state that there is a correlation between age and a leader’s behavior in international conflict situations.⁷⁹ They explain the prevailing trope that younger leaders take more risks while older leaders are tempered by experience and thus take fewer risks. The authors once again point to psychology, where evidence would suggest higher levels of testosterone has a positive relationship between physical and emotional aggression.⁸⁰ As one ages, testosterone levels will decrease and therefore in theory less physical and emotional aggression. However, the question whether younger leaders or older leaders are more prone to using military force is not as straightforward as it may seem. Horowitz himself wrote in his previous research, “Leader Age, Regime Type, and Violent International Relations,” that older

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

⁷⁸ *ibid.* 45.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

leaders were more likely to use military force. One possible explanation they discussed was time horizons, essentially people are more likely to prefer choices with short term benefits than long term benefits. They argue that a younger leader has a longer time horizon, because they may remain in office or return to office later, they would be more likely to delay a risky decision.⁸¹ An older leader would have a shorter time horizon for they may soon be relinquishing power or pass away and therefore would be more likely to make risky decisions to solidify their legacy.⁸² Time horizons may not be limited to just elder leaders. One of the best examples of a short time horizon in a young President would be President John F. Kennedy. President Kennedy suffered from numerous health issues including Addison's disease which can be treated but has no known cures.

They also explain younger leaders may be more constrained by existing institutions because their assumption of power could have in part due to political patronage while older leaders have more institutional freedom due to their existing credibility and experience.⁸³ Their research found that "As the age of the leader of state A increases, the initiation and use of force against state B becomes more likely" although they could not determine with statistical significance if this would lead to an escalation to war.⁸⁴ One leader they cited to support their theory was President Ronald Reagan, the oldest President to be elected in American history. After nearly being struck down by an assassin's bullet, President Reagan felt he had a "mission" to fulfil and said that "Perhaps having come so close to death made me feel I should do whatever I could in the years God had given me to reduce the threat of nuclear war..."⁸⁵ During his eight

⁸¹ Michael Horowitz, Rose McDermott, Allan C. Stam. "Leader Age, Regime Type, and Violent International Relations" *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 49, No. 5 (2005). 668.

⁸² *ibid.*

⁸³ *ibid.*

⁸⁴ *ibid.* 673.

⁸⁵ Horowitz, Stam, and Ellis, *Why Leaders Fight*, 144.

years in office, Reagan presided over an increase in military spending because he was driven to leave a legacy that included his vision of the United States having won the Cold War over the Soviet Union.⁸⁶

Conclusions

Horowitz et al. do not claim that the previous characteristics are the sole explanations for why a leader would choose to use military force. They admit that “Neither history nor pure statistical correlations can give us clear-cut affirmative answers” but go on to explain that it shows “...leaders are not always buffeted by the forces of history, are not always overwhelmed by the constraints of material power, and are not automatons carrying out the desires of their selectorate.”⁸⁷ It would be reasonable to believe that perhaps some, but not all, individual characteristics may explain whether a leader is more likely to use military force or not. In the next chapter, I will further discuss these individual characteristics as well as my hypotheses.

⁸⁶ *ibid.* 143-144.

⁸⁷ *ibid.* 147.

CHAPTER 3

HYPOTHESIS AND METHODS

In this chapter, I will outline the variables used to test any apparent relationships between these variables and the use of force. I have collected my own data from numerous resources for the purposes of my research. It consists of the specific use of force and the time it was used, the President at the time force was used, the President's psychological profile and characteristics, the President's political party, the Presidents' mean age while in office, political office prior to becoming President, previous foreign policy experience, previous military experience, experience in higher education, and profession outside of the political arena. These previously mentioned factors are crosstabulated to attempt to determine whether they predispose Presidents to use more military force or less military force.

Neuroticism

Neuroticism is the first of the "big five" personality traits from the Revised NEO Personality Inventory and measures anxiety levels. Stress and anxiety unquestionably can affect decision making by either causing individuals to make rash decisions without thinking through other options or by causing individuals to become indecisive and procrastinate. For the purposes of my study, I believe that high neuroticism scores in Presidents would lead to indecisiveness and procrastination and therefore less instances of uses of military force.

H₁: Presidents with high levels of neuroticism are less inclined to use military force. Therefore, there will be a correlation between neuroticism and the use of military force.

Extraversion

Extraverted Presidents could be seen as ambitious in both domestic and foreign policies, I would expect this to be no different when it comes to the use of military force. I believe Presidents with high scores of extraversion will be more likely to use military force.

H₂: Presidents with high levels of extraversion are more inclined to use military force. Therefore, there will be a correlation between extraversion and the use of military force.

Openness to Experience

Presidents who are more open to experience would be more likely to take advice from their cabinet, of which those members would have foreign policy experience like the Secretary of State and potentially military experience with the Secretary of Defense. Therefore, I believe Presidents with high scores of openness to experience will be less inclined to use military force.

H₃: Presidents with high levels of openness to experience will be less inclined to use military force. Therefore, there will be a correlation between openness to experience and the use of military force.

Agreeableness

Like openness to experience, high scores in agreeableness could also decrease the use of military force as members of government at all levels may be able to dissuade the President from using force. Therefore, I believe Presidents who score low in agreeableness will be more inclined to use military force.

H₄: Presidents with low levels of agreeableness will be more inclined to use military force. Therefore, there will be a correlation between agreeableness and the use of military force.

Conscientiousness

This personality trait with regards to my research question presents an interesting paradox. Theoretically, a President scoring high in conscientiousness would be a President who is considered principled and understands what actions would be right and wrong. However, this could mean a President could initiate numerous uses of military force for causes believed to be noble and righteous. On the opposite side of the spectrum, a President scoring low in conscientiousness could also initiate numerous uses of military force indiscriminately and with

little regard for the consequences. It's for these reasons that I believe conscientiousness is not the most important psychological determinant to whether a President uses military force or not.

H₅: Presidential scores in conscientiousness make no discernible difference as to whether a President uses military force. Therefore, there will be no correlation between conscientiousness and the use of military force.

Presidents and their Political Party

With regards to Presidents and political party, I believe that Presidents who were members of the Democratic Party will have been more likely to use military force than Presidents who were members of any other political party. I believe it's very likely for this hypothesis to hold true due in part to the modern Democratic party being founded in the early decades of the republic.

H₆: Owing in part to its founding in the early decades of the republic, Presidents who were members of the Democratic Party will be more inclined to use military force than Presidents of any other political party. Therefore there will be a correlation between the use of force and the President's party.

Presidents and their Average Age

To attempt to answer the age-old axiom about whether leaders are more likely to take risks in their younger years than their older years, I calculated the average age of each President during their terms. I believe younger Presidents will be more likely to use military force.

H₇: Presidents younger than the average age of all Presidents during the duration of their Presidency (57.3) will be more likely to use military force. Therefore, there will be a correlation between average age and the use of military force.

