The purpose of the Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics Media Tipsheet is threefold. First, it offers political reporters looking for a fresh story angle a sometimes unique, often unconventional perspective on politics. Second, it serves as a repository for research-based political analysis. Analyses and predictions in the Tipsheet are, in effect, research hypotheses to be tested prospectively against actual event outcomes, which in turn serve to refine the guiding theory of personality and leadership that informed the analysis and prediction in the first place. Third, the Tipsheet aims to provide voters, reporters, and policymakers with politically unbiased, nonpartisan insights into aspects of political leaders’ and candidates’ personal character likely to impinge on their public lives, policy preferences, decisionmaking, and leadership prospects.

January 2, 2019

What motivates Mitt Romney to criticize President Trump’s character prior to being sworn in as senator?

In an op-ed published in the Washington Post (Jan. 1, 2019) Mitt Romney, newly elected Republican senator from Utah, wrote: “[O]n balance, [Donald Trump's] conduct over the past two years … is evidence that the president has not risen to the mantle of the office,” adding, “A president should demonstrate the essential qualities of honesty and integrity, and elevate the national discourse with comity and mutual respect.”

Although one can only speculate on Romney’s rationale for this highly unusual maneuver — assailing the character of the president, no less the leader of his own party — the senator-elect’s personality profile offers a partial glimpse into his underlying motives.

Specifically, Romney’s primary personality pattern — conscientiousness — is characterized by deep-seated resonance to the personal qualities of honesty, integrity, and respect — suggesting it is no accident that Romney zeroed in on those particular traits as lacking in the president (and, by implication, holding himself up as exemplifying those qualities).

More information about Romney’s personality profile at the links below.

Mitt Romney’s Personality Profile
Introduction
We conducted a psychodiagnostic case study of 2012 Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney. The purpose of the study was to construct a Million-based personality profile of Gov. Romney.

Method
The assessment instrument was the 170-item Million Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria (MIDC; Immelman, 2012), which assesses the attribute domains of expressive behavior, interpersonal conduct, cognitive style, mood/temperament, and self-image. The instrument contains 12 scales, yielding 20 normal and 14 pathological personality styles.

Personality Type
“Dutiful Conformist”
Primary pattern: Conscientious/dutiful
Secondary patterns: Dominant/asserting and Ambitious/confident

Table 1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute Domain</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expressive behavior</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal model</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive style</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social adaptability</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-image</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervous system</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motives</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. B</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. C</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. D</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. E</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. F</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. G</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. H</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. J</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acknowledgments
Data collection: Amanda Halverson
Faculty advisor: Dr. Ashley Immelman
Director, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics

Reference

In Memory of U.S. President George H. W. Bush (1924-2018)

Obituary

“Any definition of a successful life must include service to others.”

10/31/2018
Related: USPP references to George H. W. Bush

At the time of George H. W. Bush’s election as president in 1988, I was a graduate student at the University of Maine, still in the early stages of developing my political psychology personality profiling methods. Hence, there few references to President Bush 41 on this site, based purely on informal observation; my first empirical study of a U.S. president dealt with Bill Clinton.

Position Statement on National Security (July 23, 2008)

Prior to the invasion [of Iraq in 2003], we had in place a very successful containment policy against Iraqi aggression, instituted by the first President Bush after the first Gulf War. By keeping Saddam Hussein in power, in concert with a vigorous weapons inspection regime and enforcement of no-fly zones, President George H. W. Bush preserved a delicate balance of power between Iran and Iraq in one of the world’s most volatile regions, the Middle East. …


It isn’t always easy being the son and brother of past presidents. Ask Jeb Bush.
In June, former Florida Gov. John Ellis Bush, who goes by the nickname Jeb, formally announced his presidential run. Being a member of arguably the most prominent political dynasty in American history undoubtedly has its advantages. However, Jeb Bush must also confront the daunting task of differentiating himself from his father, George H. W. Bush, and distancing himself from some of the less admirable aspects of his older brother George W. Bush’s legacy — most notably the invasion of Iraq. …

[Jeb Bush] completed college in two and a half years, is a self-proclaimed policy wonk, and prides himself in working 12–16 hours per day. These attributes reflect his highly conscientious personality — similar to the Bush patriarch but in stark contrast to his older brother, who scored quite low on this personality trait. …

