

# Gov 50.08: Personality & Foreign Policy Part II

Prof. Kathleen E. Powers

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## Logistics

- Syllabus adjustment: Pearlman (2013) no longer required for April 30. The Canvas syllabus has been adjusted to reflect this change.
- Next week:
  - No class Thursday, May 2.
  - Instead, we will meet during the x-hour on May 1 for a chance to workshop paper proposals with peers.
    - You should bring your laptop and two copies of your proposal to class.
- Questions about midterm?
- Questions about paper proposal?
  - Bonus office hours for paper proposals: Friday, April 26 8:30am-10:00am

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## Traits: The Big Five

- Five major dimensions of personality together provide a universal framework for personality traits.

**O**penness to experience  
**C**onscientiousness  
**E**xtraversion  
**A**greeableness  
**N**euroticism

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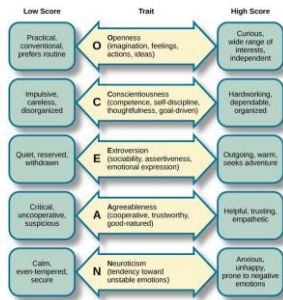
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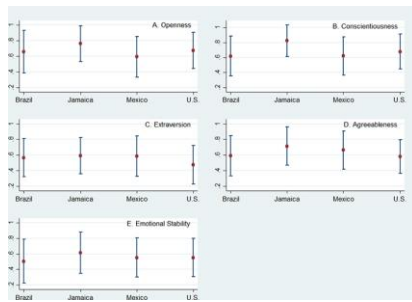
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## Traits: The Big Five



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## Traits: The Big Five



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## Does Personality predict force decisions?

- What is Gallagher & Allen's (2014) argument – who are the risk-taking presidents, and how do they approach foreign policy?
  - Excitement-seeking + use of force
  - Altruism – use of force
  - Deliberation + use of force (unexpected)
  - Openness to action + volatility
- What evidence do they provide?

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## Truman & the Berlin Blockade

- Truman's personality & risk profile:
  - Low excitement seeking, low openness to action
  - Average altruism
  - (Very) low deliberation
  - Therefore: **Moderate risk-taker**



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## Truman & the Berlin Blockade

- Berlin blockade (1948)
- Options (least to most risky):
  - Withdrawal
  - Airlift
  - Armed convoy



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## Truman & the Berlin Blockade

- Berlin blockade (1948)
- Options (least to most risky):
  - Withdrawal
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  - Armed convoy
- **Truman**: "The airlift involved less risks than armed road convoys. Therefore, I directed the Air Force to furnish the fullest support possible to the problem of supplying Berlin."

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## Does Personality predict force decisions?

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of this approach relative to the George & George psychobiographical approach?
- Would you prefer a leader who is more risk-averse, or more risk-acceptant? Why?

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## Learning Objectives

- Explain the seven characteristics that comprise a "leadership trait analysis." Analyze a leader on each dimension, and make predictions about their approach to foreign policy.
- Compare and contrast the three approaches to personality analysis covered in this class (psychodynamic, "big 5"/traits, holistic).
- Make an argument about which personality theory(ies) are most useful for analysis and/or prediction.
- Make an argument about the conditions under which personalities are more or less likely to matter in international politics.

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## Four Features of Personality

- Motives/Needs (The "Political Man")
- Traits (Big Five)
- Beliefs (Operational codes\*)
- Cognitive style
- All of the above (Leadership Trait Analysis)



- \*See optional readings if you want to learn about this approach

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## The Holistic View: Leadership Trait Analysis

- Margaret Hermann developed a typology of leaders based on motives, traits, beliefs, and cognitions.
  - "different ways of dealing with political constraints, processing information, and assuming authority can promote different reactions to what is essentially the same decision-making environment." (Hermann et al. 2011 p. 84)
- Broad orientations toward foreign policy (extreme ideal types):
  - Independent/Expansionistic:
    - Aggressive/expansionist
    - Prefer to act unilaterally, or multilaterally only on their own terms
    - Challenge constraints (norms, domestic and international institutions)
    - Prefer control, proactive policy, limited deliberation, loyal advisers
  - Participatory/Accommodative:
    - Accommodationist/less likely to initiate conflict
    - Prefer to act multilaterally
    - Respect constraints (norms, domestic and international institutions)

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## The Holistic View: Leadership Trait Analysis

- How do we know whether a leader will be more independent vs. participatory (or something in between)?
  - How do leaders react to political constraints? Do they challenge or accept them?
  - How open are leaders to incoming information?
  - Why did leaders seek their position of power – what are their motivations?

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## The Holistic View: Leadership Trait Analysis

- Seven characteristics:
  - Belief in the ability to control events
  - Need for power
  - Conceptual complexity
  - Self-confidence
  - Task orientation
  - Ingroup bias
  - Distrust of others



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## The Holistic View: Leadership Trait Analysis

- How do leaders react to political constraints? Do they challenge or accept them?
  - **Challenge**: high need for power, high belief in ability to control events
  - **Respect**: low need for power, low belief in ability to control events

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## The Holistic View: Leadership Trait Analysis

- How open are leaders to incoming information?
  - **Open to information**: high conceptual complexity, low self-confidence
  - **Ideologues**: higher self-confidence than conceptual complexity
  - **"Political Man"**: low self-confidence, low conceptual complexity

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## The Holistic View: Leadership Trait Analysis

- Why did leaders seek their position of power? (2 parts)
  - **Problem-solver**: task-orientation is on problem-solving
  - **Relationship-builder**: task orientation is on group maintenance
  - **Eliminate Threats**: high ingroup bias, high distrust of others
  - **Build Relationships**: low ingroup bias, low distrust of others

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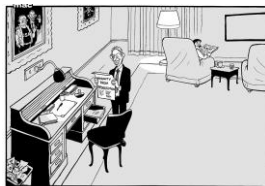
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## Tony Blair & Iraq War Decisions

- What features of Blair's personality profile set him apart from the "average" leader?
- What did this imply about his foreign policy preferences in the Iraq War? What might have been different type of leader were in power?



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## Active Learning: Leadership Trait Analysis

- Conduct your own analysis of either President Trump or Prime Minister Trudeau using the leadership trait analysis framework (form a group of 3 with 2 others who studied the same leader)
- Output from an LTA of speeches
  - **Trump:** 2016 foreign policy speech as candidate; 2018 address to the United Nations; 2017 address to the United Nations; 2018 remarks after NATO summit; 2017 speech on Afghanistan (~20,000 words)
  - **Trudeau:** 2015 remarks in the House of Commons on Iraq & Syria; 2017 address to the United Nations; 2016 address to the United Nations; 2017 address to the European Parliament; 2018 speech at the World Economic Forum (~11,000 words)
- Analyzed by profilerplus.org

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## Active Learning: Leadership Trait Analysis



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## Discussion

- Compare and contrast the psychodynamic, "big 5", and LTA approaches to understanding the relationship between personality and foreign policy.
- When do leaders matter? Hermann et al. (2001):
  - Active interest in and involvement with foreign and defense issues
  - Foreign policy problem is perceived to be a crisis
  - Foreign policy problem involves high-level diplomacy or protocol (state visit, summits, etc.)
  - The issue is of special interest or concern for the leader

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Fin.

Next time: Exam

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