Presidents and their Last Political Office

Most Presidents, but not all, held political office prior to becoming President. I believe those who were formerly Vice Presidents will be less likely to use military force, perhaps being tempered by the inclination to use military force or not to use military force by the President whom they served.

H₈: Presidents who formerly served as Vice President will be less inclined to use military force. Therefore, there will be correlation a between a President's last political office and the use of military force.

Presidents and Previous Foreign Policy Experience

Owing to their experience in world affairs, Presidents may be tempered by their interactions with foreign nations may understand that might does not always equal right, I would expect Presidents with previous foreign policy experience to be less likely to use military force.

H₉: Presidents with foreign policy experience will be less inclined to use military force. Therefore, there will be a correlation between a President's previous foreign policy experience and the use of military force.

Presidents and Previous Military Experience

Over half of all Presidents had previous military experience. Of those half, many also served during wartime. Military experience alone would shape your own personal beliefs, and service during wartime would further shape those beliefs. I believe that Presidents with military experience would be less likely to use force.

H₁₀: Presidents with previous military experience will be less inclined to use military force. Therefore, there will be a correlation between a President's previous military experience and the use of military force.

Presidents and Higher Education

While nearly every President completed some form of higher education after high school, there were some Presidents who did not attain their college degrees. Of those who did not have college degrees most still at least partially completed their degree. However, it's obvious that to become President of the United States one must have some level of intelligence and I believe that completion of higher education is not an important factor on whether a President uses military force or not but I believe there those who have attended higher education will have been more likely to use military force.

H₁₁: Presidents who attended some form of higher education will have been more likely to use force, however this is not an important determinant in which President is more inclined to use military force. Therefore, there will be no correlation between a President's completion of higher education and the use of military force.

Presidents and Occupation

Most Presidents were lawyers. Therefore, I believe that Presidents who were lawyers are more inclined to use military force due to simply outnumbering all other professions of other Presidents.

H₁₂: Presidents who were lawyers are more inclined to use military force. Therefore, there will be a correlation between a President's previous occupation and the use of military force.

Variables

Use of Force Events

The use of force events was collected from a report prepared by the Congressional Research Service. The CRS provides policy and legal analysis to committees and members of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Per the Library of Congress, the CRS "serves the Congress throughout the legislative process by providing comprehensive and reliable legislative research and analysis that are timely, objective, authoritative and confidential, thereby contributing to an informed national legislature."⁸⁸ The CRS is non-partisan and each publication is subject to a multi-layered review process. The CRS has published "Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad" for several years. When circumstances warrant, the report will be updated and was updated twice in 2015 alone.

The report lists "hundreds of instances in which the United States has used its Armed Forces abroad in situations of military conflict or potential conflict or for other than normal

⁸⁸ Library of Congress, "About CRS: History and Mission", last modified November 15, 2012, <https://www.loc.gov/crsinfo/about/history.html>

peacetime purposes.”⁸⁹ Covert operations, disaster relief, and routine alliance stationing and training exercises are not included in the report. Internal conflicts such as the Whiskey Rebellion and the Civil War are not included as the use of military force as in these cases were not used abroad but internally. The Revolutionary War was also not included as an instance of use of force but it was not explicitly stated why, the likeliest reason being that newly declared United States of America did not have widespread political recognition and was essentially an internal conflict. The Indian Wars, or as the author described as the “exploration, settlement, and pacification of the western part of the United States” are also not included in the list of uses of armed forces. The list spans from 1798 beginning with the Quasi-War, an undeclared naval war against France, and ends in October 2015 with US Armed Forces intervention in Cameroon.

I have found it to be the most comprehensive resource about the use of force. The report continues to state that the instances of use of force “...differ greatly in number of forces, purpose, extent of hostilities, and legal authorization.”⁹⁰ Essentially, a use of force does not require that bullets to be fired, bombs to be dropped, or missiles to be launched to be construed as a use of force; numerous events are what could be described simply as saber rattling or military maneuvers that are intended to convey a message. It is also important to note that major conflicts such as World War II are defined as a single use of force. Individual battles and events that were part of a war are not counted in an overall tally of instances of force being used. Thus, as an example from World War II, President Harry S. Truman would not receive more “points” than his predecessor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, for presiding over the bloodiest battle of the Pacific Theatre, Okinawa, or for his decision to drop the atomic bomb on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. President Roosevelt and President Truman would equally be

⁸⁹ Congressional Research Service, *Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2015*. 2.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*

assigned World War II as part of their tally of uses of force as Truman continued to preside over the war.

Psychological Profiles – The “Big Five” Traits

I have approximated as best I could with the resources available to me the psychological profile of each President of the United States. However, as the famous quote attributed to Mark Twain says, “All generalizations are false, including this one.” But since it would be impossible to assign each President a psychological profile with 100% accuracy, I believe the work of Steven J. Rubenzer and Thomas R. Faschingbauer has been the most thorough effort to assign psychological profiles and determine important characteristics of the Presidents. Together they wrote *Personality, Character, and Leadership in the White House: Psychologists assess the Presidents*. They admit that measuring personality cannot be measured with precision but they could still be useful as effective instruments. Rubenzer and Faschingbauer tasked biographers, journalists, and scholars to complete personality tests for the Presidents that they specifically studied. They had these Presidential experts fill out the Revised NEO Personality Inventory which explicitly attempts to measure the full range of personality traits including what are known as the “big five” traits: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.

Neuroticism

Neuroticism is a personality trait that is related to levels of anxiety. Facets of neuroticism include anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability.⁹¹ Rubenzer and Faschingbauer describe high scorers of neuroticism as “moody, tense, self-conscious, prone to feeling downhearted and discouraged, and have difficulty resisting

⁹¹ Steven J. Rubenzer and Thomas R. Faschingbauer, *Personality, Character, and Leadership in the White House: Psychologists Assess the Presidents* (Dulles: Brassey’s Inc, 2004), 10.

their impulses.”⁹² Low scorers are “calm, relaxed, secure, well balanced, and able to see to the heart of problems.”⁹³ Presidents with high scores for neuroticism included Richard Nixon and Lyndon B. Johnson.⁹⁴ Presidents with low scores were Franklin D. Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan.

Extraversion

Extraversion measures how social a President is. Facets of extraversion include warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement seeking, and positive emotions.⁹⁵ Rubenzer and Faschingbauer describe high scorers of extraversion as “sociable, enthusiastic, energetic, adventurous, talkative, assertive, and outspoken.”⁹⁶ Low scorers would be more introverted, reserved, and more introspective. Presidents with high scores included Theodore Roosevelt, who was more extraverted than 997 out of 1000 average Americans, Bill Clinton, and Warren G. Harding were also both extremely extraverted.⁹⁷ Presidents with low scores included Calvin Coolidge, whose introverted and reserved mannerisms earned him the nickname “Silent Cal” from the American press, and also included John Quincy Adams and Herbert Hoover.⁹⁸

Openness to Experience

Openness to experience “contrasts poets, philosophers, and artists with farmers, machinists, and ‘down-to-earth’ people.”⁹⁹ Facets of openness to experience include openness to fantasy, openness to aesthetics, openness to feelings, openness to actions, openness to ideas, and openness to values.¹⁰⁰ Openness to experience is the only dimension of the “big five” that is

⁹² *ibid.* 7.