As a “high-dominance charismatic” [Donald] Trump assumes the mantle of leadership with a Clintonian combination of extraversion and self-confidence, buttressed by a level of dominance not seen since Lyndon B. Johnson. In addition, he is practically devoid of his predecessor’s [Barack Obama’s] accommodating disposition … or George H. W. Bush’s prudent conscientiousness. …

September 23, 2018

The reliability of Dr. Christine Blasey Ford’s sexual assault allegation against Supreme Court nominee Judge Brett Kavanaugh

The expert witness best qualified to comment on the accuracy and reliability of Dr. Christine Blasey Ford’s memory of a sexual assault approximately 36 years ago is Dr. Elizabeth Loftus, distinguished professor in the Department of Psychology and Social Behavior and the Department of Criminology, Law, and Society at the University of California, Irvine, with additional appointments in the university’s Department of Cognitive Sciences and the Center for the Neurobiology of Learning and Memory.

“The real question in this case … is not whether this happened so much. But who actually did it. Because everything I’ve seen in the discussions of this case, one of the things I want to know is when did she attach the name Brett Kavanaugh to the episode that she is recounting from when she was 15 years old. And I wish somebody would ask that question because I think the answer to that question is pretty crucial.” — Elizabeth Loftus (“Anderson Cooper 360°,” CNN, September 19, 2018)

Eminent California professor and human memory expert weighs in on Christine Ford’s allegations against Kavanaugh (Scott Morefield, Townhall.com, Sept. 23, 2018)

Caution, the Kavanaugh mess may never be resolved satisfactorily (Megan McArdle, Washington Post, Sept. 17, 2018)

Kavanaugh’s accuser may be telling the truth, but there are still big problems with her story (John Ziegler, Mediaite, Sept. 17, 2018)

More » Google search: Christine Blasey Ford Kavanaugh Elizabeth Loftus

Related interest


Abstract: Examines the psychological basis for repression and recovery of traumatic memories, presents the results of research on potential sources of error
in delayed or recovered memories, and offers possible reasons (primarily related to clinical practice and collective behavior) for false accusations of sexual abuse.

August 25, 2018

Sen. John McCain dead at 81


“John McCain: A question of temperament” (Aubrey Immelman St. Cloud Times, Nov. 1, 2008, p. 7B) — As Arizona Sen. John McCain tries to close the gap with Barack Obama in the final weekend leading up to Tuesday's presidential election, his task is to convince the American people that he's the right man to lead the nation at a time when America faces daunting economic challenges at home and urgent national security threats abroad. Voters, for their part, must discern whether McCain has the right stuff to move the nation in the right direction. A useful metric to take a measure of the man is temperament — that is, McCain’s mental and emotional predisposition to action. … Full report

“McCain’s maverick nature is double-edged sword” (Amy Marschall and Aubrey Immelman, St. Cloud Times, Oct. 15, 2008, p. 7B) — As the 2008 presidential campaign enters the home stretch in a time of growing economic uncertainty, voters are taking a new look at John McCain, who clinched the Republican nomination largely on the basis of his military and foreign policy credentials in a time of war. … To obtain a more precise reading of the real McCain, we consulted four personality profiles of the Arizona senator, developed at the Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics at the College of St. Benedict and St. John’s University in 1999, 2007, and the spring and summer of 2008. Collectively, the profiles reveal a highly dominant individual with a dauntless, dissenting, adventurous streak and a strong outgoing tendency. … Full report

“Maverick McCain finds his mojo — But what does it mean?” (Patrick Sweetman and Aubrey Immelman, St. Cloud Times, Jan. 10, 2008, p. 7B) — John McCain’s victory in Tuesday’s New Hampshire Republican primary has injected new life in a presidential campaign some had all but given up for dead. With recent polls showing McCain to be the Republican contender best positioned to beat the Democratic nominee in November, the resuscitation of McCain’s presidential prospects in New Hampshire raises anew the question of how he might govern as leader of the free world. … Full report

“Heroism, timing help McCain’s campaign” (Matthew J. Tinguely and Aubrey Immelman, St. Cloud Times, March 5, 2000, p. 9B) — Despite the overwhelming support of elected Republican leaders and the Republican establishment for the candidacy of George W. Bush, the insurgent John McCain catapulted into the national spotlight with primary wins in New Hampshire, Michigan, and Arizona. Polls released last week show McCain running well ahead of Bush in a hypothetical two-way race against likely Democratic nominee Al Gore. … What drives the McCain political machine? Two words: “hero” and “personality.” … Full report

“Former POW McCain’s rise in polls leads to more scrutiny” (Melisa S. Illies and Aubrey Immelman, St. Cloud Times, Nov. 28, 1999, p. 11B) — In the first of our College of St. Benedict/St. John’s University presidential candidate profiles (St. Cloud Times, Nov. 7), Stephanie Anderson and Holly Berreau commented on Elizabeth Dole’s withdrawal from the 2000 presidential race. It was inevitable that Dole’s departure would prompt more intense public scrutiny of Arizona Sen. John McCain as the now unrivaled challenger for Texas Gov. George W. Bush’s front-runner status in the bid for the Republican nomination. Unfortunately for McCain, his newfound ascent to prominence has been troubled by turbulence. At issue: persistent reports in the media of a “volcanic temper,” casting doubt on his fitness to govern. … Full report

July 14, 2018

2018 Russia–United States summit
On July 16, 2018, U.S. president Donald Trump and Russian president Vladimir Putin will have a summit meeting in Helsinki, Finland.

Compare the psychological profiles of Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump

The Political Personality of Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin. Working paper, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, January 2017. Abstract and link for full-text (36 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/104/

The Political Personality of 2016 Republican Presidential Nominee Donald J. Trump. Working paper, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John’s University/College of St. Benedict, October 2016. (Paper presented at the 41st Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology, San Antonio, TX, July 4-7, 2018.) Abstract and link for full-text (31 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/103/

The Leadership Style of U.S. President Donald J. Trump. Working paper, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John’s University/College of St. Benedict, January 2017. Abstract and link for full-text (14 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/107/

May 6, 2018

Who should get the credit for Kim Jong-un’s denuclearization pledge?

North Korea says denuclearization pledge not result of U.S.-led sanctions (Reuters, May 6, 2018) — North Korea said on Sunday its intention to denuclearize … was not the result of U.S.-led sanctions and pressure. … The North’s official KCNA news agency said Washington was “misleading public opinion” by claiming the denuclearization pledge was the result of sanctions and other pressure. …

Analysis: Empirical support for North Korea’s contention that its denuclearization pledge was not solely the result of the Trump administration’s policy of sanctions and “maximum pressure” is implicit in the psychological assessment of Kim Jong-un conducted at the Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, which indicated as early as April 2013 that Kim’s personality profile revealed a predominantly outgoing tendency supplemented by a distinctly accommodating inclination, signifying a “congenial–cooperative” leadership style and pointing to an accommodating, neighborly, conflict-avoidant foreign policy orientation.

April 28, 2018

Students Present Research at Scholarship Day
COLLEGEVILLE, Minn. (April 27, 2018) — Psychological profiles of U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un were presented on April 26, 2018, at “Celebrating Scholarship and Creativity Day,” an annual event to recognize students, faculty, and staff who have undertaken significant research, scholarship, or creative works during the past academic year at St. John’s University and the College of St. Benedict.

Undergraduate students in a Personality Psychology course at the colleges conducted the research under the auspices of the Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, directed by Aubrey Immelman, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology.

Biographical and life history data concerning the candidates were collected from media reports and synthesized into personality profiles using the third edition of the Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria (MIDC). Following are abstracts of the poster presentations.

_______________________________

THE POLITICAL PERSONALITY OF PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP IN OFFICE

Meghan Keaveny, Jamie McCarthy, Thomas Baker, Emily Berg, Erin Titus, Cassidy Smith, and Aubrey Immelman

Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics

April 26, 2018
Abstract

A remote psychological assessment of Donald Trump in his capacity as president of the United States was conducted from 2017 to 2018. Psychodiagnostically relevant data regarding Trump were extracted from biographical sources and media reports published after his inauguration as president on January 20, 2017, and synthesized into a personality profile using the Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria (MIDC), which yields 34 normal and maladaptive personality classifications congruent with DSM–III–R, DSM–IV, and DSM–5. The primary purpose of this study, which will continue throughout the Trump presidency, was to compare Trump’s public personality in office to his personality prior to assuming political office, as assessed during the 2016 presidential election cycle.