⁹³ *ibid.* 23.

⁹⁴ *ibid.* 23.

⁹⁵ *ibid.* 11.

⁹⁶ *ibid.* 7.

⁹⁷ *ibid.* 25.

⁹⁸ *ibid.* 25.

⁹⁹ *ibid.* 9.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.* 12.

related to intelligence.¹⁰¹ Presidents with high scores in this category include Thomas Jefferson, John Quincy Adams, and Abraham Lincoln.¹⁰² Jefferson was a Founding Father, writer of the Declaration of Independence, and a Renaissance man of sorts during the early years of the United States. Quincy Adams was the son of a Founding Father and Lincoln was a self-taught lawyer. Presidents with low scores include Andrew Jackson, William Howard Taft, and Harry S. Truman.¹⁰³ Jackson styled himself as a man of the people, Taft was an adherent to the strict constructionism philosophy, and Truman never received a Bachelor's degree.

Agreeableness

Facets of agreeableness include trust, straight-forwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty, and tender-mindedness.¹⁰⁴ High scorers are “sympathetic, kind, forgiving, appreciative, trusting, softhearted, modest, and considerate.”¹⁰⁵ Low scorers are “stubborn, ruthless, critical, skeptical, unkind, demanding, and uncooperative.”¹⁰⁶ Presidents with high scores in this category included Millard Fillmore, Abraham Lincoln, and Warren G. Harding while Andrew Jackson, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Richard Nixon all scored exceptionally low scores either at or below 0.1 percentile.¹⁰⁷

Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness measures inner thought. Facets of conscientiousness include competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, and deliberation.¹⁰⁸ High scorers are “organized, thorough, hardworking, principled, deliberate, precise, and

¹⁰¹ *ibid.* 10.

¹⁰² *ibid.* 26.

¹⁰³ *ibid.* 26.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.* 13.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.* 10.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.* 11.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.* 27.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.* 14.

dependable.”¹⁰⁹ Low scorers are “lazy, careless, distractible, inefficient, frivolous, and irresponsible.” Presidents with high scores include Woodrow Wilson, George Washington, and Jimmy Carter, while John F. Kennedy, Bill Clinton, and Warren G. Harding were ranked with the lowest scores.¹¹⁰ Wilson, Washington, and Carter were all relatively scandal-free at a personal level. However, the bottom three candidates all had numerous scandals. For Kennedy, it was an open secret during his lifetime that he was a womanizer who had numerous affairs from White House interns to Hollywood star Marilyn Monroe. Clinton also had an affair with a White House intern. Harding had no blemishes on his personal character, but his administration is described as one of the most corrupt of all American Presidents.

The Presidents, Political Parties, and Mean Age

The CRS report does not concurrently list each Presidential administration with each use of force; I have taken the liberty of doing so. My additional research has revealed that only two Presidents did not use any force per the terms of the CRS definition. They were President George Washington and President William Henry Harrison. President Washington was seemingly averse to the use of force as evidenced by his Proclamation of Neutrality that declared the United States neutral during the French Revolutionary Wars. President Washington did personally lead the military in response to the Whiskey Rebellion, but as it was an internal dispute it is not included in the report’s tally. President William Henry Harrison, who died due to a combination of pneumonia and typhoid fever after only thirty days in office, had no opportunity to use military force. President Grover Cleveland, the only President to serve non-consecutive terms, will be coded as two separate administrations for the sake of simplicity. It would be of interest to my research to determine whether President Cleveland’s four years on the outside looking in of the

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.* 11.

¹¹⁰ *ibid.* 28.

Oval Office provided him with an epiphany to use less force or more force when he returned to office.

Also listed with each President is their corresponding political party. Only five political parties have held the Presidency since the founding of the Republic: the Federalist Party, the Democratic-Republican Party, the Democratic Party, the Whig Party, and the Republican Party.¹¹¹ President John Tyler, while elected on the Whig ticket as Vice President to William Henry Harrison, was expelled from the Whig Party after he ascended to the Presidency when he made clear he did not intend to follow the policy proposals of the late President Harrison. This makes Tyler one of only two Presidents, the second being George Washington, to have no party affiliation. For this reason, I have listed John Tyler as an Independent. The parties are coded based on which one had first attained the office of President. Therefore, Federalists are coded 1, Democratic-Republicans coded 2, the modern Democratic Party coded 3, Independents coded 4, Whigs coded 5, and Republicans coded 6.

For determining the age of the President, I have decided to use the mean age of the President while in office instead of age upon ascension to the office. I have done so to equalize the possibility of either Presidents becoming more risk-averse or less risk-averse as they age. I believe it is also a much fairer comparison using average age to balance between Presidents who served less than two full terms or in the case of President Franklin D. Roosevelt who served three full terms and served the first few months of his fourth term before his death.

Last Political Office

Nearly every President has held political office prior to becoming President, but there are three notable exceptions. President Zachary Taylor, a Major General and Mexican-American

¹¹¹ The roots of the modern Democratic Party can be traced to the Democratic-Republicans or Jeffersonian Republicans, but a clear policy shift emerged after the election of Andrew Jackson, giving birth to the modern Democratic Party.

War hero, had no formal political office before he was elected President in 1848 on the Whig Party ticket. President Ulysses S. Grant, who led the Union Army during the Civil War to victories at Vicksburg and Chattanooga before being appointed commander of all Union forces, also held no political office when elected in 1868 as a Republican. Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander and one of the principal planners of the invasion of Normandy during World War II, was courted by both the Democratic and Republican Parties before ultimately being elected President as a Republican in 1952. Besides these three exceptions, every single President has held political office ranging from the Vice Presidency, a position in the President's cabinet, House of Representatives or Senate seat, state governorship, and even all the way on down to local political offices. The last political offices of the Presidents will be coded as follows: 0, no political experience. 1, Vice Presidency. 2, Cabinet position. 3, Congressman or Senator. 4, state governor. 5, miscellaneous government appointments.

Previous Foreign Policy Experience

Previous foreign policy experience prior to becoming President, surprisingly, is not as common as having previous political experience. The cabinet position of Secretary of State was once seen as a traditional stepping-stone to the Presidency in the early days of the republic. Six former Secretaries of State would go on to become President: Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, John Quincy Adams, Martin Van Buren, and James Buchanan. Other Presidents with previous foreign policy experience such as ambassadors or envoys to foreign nations include John Adams and William Henry Harrison. In addition to being Ambassador to the United Nations, George H.W. Bush was also the Director of Central Intelligence for the Central Intelligence Agency. With the elder Bush being the exception, many recent Presidents have not held any political office with regards to foreign policy. This previous foreign policy experience

will be coded binarily, 1 for previous foreign policy experience and 0 for no previous foreign policy experience.