The personality profile yielded by the MIDC was analyzed in accordance with interpretive guidelines provided in the MIDC and Millon Index of Personality Styles manuals. Trump’s primary personality patterns were found to be Ambitious/exploitative and Dominant/controlling, infused with secondary Outgoing/congenial and Dauntless/adventurous features, possibly supplemented by a slight Erratic/unstable tendency.

In summary, Trump can be characterized as a highly confident, dominant extravert, based on the amalgam of Ambitious, Dominant, and Outgoing patterns in his overall personality profile.

Ambitious individuals are bold, competitive, and self-assured; they easily assume leadership roles, expect others to recognize their special qualities, and often act as though entitled. Dominant individuals enjoy the power to direct others and to evoke obedience and respect; they are tough and unsentimental and often make effective leaders. Outgoing individuals are dramatic attention-getters who thrive on being the center of social events, go out of their way to be popular with others, have confidence in their social abilities, tend to be impulsive and undisciplined, and become easily bored — especially when faced with repetitive or mundane tasks. Dauntless individuals tend to flout tradition, dislike following routine, sometimes act impulsively and irresponsibly, and are inclined to elaborate on or shade the truth and skirt the law.

Trump’s major personality strengths in a political role are his confident assertiveness, personal charisma, and persuasiveness. His major personality-based shortcomings are of a temperamental nature: impulsiveness and a lack of emotional restraint and self-discipline.

The Personality Profile of North Korea’s Kim Jong Un

Katlin Rice, Austen Luetmer, Suntina Spehar, Hillary Rethlake, Lucas Vetsch, Amanda Olson, Mariah Ogden-Kellington, and Aubrey Immelman

Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics

April 26, 2018
Abstract

A remote psychological assessment of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was conducted from 2017 to 2018. Psychodiagnostically relevant data regarding Kim were extracted from open-source media reports and synthesized into a personality profile using the Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria (MIDC), which yields 34 normal and maladaptive personality classifications congruent with DSM–III–R, DSM–IV, and DSM–5.

The personality profile yielded by the MIDC was analyzed in accordance with interpretive guidelines provided in the MIDC and Millon Index of Personality Styles manuals. Kim’s primary personality patterns were found to be Outgoing/gregarious and Dominant/controlling, supplemented by secondary Ambitious/confident, Dauntless/adventurous, and Accommodating/cooperative features. Given his Outgoing–Dominant primary personality composite, Kim may be classified as a high-dominance extravert.

Outgoing individuals are dramatic attention-getters who thrive on being the center of social events, go out of their way to be popular with others, and are confident in their social skills; they may have an impulsive tendency and be prone to boredom. Dominant individuals enjoy the power to direct others and to evoke obedience and respect; they can be tough and unsentimental and often make effective leaders. Ambitious individuals are bold, competitive, and self-assured; they easily assume leadership roles, expect others to recognize their special qualities, and may act as though entitled. Dauntless individuals tend to flout tradition, conventional standards, and cultural mores, dislike following routine, and may act impulsively and recklessly; they are resistant to coercion and may exhibit a strong need for autonomy and self-determination. Accommodating individuals are notably cordial, cooperative, and amicable; they are willing to adapt their preferences to be compatible with those of others, to reconcile differences to achieve peaceable solutions, and to concede or compromise when necessary.

Kim Jong-un’s major personality-based leadership strength is a distinctly outgoing tendency, supplemented by an accommodating inclination, a fitting descriptive label for which would be congenial–cooperative. Leaders matching this profile can be expected to be jovial, socially gregarious, agreeable, accommodating, and obliging in their relationships with others; they are characteristically gracious, neighborly, and benevolent, preferring to avoid conflict and seek harmony with others.
According to the study, "Kim Jong-un's major personality-based leadership strength is a distinctly outgoing tendency, supplemented by an accommodating inclination, a fitting descriptive label for which would be 'congenial–cooperative.' Leaders matching this profile can be expected to be jovial, socially gregarious, agreeable, accommodating, and obliging in their relationships with others; they are characteristically gracious, neighborly, and benevolent, preferring to avoid conflict and seek harmony with others."