Previous Military Experience

Half of all Presidents have served in the United States military to varying degrees. Twelve Presidents were previously generals, those being George Washington, Andrew Jackson, William Henry Harrison, Zachary Taylor, Franklin Pierce, Andrew Johnson, Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B Hayes, James A. Garfield, Chester A. Arthur, Benjamin Harrison, and Dwight D. Eisenhower. The rest of the Presidents with previous military experience apart from James Buchanan served as officers in state militias or the United States military. This previous military experience will be coded binarily, 1 for previous military experience and 0 for no previous military experience.

Higher Education and Profession Outside Politics

A clear majority of Presidents have earned a college degree and often went on to complete their law degrees. As far as postgraduate education is concerned, the only President to ever earn a Ph.D. was Woodrow Wilson. However, some Presidents never completed formal education. The following Presidents never attended college or never completed their degree: George Washington, James Monroe, Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, William Henry Harrison, Zachary Taylor, Millard Fillmore, Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson, Grover Cleveland, William McKinley, and Harry S. Truman. Higher education will be coded binarily, 1 for completing higher education or 0 for not completing higher education.

For professions outside of politics, most Presidents were lawyers. Other professions of the Presidents included farmers like George Washington and Jimmy Carter, businessmen like George H.W. Bush and his son George W Bush, writers such as John F. Kennedy, an educator

like Lyndon B. Johnson, and an actor such as Ronald Reagan. Many Presidents, most especially those considered Founding Fathers, had multiple professions. Only their primary profession is considered. These professions will be coded based on the when they first attained the office of President. Lawyers are coded 1, soldiers coded 2, tailors/haberdashers coded 3, educators coded 4, editor-publishers coded 5, engineers coded 6, farmers coded 7, writers coded 8, actors coded 9, and businessmen coded 10.

In the next chapter, I will crosstabulate these variables to attempt and determine whether they predispose Presidents to use more military force or less military force.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presidents and Neuroticism

Table 1 shows the results of H_1 to determine whether there is correlation between a President's neuroticism levels and the use of military force. I hypothesized that there would be a correlation and that Presidents with higher levels of neuroticism would be less inclined to use military force.

Table 1. Uses of Military Force by Neuroticism

Use of Force Counts	0-24	25-49	50-74	75-100	
0-5	1 2.33 (0.76)	3 3.27 (0.02)	2 2.80 (0.23)	8 5.60 (1.03)	14
6-10	3 1.33 (2.08)	2 1.87 (0.01)	2 1.60 (0.10)	1 3.20 (1.51)	8
11-15	0 0.83 (0.83)	2 1.17 (0.60)	1 1.00 (0.00)	2 2.00 (0.00)	5
15+	1 0.50 (0.50)	0 0.70 (0.70)	1 0.60 (0.27)	1 1.20 (0.03)	3
	5	7	6	12	30

$$\chi^2 = 8.675, \quad df = 9, \quad \chi^2/df = 0.96, \quad P(\chi^2 > 8.675) = 0.4678$$

While Presidents whose neuroticism scores were between the 75th and 100th percentile appeared to use military force infrequently, the results show that there is no correlation between levels of neuroticism and the use of military force. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no association is not rejected and my H_1 hypothesis is not supported.

Presidents and Extraversion

Table 2 shows the results of H₂ to determine whether there is correlation between a President's extraversion levels and the use of military force. I hypothesized that there would be a correlation and that Presidents with higher levels of extraversion will be more likely to use military force.

Table 2. Uses of Military Force by Extraversion

Use of Force Counts	0-24%	25-49%	50-74%	75-100%	
0-5	6 4.20 (0.77)	2 1.87 (0.01)	1 1.40 (0.11)	5 6.53 (0.36)	14
6-10	1 2.40 (0.82)	1 1.07 (0.00)	2 0.80 (1.80)	4 3.73 (0.02)	8
11-15	2 1.50 (0.17)	0 0.67 (0.67)	0 0.50 (0.50)	3 2.33 (0.19)	5
15+	0 0.90 (0.90)	1 0.40 (0.90)	0 0.30 (0.30)	2 1.40 (0.26)	3
	9	4	3	14	30

$$\chi^2 = 7.776, \quad df = 9, \quad \chi^2/df = 0.86, \quad P(\chi^2 > 7.776) = 0.5569$$

While Presidents whose extraversion scores were between the 75th and 100th percentile appeared more likely to use military force, the results show there is no correlation between levels of extraversion and the use of military force. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no association is not rejected and my H₂ hypothesis is not supported.

Presidents and Openness to Experience

Table 3 shows the results of H₃ to determine whether there is correlation between a

President's openness to experience levels and the use of military force. I hypothesized that there would be a correlation and that Presidents with higher levels of openness to experience will be less likely to use military force.

Table 3. Uses of Military Force by Openness to Experience

Use of Force Counts	0-24	25-49	50-74	75-100	
0-5	6 6.53 (0.04)	2 2.80 (0.23)	1 1.87 (0.40)	5 2.80 (1.73)	14
6-10	5 3.73 (0.43)	3 1.60 (1.22)	0 1.07 (1.07)	0 1.60 (1.60)	8
11-15	2 2.33 (0.05)	1 1.00 (0.00)	2 0.67 (2.67)	0 1.00 (1.00)	5
15+	1 1.40 (0.11)	0 0.60 (0.60)	1 0.40 (0.90)	1 0.60 (0.27)	3
	14	6	4	6	30

$$\chi^2 = 12.320, \quad df = 9, \quad \chi^2/df = 1.37, \quad P(\chi^2 > 12.320) = 0.1959$$

While Presidents whose openness to experience scores were between the 75th and 100th percentile appeared to be less likely to use military force, the results show there is no correlation between levels of extraversion and the use of military force. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no association is not rejected and my H₃ hypothesis is not supported.

Presidents and Agreeableness

Table 4 shows the results of H₄ to determine whether there is a correlation between a President's agreeableness levels and the use of military force. I hypothesized that there would be a correlation and that Presidents with higher levels of agreeableness to will be less likely to use military force.

Table 4. Uses of Military Force by Agreeableness

Use of Force Counts	0-24	25-49	50-74	75-100	
0-5	10 7.00 (1.29)	0 2.33 (2.33)	2 3.73 (0.80)	2 0.93 (1.22)	14
6-10	2 4.00 (1.00)	3 1.33 (2.08)	3 2.13 (0.35)	0 0.53 (0.53)	8
11-15	2 2.50 (0.10)	0 0.83 (0.83)	3 1.33 (2.08)	0 0.33 (0.33)	5
15+	1 1.50 (0.17)	2 0.50 (4.50)	0 0.80 (0.80)	0 0.20 (0.20)	3
	15	5	8	2	30

$$\chi^2 = 18.628, \quad df = 9, \quad \chi^2/df = 2.07, \quad P(\chi^2 > 18.628) = 0.0285^*$$

* $p < 0.05$

The results show that Presidents with higher levels of agreeableness were significantly less likely to use military force. Additionally, the results show that there is a correlation between agreeableness and the use of military force and was statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. The result rejects the null hypothesis of no association and supports my H₄ hypothesis.