Related video: April 30, 2018


America’s Newsroom (April 30, 2018) — Fox News senior strategic analyst Gen. Jack Keane says the Central Intelligence Agency has the best profile of Kim Jong Un and former director Mike Pompeo understands Kim better than anybody and, based on the intelligence the CIA has, believes Kim is a rational actor. (04:20)
Predominantly conscientious (compulsive) personalities that also possess significant ambitious (narcissistic) features have been labeled bureaucratic compulsives (Millon, 1996, pp. 521–522; Millon & Davis, 2000, p. 179). Leaders with this composite character complex are noted for their officious, high-handed bearing, intrusive, meddlesome interpersonal conduct, unimaginative, meticulous, closed-minded cognitive style, grim, imperturbable mood, and scrupulous if grandiose sense of self.

A controlling, virtuous but moralistic upbringing with high expectations for perfection can breed adults who “displace anger and insecurity by seeking out some position of power that allows them to become a socially sanctioned superego for others,” whose “swift judgment … conceals a sadistic and self-righteous joy” cloaked in the mantle of social virtue (Millon & Davis, 2000, p. 184).

The bureaucratic compulsive character complex is rooted in the highly conscientious personality’s deep ambivalence between obedience and defiance, modulated by the ambitious, narcissistic personality’s overinflated ego. It is strongly characterized by the regulatory mechanism of sadistic displacement of hostile impulses.

To compensate for their internal ambivalence, bureaucratic compulsives “fuse their identity with the system as a means of achieving place, purpose, and protection” (Millon & Davis, 2000, p. 179); the formalized external structures of the party and the state may become an embodiment of the self. To relinquish control is to obliterate the self. Political opponents are to their personal psychology what invasive organisms are to the body’s immune system — and the self-protective response equally swift and ruthless.

Millon and Davis (2000) describe the bureaucratic compulsive as follows:

"Bureaucratic compulsives ally themselves with traditional values and established authorities. They flourish in organizational settings, feeling comforted, strengthened, and empowered by clearly defined superior and subordinate relationships, definite roles, and known expectations and responsibilities. Once established, they function loyally and dependably. In effect, these individuals use highly developed and formalized external structures to compensate for the internal sense of ambivalence and indecisiveness that plague the average compulsive pattern. Many fuse their identity with the system as a means of achieving place, purpose, and protection. Their superiors know them as trustworthy, diligent, and faithfully committed to the goals and values of the institution, which fortifies their self-esteem and gives them a direction. Be it church, police, union, university, or business, without the organization most would feel lost or aimless in life. Punctual and meticulous, they adhere to the work ethic like worker ants in a colony, appraising their own and others’ tasks with black-and-white efficiency, as done or not done.

Like the conscientious compulsive (conscientious–accommodating subtype), the bureaucratic subtype shades gently into normality. However, bureaucratic compulsives run the spectrum from nearly normal to completely sadistic. At a moderately disordered level, their rigid adherence to policies and rules makes them seem officious, high-handed, close-minded, and petty. At a severely disordered level, they may use their knowledge of the rules, effectiveness with red tape, and ingratiating attitude with superiors to terrorize subordinates or anyone else that crosses their path without paying them the proper dues and respect. (p. 179)"
On Sunday, Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Arizona, was asked whether he thinks someone should challenge President Donald Trump in the 2020 Republican primary. “Yes, I do. I do,” Flake told “Meet the Press” host Chuck Todd. “I mean, it would be a tough go in a Republican primary. The Republican Party is the Trump party right now. But that’s not to say it will stay that way.”

Who could that someone be? Obviously, Flake, who was all-but-forced into retirement after his attacks on Trump led to an open revolt against him by the base of the party, wants it to be him. (He has been very coy about his own future political plans.)

And he’s certainly on the list of potential Trump primary challengers. Here’s my ranking of the top three — in order of most likely to least likely to actually run.

1. John Kasich: The Ohio governor was one of a handful of major establishment politicians who never threw their lots behind Trump in 2016. And he has been open about his interest in running again. “I honestly don’t know what my future is,” Kasich told CNN in January.

2. Jeff Flake: He’s young (55) and has a very conservative record — particularly on debt and spending issues where Trump has totally abandoned Republican orthodoxy. Even so, this feels more like a race of conscience for Flake rather than a race he can actually win.

3. Mitt Romney: The two-time presidential candidate is very likely to win the seat of retiring Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, this fall. His return to the political arena — coupled with Romney’s outspoken criticism of Trump during the 2016 campaign — has people speculating that a presidential primary bid might happen. I don’t see it.

The Point: Beating a sitting president in a primary is a near-impossible task. (See Kennedy, Ted in 1980.) And while Trump’s numbers are historically low among the broader populace, he remains quite popular among Republicans. In short: One of these three men might run, but beating the President is something else entirely.

March 8, 2018

Donald Trump to meet Kim Jong-un

South Korea’s national security adviser, Chung Eui-yong, announced at the White House that U.S. President Donald Trump will meet with North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un by May 2018. Kim reportedly said he is “committed to denuclearization” and pledged North Korea will “refrain from any further nuclear or missile tests.”
Jan 8, 2018

"Fire and Fury"

Jim VandeHei and Mike Allen ("The Wolff lines on Trump that ring unambiguously true," Axios, Jan. 5, 2018) write:

“There are definitely parts of Michael Wolff’s ‘Fire and Fury’ that are wrong, sloppy, or betray off-the-record confidence. But there are two things he gets absolutely right, even in the eyes of White House officials who think some of the book’s scenes are fiction: his spot-on portrait of Trump as an emotionally erratic president, and the low opinion of him among some of those serving him.”

VandeHei and Allen categorize “lines from the book [that] ring unambiguously true” into four categories: (1) how Trump processes (and resists) information; (2) instinct over expertise; (3) ill-preparedness; and (4) low regard by key aides.

Following is a selection from VandeHei and Allen’s shortlist of “Fire and Fury” quotes, annotated with empirical research findings from studies conducted at the Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics.

How Trump processes (and resists) information:

- “[Trump] seemed to lack the ability to take in third-party information.”
- “Trump didn’t read. He didn’t really even skim. … [H]e could read headlines and articles about himself, or at least headlines on articles about himself, and the gossip squibs on the New York Post’s Page Six.”
- “[Trump] trusted his own expertise — no matter how paltry or irrelevant — more than anyone else’s [see *Note]. What’s more, he had an extremely short attention span, even when he thought you were worthy of attention.”

Outgoing (histrionic) cognitive style: flighty/scattered — Avoids introspective thought, attentive to fleeting external events, and speaks in impressionistic generalities; integrates experiences poorly, resulting in scattered learning and thoughtless judgments. [*Note: Trusting one’s own expertise more than anyone else’s is a narcissistic trait.]

Instinct over expertise:

- “[Trump was] a man who, while he knew little, was entirely confident of his own gut instincts and reflexive opinions, however frequently they might change.”

Ambitious (narcissistic) expressive behavior: confident/conceited — Self-confident, conveying an air of calm, untroubled self-assurance; tends to act in a conceited manner, shading into hubris, immodesty, or presumptuousness; self-promoting, displaying an inflated sense of self-importance.

Ill-preparedness:

- “[T]he president’s views of foreign policy and the world at large were among [his White House’s] most random, uninformed, and seemingly capricious aspects. His advisers didn’t know whether he was an isolationist or a militarist, or whether he could distinguish between the two.”
Outgoing (histrionic) cognitive style: flighty/scattered — Avoids introspective thought, attentive to fleeting external events, and speaks in impressionistic generalities; integrates experiences poorly, resulting in scattered learning and thoughtless judgments.

Low regard by key aides:

- “He spoke obliviously and happily, believing himself to be a perfect pitch raconteur and public performer, while everyone with him held their breath.”

Ambitious (narcissistic) expressive behavior: confident/conceited — Self-confident, conveying an air of calm, untroubled self-assurance; tends to act in a conceited manner, shading into hubris, immodesty, or presumptuousness; self-promoting, displaying an inflated sense of self-importance.

- “If a wackadoo moment occurred on the occasions … when his remarks careened in no clear direction, his staff had to go into intense method-acting response.”