Presidents and Conscientiousness

Table 5 shows the results of H₅ to determine whether there is a correlation between a President's conscientiousness levels and the use of military force. I hypothesized that there would be no correlation and that conscientiousness scores would make no discernible difference as to whether a President would use military force.

Table 5. Uses of Military Force by Conscientiousness

Use of Force #	0-24	25-49	50-74	75-100	
0-5	1 2.33 (0.76)	1 0.93 (0.00)	2 2.33 (0.05)	10 8.40 (0.30)	14
6-10	2 1.33 (0.33)	1 0.53 (0.41)	1 1.33 (0.08)	4 4.80 (0.13)	8
11-15	0 0.83 (0.83)	0 0.33 (0.33)	2 0.83 (1.63)	3 3.00 (0.00)	5
15+	2 0.50 (4.50)	0 0.20 (0.20)	0 0.50 (0.50)	1 1.80 (0.36)	3
	5	2	5	18	30

$$\chi^2 = 10.433, \quad df = 9, \quad \chi^2/df = 1.16, \quad P(\chi^2 > 10.433) = 0.3166$$

The results show that there is no correlation between conscientiousness and the use of military force. The results fail to reject the null hypothesis of no association, which supports my H₅ hypothesis.

Presidents and their Political Party

Table 6 shows the results of H₆ to determine whether a President's political party inclines them be more likely to use military force or less likely to use military force. I hypothesized that there would be a correlation between political party and the use of military force.

Table 6. Uses of Military Force by Political Party

Use of Force Counts	None	Federalist	Democratic-Republican	Democratic	Whig	Republican	
0-5	2 0.95 (1.15)	1 0.48 (0.57)	2 1.91 (0.00)	7 7.16 (0.00)	3 1.43 (1.72)	6 9.07 (1.04)	21
6-10	0 0.55	0 0.27	1 1.09	4 4.09	0 0.82	7 5.18	12

	(0.55)	(0.27)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.82)	(0.64)	
11-15	0 <i>0.27</i> (0.27)	0 <i>0.14</i> (0.14)	1 <i>0.55</i> (0.38)	1 <i>2.05</i> (0.53)	0 <i>0.41</i> (0.41)	4 <i>2.59</i> (0.77)	6
15+	0 <i>0.23</i> (0.23)	0 <i>0.11</i> (0.11)	0 <i>0.45</i> (0.45)	3 <i>1.70</i> (0.98)	0 <i>0.34</i> (0.34)	2 <i>2.16</i> (0.01)	5
	2	1	4	15	3	19	44

$$\chi^2 = 11.395, \quad df = 15, \quad \chi^2/df = 0.76, \quad P(\chi^2 > 11.395) = 0.7241$$

The results show that there is no correlation between the use of military force and a President's political party. The null hypothesis of no association is not rejected; therefore, my H₆ hypothesis does not hold true.

Presidents and their Average Age

Table 7 shows the results of H₇ to determine whether there is any correlation between a President's age and their inclination to use military force. I hypothesized that there would be a correlation between average age and the use of military force.

Table 7. Uses of Military Force by Average Age

Use of Force Counts	45-54	55-64	65-74	
0-5	9 <i>8.11</i> (0.10)	9 <i>9.55</i> (0.03)	3 <i>3.34</i> (0.03)	21
6-10	2 <i>4.64</i> (1.50)	8 <i>5.45</i> (1.19)	2 <i>1.91</i> (0.00)	12
11-15	4 <i>2.32</i> (1.22)	1 <i>2.73</i> (1.09)	1 <i>0.95</i> (0.00)	6
15+	2 <i>1.93</i> (0.00)	2 <i>2.27</i> (0.03)	1 <i>0.80</i> (0.05)	5

Table 7. continued

	17	20	7	44
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$$\chi^2 = 5.258, \quad df = 6, \quad \chi^2/df = 0.88, \quad P(\chi^2 > 5.258) = 0.5112$$

Although the results show that younger Presidents were more likely to use military force, there is no correlation between average age and the propensity to use military force. The null hypothesis of no association is not rejected; therefore, my H₇ hypothesis does not hold true.

Presidents and their Last Political Office

Table 8 shows the results of H₈ to determine if a President's last political office would predispose them to be more likely to use military force. I hypothesized that there would be a correlation between a President's last political office and the use of military force.

Table 8. Uses of Military Force by President's Last Political Office

Use of Force Counts	None	Vice Presidency	Cabinet	Legislative	State Governor	Misc.	
0-5	1 <i>1.43</i> (0.13)	8 <i>6.68</i> (0.26)	2 <i>2.39</i> (0.06)	6 <i>5.25</i> (0.11)	3 <i>4.30</i> (0.39)	1 <i>0.95</i> (0.00)	21
6-10	2 <i>0.82</i> (1.71)	3 <i>3.82</i> (0.18)	1 <i>1.36</i> (0.10)	3 <i>3.00</i> (0.00)	2 <i>2.45</i> (0.08)	1 <i>0.55</i> (0.38)	12
11-15	0 <i>0.41</i> (0.41)	3 <i>1.91</i> (0.62)	2 <i>0.68</i> (2.55)	1 <i>1.50</i> (0.17)	0 <i>1.23</i> (1.23)	0 <i>0.27</i> (0.27)	6
15+	0 <i>0.34</i> (0.34)	0 <i>1.59</i> (1.59)	0 <i>0.57</i> (0.57)	1 <i>1.25</i> (0.05)	4 <i>1.02</i> (8.67)	0 <i>0.23</i> (0.23)	5
	3	14	5	11	9	2	44

$$\chi^2 = 20.087, \quad df = 15, \quad \chi^2/df = 1.34, \quad P(\chi^2 > 20.087) = 0.1686$$

The results show that there is no correlation between the use of military force and a President's prior political office. The null hypothesis of no association is not rejected; therefore, my H₈ hypothesis does not hold true.

Presidents and Previous Foreign Policy Experience

Table 9 shows the results of H₉ to determine whether a President's previous foreign policy experience has a correlation with the use of military force. I hypothesized that there would be a correlation between a President's previous foreign policy experience and the use of military force.