Outgoing (histrionic) mood/temperament: poor impulse control — Animated, uninhibited, and emotionally responsive; moods subject to rapid fluctuation; may be over-excitable, exhibit a pervasive tendency to be easily enthused and as easily bored or angered, make thoughtless, imprudent judgments, and embark on rash or reckless courses of action.

- “At points on the day’s spectrum of adverse political developments, he could have moments of, almost everyone would admit, irrationality. When that happened, he was alone in his anger and not approachable by anyone.”

Dominant (aggressive) mood/temperament: volatile — Prone to irritability; volatile temper that may at times be difficult to control, flaring readily into petty or contentious argument.

Recommended References for In-Depth Analysis

The Political Personality of 2016 Republican Presidential Nominee Donald J. Trump. Working paper, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John’s University/College of St. Benedict, October 2016. Abstract and link for full-text (31 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons:
http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/103/

The Leadership Style of U.S. President Donald J. Trump. Working paper, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John’s University/College of St. Benedict, January 2017. Abstract and link for full-text (14 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons:
http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/107/

Sidebar

August 13, 2017

FOX to CIA: “What is your psychological profile of Kim Jong-un?”

Michael Wolff and “Dr. Evil”
Director Pompeo’s response the question of Kim Jong-un’s psychological profile at best scratches the surface. Empirically, psychological analysis conducted at the Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics indicates that Kim Jong-un’s personality profile is within normal limits for a high-level political leader.

Specifically, there is little evidence that Kim has a paranoid personality orientation; he does not display a pathological degree of narcissism (grandiosity, self-absorption, and an inability to empathize with others); his dominance does not rise to unconstrained aggressive or sadistic levels; and he does not have significant antisocial tendencies (i.e., bereft of any constraints of conscience). In short Kim cannot be characterized as a “malignant narcissist” — a personality composite psychiatrist Jerrold Post has called “the most dangerous personality disorder.”

Regarding the question of whether Kim is rational and disciplined, it’s difficult to provide an unequivocal response. Yes, Kim is rational; however, the North Korean regime’s policies appear at times to be irrational, but it’s not entirely clear that Kim Jong-un truly “calls the shots” in North Korea. The matter of self-discipline is more straightforward. Empirical analysis indicates that Kim Jong-un rates low on conscientiousness, from which it can be inferred that he is neither highly disciplined nor substantially deliberative and may, in fact, be prone to acting on impulse.

---

August 7, 2017

A follow-up, more intensive psychological investigation of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is nearing completion, scheduled for release early in 2018.

Update

The Personality Profile of North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un. Working paper, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John’s University/College of St. Benedict, April 2018. Abstract and link for full-text (32 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/119/
July 7, 2017

**Putin–Trump meeting**

Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin meet face-to-face at the G20 summit in Hamburg, Germany today.

Psychological profiles of [Vladimir Putin](#) and [Donald Trump](#)

**The Political Personality of Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin**. Working paper, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, January 2017. Abstract and link for full-text (36 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: [http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/104/](http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/104/)

**The Political Personality of 2016 Republican Presidential Nominee Donald J. Trump**. Working paper, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John’s University/College of St. Benedict, October 2016. Abstract and link for full-text (31 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: [http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/103/](http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/103/)

**The Leadership Style of U.S. President Donald J. Trump**. Working paper, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John’s University/College of St.
The personality profile of North Korean supreme leader Kim Jong-un

Introduction

We conducted a psychodiagnostic case study of North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un. The purpose of the study was to construct a Millon-based personality profile of Kim.

Method

The assessment instrument was the 170-item Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria (MIDC; Millman, 2012), which assesses the attribute domains of expressive behavior, interpersonal contact, cognitive style, mood temperament, and self-image. The instrument contains 12 scales, yielding 28 normal and 14 pathological personality styles.

Personality Type

"High-Dominance Extravert"

Primary traits: Dominant / controlling

Secondary traits: Outgoing / congenial

Results

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute Domain</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intramuscular behavior</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intramuscular conduct</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive style</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somatic</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MIDC Item Name</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Low:</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Low:</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Low:</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Low:</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Low:</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Low:</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Low:</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Low:</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Low:</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Low:</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Low:</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Low:</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Low:</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Low:</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References


April 28, 2017

The personality profile of U.S. vice president Mike Pence

The Political Personality of U.S. Vice President Mike Pence. Working paper, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John’s University/College of St. Benedict, May 2017. Abstract and link for full-text (19 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/118/

April 20, 2017

Has Allan Lichtman correctly predicted the winner of every presidential election since 1984?