Table 9. Uses of Military Force by Previous Foreign Policy Experience

Use of Force Counts	Yes	No	
0-5	5 4.30 (0.12)	16 16.70 (0.03)	21
6-10	2 2.45 (0.08)	10 9.55 (0.02)	12
11-15	2 1.23 (0.49)	4 4.77 (0.13)	6
15+	0 1.02 (1.02)	5 3.98 (0.26)	5
	9	35	44

$$\chi^2 = 2.148, \quad df = 3, \quad \chi^2/df = 0.72, \quad P(\chi^2 > 2.148) = 0.5422$$

Although Presidents who had foreign policy experience were less likely to use military force than those who did not have foreign policy experience, the results show there is no correlation between Presidents' previous foreign policy experience and their use of military force. The null hypothesis of no association is not rejected; therefore, my H₉ hypothesis does not hold true.

Presidents and Previous Military Experience

Table 10 shows the results of H_{10} to determine whether a President's previous military experience has a correlation with the use of military force. I hypothesized that there would be a correlation between a President's previous military experience and the use of military force.

Table 10. Uses of Military Force by Previous Military Experience

Use of Force Counts	Yes	No	
0-5	16 <i>14.80</i> (0.10)	5 <i>6.20</i> (0.23)	21
6-10	9 <i>8.45</i> (0.04)	3 <i>3.55</i> (0.08)	12
11-15	4 <i>4.23</i> (0.01)	2 <i>1.77</i> (0.03)	6
15+	2 <i>3.52</i> (0.66)	3 <i>1.48</i> (1.57)	5
	31	13	44

$$\chi^2 = 2.720, \quad df = 3, \quad \chi^2/df = 0.91, \quad P(\chi^2 > 2.720) = 0.4368$$

The results show there is no correlation between a President's prior military experience and the use of military force. The null hypothesis of no association is not rejected; therefore, my H_{10} hypothesis does not hold true.

Presidents and Higher Education

Table 11 shows the results of H_{11} to determine whether a President's completion of higher education has a correlation with the use of military force. I hypothesized that there would not be a correlation between a President's previous completion of higher education and the use of military force owing to the notion that those who become President of the United States are of

higher intelligence compared to the average American, regardless if they had a formal education.

Table 11. Uses of Military Force by Completion of Higher Education

Use of Force Counts	Yes	No	
0-5	15 16.70 (0.17)	6 4.30 (0.68)	21
6-10	9 9.55 (0.03)	3 2.45 (0.12)	12
11-15	6 4.77 (0.32)	0 1.23 (1.23)	6
15+	5 3.98 (0.26)	0 1.02 (1.02)	5
	35	9	44

$$\chi^2 = 3.831, \quad df = 3, \quad \chi^2/df = 1.28, \quad P(\chi^2 > 3.831) = 0.2803$$

The results show that there is no correlation between a President's completion of higher education and the use of military force. The null hypothesis of no association is not rejected, which supports my H₁₁ hypothesis.

Presidents and Occupation

Table 12 shows the results of H₁₂ to determine whether a President's occupation outside of politics has a correlation with the use of military force. I had hypothesized that Presidents who were lawyers would be more inclined to use military force.

Table 12. Uses of Military Force by Occupation

Use of Force Counts	Lawyers	All Others	
0-5	13 12.89 (0.00)	8 8.11 (0.00)	21

Table 12. continued

6-10	7 7.36 (0.02)	5 4.64 (0.03)	12
11-15	5 3.68 (0.47)	1 2.32 (0.75)	6
15+	2 3.07 (0.37)	3 1.93 (0.59)	5
	27	17	44

$$\chi^2 = 2.233, \quad df = 3, \quad \chi^2/df = 0.74, \quad P(\chi^2 > 2.233) = 0.5255$$

Although lawyers used military force more than all other occupations combined, the results show there is no correlation between a President's occupation outside of politics and the use of military force. The null hypothesis of no association is not rejected; therefore, my H₁₂ hypothesis does not hold true.

Discussion

The results show that eleven of the twelve tests were statistically not significant, indicating that party affiliation, previous experience, and psychological characteristics generally do not have any significant effect as to whether a President is more prone to use military force or less prone to use military force. The only exception was levels of agreeableness, which showed there appeared to be a correlation between those who had high percentile scores in agreeableness and the use of military force. It is important to note that due to the small sample size that was available, forty-five presidencies overall and just thirty presidencies in the case of psychological characteristics, there may in fact be correlations between more of the variables that are masked by the limited number of observations available. Horowitz et al. did find correlations when testing for world leaders, but my research indicates this finding may not apply to American Presidents.

Neuroticism

High neuroticism scores from the NEO Personalized Inventory test would indicate a President would be more prone to experiencing negative feelings. I believed that if a President was more prone to neurotic bouts their decisions as commander-in-chief would be significantly affected. While in a depressive state a President may delay his decision to use force or fail to decide altogether. Eight Presidents who scored over the 75th percentile in neuroticism used military force between zero to five times, the highest count in the crosstabulation. However, no correlation was found between neuroticism and the use of military force. Neuroticism would seem to be a weak determinant because a President who is less neurotic and calmer would still use as little military force as a President who is more neurotic and more erratic. There are also times when military force is used in response to an attack from another nation where a President, no matter how neurotic he may be, would have no choice but to respond with military force in the face of mounting pressure from members of government and the American public.

Extraversion

Assertiveness is the key facet of extraversion that I feel is most important to whether a President would be more or less likely to use military force. An assertive President would make decisions quicker than someone who is not as extraverted and therefore likely to be less assertive. President Theodore Roosevelt, who scored in the 99.97th percentile, used military force fifteen times. President Bill Clinton, who scored in the 99.90th percentile, used military force sixty-five times, more than any other President. However, they were the only two Presidents between the 75-100th percentile to use military force fifteen times or more; five other Presidents who were just as extraverted used military force less than five times. Further evidence supporting the conclusion that extraversion is not an important determinant is the comparison between

President Theodore Roosevelt and President Calvin Coolidge. As mentioned, President Roosevelt was more extraverted than 9,997 out of 10,000 people and used military force fifteen times. President Coolidge, so famous for his quiet demeanor he was nicknamed “Silent Cal” by the press, scored the lowest percentile score of any President in extraversion at the 0.4th percentile. Despite this, President Coolidge had thirteen uses of military force, only two less than President Theodore Roosevelt. Overall, no correlation was found between extraversion and the use of military force.

Openness to Experience

For Presidents with high scores on openness to experience, I would have expected them to use military force sparingly. Presidents with high openness to experience in theory should be intellectually sound and value experiences of their own personal life as well as the experiences of others. This is important for when the President would receive military advice, for if he does not have military experience and has not faced the horrors of war he could still be receptive to advice from members of his cabinet or other positions of power such as the Joint Chiefs of Staff who may have been deployed in combat. Of the six Presidents who scored between the 75th and 100th percentiles in openness to experience, five of them used military force less than five times. But the results still showed that numerous Presidents with low openness to experience also tended to use less military force. Overall there was no significant correlation between the use of military force and openness to experience. The reasoning may be that those Presidents with less openness to experience may be more conservative and less resistant to changing the status quo; the use of military force would certainly change any status quo between the United States and the nation the action is taken against.

Agreeableness

Agreeableness was the only statistically significant variable in this research. There were only two Presidents who scored between the 75th and 100th percentile, Presidents Millard Fillmore and Abraham Lincoln, who both used military force less than five times. A President who is more agreeable would be more likely to accept the advice of his cabinet and other members of government. A President who is less agreeable would be much less cooperative and perhaps even act ruthlessly as commander-in-chief. Most Presidents did not score such high levels of agreeableness as generally speaking very few politicians who aspire to become President could be described as kind and trusting, with the exceptions being Fillmore and Lincoln.

Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness had no significant correlation with the use of military force, as I had hypothesized. The most significant reason for this result may be an interesting paradox. A President with high scores in conscientiousness could be viewed as a principled individual with great moral character. With this reasoning a conscientious President could act in two different ways. A President with a good conscience, understanding the depravity of war and conflict, could be less hesitant to use military force. However, a President with a good conscience could also potentially be just as willing to use military force as a President who lacks a conscience if he believes that his use of military force in his pursuit of a noble goal. This may best describe uses of military force that are approved by the United Nations or described as humanitarian interventions.

Political Parties

There are numerous reasons why political parties may not be the best determinant of the

use of military force. The two major political parties in the United States today, the Democratic and the Republican parties, have proven to be lasting institutions. The modern Democratic Party was founded in 1828 and the Republican Party was founded in 1854. By attempting to correlate the use of military force by political party, one would have to operate under the assumption that party philosophy and policy remained stagnant. But since both major parties are over 150 years old, their policies have clearly changed since their founding; the Democratic Party of Jackson was not the same Democratic Party of Obama and the Republican Party of Lincoln was not the same Republican Party of Donald Trump. While the Federalist, Democratic-Republican, and Whig parties' political relevancy was much shorter and their policies may be easier to pinpoint, it is very difficult to make any inferences as to whether Presidents of these parties were more inclined to use military force. Compared to the two major parties of today the minor parties had significantly fewer individuals as President, thus making it difficult to find a correlation due to small sample size. With only forty-five presidencies throughout American history to date, the sample size is too small to detect effects that could result in statistically significant inferences.

Average Age

The results for average age were complexing. One would expect younger Presidents to be much more aggressive but no correlations were found, suggesting that the age of the President made no discernible difference. Presidents who had an average age between forty-five and fifty-four years old did use more military force than the other two age brackets. This would appear to contradict Horowitz et al.'s research that showed a correlation between age and a leader's decision to use force and contradicts their finding that older leaders were more likely to use military force. The forty-five to fifty-four age bracket is also significantly affected by President Bill Clinton and President Barack Obama, who used significantly more military force than most

Presidents. Unlike my research, Horowitz et al. did not limit the selection of their leaders to American Presidents, but leaders from across the world, so average age could simply not have a correlation in the United States but have correlation for other world leaders.

Last Political Office

The results appeared to show that former Vice Presidents were the most hesitant to use force. Eight Presidents who were previously Vice Presidents used force zero to five times during their administration. Regardless, the data showed no clear correlation between a President's last political office and their use of force. I have found no research in either support or opposition of my argument. One explanation for my finding of no correlation could be that while there are previous political offices that allow for politicians to gain executive experience, no prior position could prepare someone for all the powers the Presidency has to offer.

Previous Foreign Policy Experience

Presidents with previous foreign policy experience were responsible for only 12.8% of all uses of military force while Presidents without previous foreign policy experience were responsible for 87.2% of all uses of military force. The data still showed no correlation as to whether this made a President more predisposed to use military force. I would have expected a correlation, as Horowitz et al. wrote that when information isn't readily available a leader would rely on experience.¹¹²

Previous Military Experience

Presidents with military experience used more military force than Presidents without military experience. Uses of military force by Presidents with military experience accounted for 51.9% of all uses of military force since 1798 compared to 48.1% of uses of military force

¹¹² Michael C. Horowitz, Allan C. Stam, and Cali M. Ellis, *Why Leaders Fight*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 10.

initiated by Presidents without military experience. The data still showed no correlation as to whether this made a President more predisposed to use military force. This would seem to contradict Horowitz et al., who claimed "...the single leader background experience most plausibly relevant to the initiation of military conflict is whether a leader had prior military service." But in defense of Horowitz et al., they also analyzed the effects of leaders who had military experience with combat experience and leaders without combat experience while there was no such distinction in my data. One reason for a lack of correlation in my research could be that the President is not necessarily the sole civilian leader of the American military as there are other departments and agencies responsible for influencing military affairs. This result in turn becomes confusing because the studies by Feaver and Gelpi have shown that American policymakers with military experience would be less likely to use military force.

Higher Education

The finding that a President's completion of higher education had no correlation and did not predispose them to use more or less military force matched Horowitz et al.'s findings. In fact, they found that there was weak correlation to suggest completion of higher education could result in using more military force.¹¹³ Because a clear majority of Presidents had completed higher education I did not expect to find any correlation. I considered the presence of higher education to be the weakest determinant on the use of military force. Of the few Presidents that did not complete higher education, they were either self-educated or had partially completed their education before entering politics or other ventures. Regardless if a President had completed higher education or not, to become President they must obviously had to display some level of intelligence for the voters to elect them. It would be illogical to suggest that President Abraham Lincoln did not display generally high intelligence just because he did not have formal

¹¹³ *ibid.* 145.

education. In a study conducted for the previous forty-two men who had been President, each of them has been estimated to have an IQ level higher than the average American; no President had an IQ score estimated to be lower than 110.¹¹⁴

Occupation

No correlation was found between occupation and the use of military force. Making inferences from occupation is very difficult as an overwhelming majority of Presidents were previously lawyers. While I attempted to choose a Presidents primary occupation before politics, many Presidents were not just lawyers and held many professions in their lifetime. We once again run into the limitations of studying American presidents as some Presidents were the only Presidents to have a certain occupation. President Ronald Reagan has been the only President whose primary occupation was acting. While President Reagan was responsible for seventeen uses of military force, more uses of military force than several other Presidents combined, it cannot be inferred that previously being an actor as your primary occupation predisposes you to use more military force compared to Presidents who weren't actors. The same principle can be applied to Presidents who were soldiers, tailors/haberdashers, educators, editor-publishers, engineers, and businessmen, as the Presidents with these professions were less than half of all Presidents. Regardless of profession, the lack of correlation between occupation and the use of force makes previous occupations a very weak determinant.

Conclusions

Overall, the results show that individual factors and personal characteristics may give little indication or its effects are overstated as to whether a President is more prone to use military force or less prone to use military force. Many of the results contradict existing

¹¹⁴ Simonton, Dean Keith. "Presidential IQ, Openness, Intellectual Brilliance, and Leadership: estimates and Correlations for 42 U.S. Chief Executives" *International Society of Political Psychology* Vol. 27, No. 4 (2006). 516.

literature, but due to the small sample size of American presidencies the results may not be truly representative. At best, it can be inferred that American Presidents aren't as significantly affected by individual factors and personal characteristics compared to other world leaders.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This research investigated whether individual factors were the most effective explanation for the propensity of Presidents of the United States to use military force, including whether psychological characteristics, political party, average age while in office, last political office, previous foreign policy experience, previous military experience, completion of higher education, and occupation made them more predisposed to do so.

The theory for my research drew from existing literature, primarily from *Why Leaders Fight* by Michael C. Horowitz, Allan C. Stam, and Cali M. Ellis. They wrote that the early experiences in life that a leader would have would affect their decision-making processes because in many foreign policy situations there would be unknown information concealed within a fog of war. The research of Steven J. Rubenzer and Thomas R. Faschingbauer was also utilized, as they scored each President's "big five" personality characteristics with the help of Presidential experts to determine and predict how successful a President may be. The work of Peter D. Feaver and Christopher Gelpi was also utilized, as their book *Choosing Your Battles* showed that American policymakers with military experience would be less likely to use military force.

I hypothesized that a fair majority of individual factors would correlate with the President's use of military force. The only factors I believed did not hold any correlation were the President's completion of higher education and conscientiousness scores. The uses of force were collected from a report by the Congressional Research Service that listed all uses of military force from 1798 to 2015. The uses of force by each President were then cross-tabulated with the individual factors I was investigating. Although the President ultimately makes the final

decision to use military force, the results showed that individual characteristics are irrelevant or its effects severely overstated. The only factor that was statistically significantly correlated with the use of military force was agreeableness. These results would indicate that other factors, such as societal factors, governmental and bureaucratic factors, and external factors have more or at least equal impact on Presidents' decisions to use military force. The purpose of my research was not to discount any other factors but to attempt to find evidence that individual factors were the most important.

President Trump

On November 8, 2016, businessman Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton in the United States Presidential election after securing more than the 270 electoral votes necessary to win. Mr. Trump was duly sworn in as the 45th President of the United States on January 20, 2017. At seventy years old, Donald Trump is the oldest President to be elected in American history. A businessman by occupation, he parlayed his fame by appearing on popular television shows like "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous" and his own reality TV show "The Apprentice" that made "The Donald" a familiar figure to the average American family in the mid-2000s. President Trump held no previous political office and he is the first President since Dwight D. Eisenhower to have no political experience before ascending to the Presidency. Trump is also the first President to not have any combination of political experience, military experience, or foreign policy experience altogether. Trump completed his education at the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. As it relates to psychological character, Trump is undoubtedly an extreme extravert by judging his public demeanor. It cannot be properly determined whether Trump is highly neurotic, as there are no trademark depressive tendencies that he exhibits, but Trump will respond with verbal attacks if he feels he has been verbally

attacked as well. Trump's conscientiousness may be indeterminable but he was certainly known to be a ruthless businessman. Trump would likely score low in agreeableness, as he strove to make the best deals possible for himself and his business ventures. Trump's level of openness may vary; he could score low due to his potential low level of agreeableness but often the best businessmen are those who are receptive to changes in the market.

Trump was one of the most controversial and outspoken candidates that has ever run for higher office in the history of the republic. His character and temperament for the office of President have been called into question repeatedly. Trump frequently bombastically attacked opponents of his campaign. Among many other examples that can be listed, Trump responded to criticisms from Senator John McCain of Arizona with a vicious personal attack at The Family Leadership Summit in Ames, Iowa, in 2015. Trump stated that McCain was not actually a war hero during his service in the Vietnam War and claimed that he was only a war hero because the North Vietnamese captured him after the A4-Skyhawk McCain was piloting was shot down. Trump also frequently played to the crowd at his campaign rallies across the nation with simple catchphrases such as his oft repeated proclamation that together they would make America great again and frequently insinuated that he would imprison Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton after beating her in the election. While it appeared Trump lacked substance to his policies, his mannerisms and actions gave him an air of authenticity that his supporters believed other politicians did not have. He was not afraid of what he wanted to say and refused to apologize for nearly everything he said as a candidate.

The question remains how successful and effective Donald Trump, as a CEO, will be as President of the United States. As fate would have it, Rubenzer and Faschingbauer devoted a small section in their book twelve years before Donald Trump ever ran for President that was

titled “The Donald for President? The CEO Metaphor.” They wrote “the most successful presidents have been ambitious, intelligent, assertive, and competent—but not necessarily straightforward or brimming with integrity.”¹¹⁵ In a study by Ones, Hough, and Viswesvaran, managers and CEOs personally completed a test similar to the NEO Personalized Inventory. The results showed that these CEOs all scored high in assertiveness, energy level, and achievement orientation.¹¹⁶ Of the NEO Personality traits, the authors state that CEOs would exhibit low openness to experience, as openness to experience was not a factor in determining who a successful CEO would be while openness to experience was important in determining who a successful President would be.¹¹⁷

Limitations, Future Research, and Final Thoughts

Unless Jimmy Carter, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump all are willing to subject themselves to a psychological study, it will be impossible to correctly determine their percentile scores in the “big five” personality traits of our living former Presidents and our current President. Instead, experts of their administrations must assign scores to them. Likewise, for Presidents who are no longer alive, experts can also only approximate their percentile scores as best they can. The Revised NEO Personality Inventory allows for the test to be taken by a third party, but it’s accuracy could be open to interpretation; nonetheless this option remains the best available to researchers.

In addition to psychological character scores, one future research area that may merit investigation is an analysis of Presidential verbal syntax and a correlation with the use of military force. The public papers and speeches of the Presidents are readily available. Social Science

¹¹⁵ Steven J. Rubenzer and Thomas R. Faschingbauer, *Personality, Character, and Leadership in the White House: Psychologists Assess the Presidents* (Dulles: Brassey’s Inc, 2004), 50

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* 51

¹¹⁷ *ibid.* 51

Automation Inc. provides many schemes available to analyze text, including the Leadership Trait Analysis Scheme, the Verbs in Context System for Operational Code, the Motivations Scheme, the Conceptual/Integrative Complexity scheme, and the Verbal Behavior Analysis. This may prove useful since, as mentioned previously, Presidents will not be willing to partake in academic studies.

Although the prospects of a Trump presidency may be horrifying to many, the results of this research show that the Office of President is not significantly affected by the President himself due to his psychological characteristics, political party, average age while in office, last political office, previous foreign policy experience, previous military experience, completion of higher education, and occupation. Even if the President's personal effects are overstated, the Presidency still has many checks on power including from the other branches of government as well as from the Presidency itself as an institution. Societal factors can also constrain a President, including the media as well as the American public. Combined with the current state of political gridlock that exists largely because of the American constitutional structure, we may yet remain protected from any one individual.

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