Mika Brzezinski: “American University professor Allan Lichtman … predicting that Trump would win the election … adding to his streak of correctly predicting the winner of every presidential election since 1984.”
Professor predicts Trump impeachment ‘very likely’ (MSNBC “Morning Joe,” April 18, 2017) — Writer and professor Allan Lichtman made an early prediction that Donald Trump would win the presidency. He’s back with a new prediction: Trump could be impeached. Lichtman joins the discussion. (Duration: 8:44)

Election 2000 — Excerpts from media reports

Al Gore will be the next president of the United States. … The prediction … is the work of one Allan Lichtman, political scientist and head of the history department at American University. He’s scoring a lot of coverage with it, mainly because, in the last 35 presidential elections, Lichtman’s success rate is 100 percent. Lichtman developed his “13 keys” test in the early 1980s with the help of — get this — a Russian specialist in earthquake prediction. In every Oval Office contest since then, Lichtman has used the keys to correctly predict the winner. And looking backward, his method holds true for every presidential race since 1860. ("President Al wins this election test," Michael Zuzel, Columbian [Vancouver, Wash.], April 4 2000: A11)

Lichtman concluded the contestants and their campaigns really don’t matter. “The election is a referendum on peace, prosperity and good times at home,” he said. With that in mind, he said he predicts a Gore win. Gore started out with just three of the 13 keys against him. He’s not a sitting president, he’s not considered charismatic and he’s been associated with a scandal. (“Keys to election: Gore in a landslide?” Gail Rippey, Sunday News [Lancaster, Pa.], Oct.8 2000: A-1)

Election 2016 — Press release

With the presidential election just weeks away, Donald J. Trump is predicted to win, according to American University Professor Allan Lichtman. Lichtman’s “13 Keys” system predicts the outcome of the popular vote based on the performance of the party and not the use of candidate preference polls, campaign strategies, or events. “The Keys point to a Donald Trump victory, and in general, point to a generic Republican victory. Still, I believe that given the unprecedented nature of the Trump candidacy and Trump himself, Trump could defy all odds and lose even though the verdict of history is in his favor,” Lichtman said. ("Historian’s prediction: Donald J. Trump to win 2016 election," Rebecca Basu, University Communications & Marketing, American University, Sept. 26, 2016)

Election 2016 — Final popular vote result

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Donald J. Trump</th>
<th>Hillary Clinton</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Popular vote</strong></td>
<td>62,984,825</td>
<td>65,853,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage</strong></td>
<td>46.1%</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

April 1, 2017 (Updated July 2, 2017)

Partial index of psychological studies of U.S. presidents and presidential candidates, foreign leaders, and leading terrorist figures conducted at the Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics
Following is a partial catalogue of psychological assessments of U.S. presidents and presidential candidates, foreign leaders, and rogue or terrorist leaders conducted at the Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics.

**U.S. Presidents and Presidential Candidates**

**The Political Personality of U.S. Vice President Mike Pence**. Working paper by Aubrey Immelman, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John's University/College of St. Benedict, May 2017. Abstract and link for full-text (19 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/118/

**The Leadership Style of U.S. President Donald J. Trump**. Working paper by Aubrey Immelman, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John’s University/College of St. Benedict, January 2017. Abstract and link for full-text (14 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/107/

**The Political Personality of 2016 Republican Presidential Nominee Donald J. Trump**. Working paper by Aubrey Immelman, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John’s University/College of St. Benedict, October 2016. Abstract and link for full-text (31 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/103/

**The Political Personality of 2016 Democratic Presidential Nominee Hillary Clinton**. Working paper by Aubrey Immelman, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John’s University/College of St. Benedict, October 2016. Abstract and link for full-text (34 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/102/

**Personality Profiles of the 2016 Republican Presidential Candidates**. Forum lecture by Aubrey Immelman, St. John’s University/College of St. Benedict, November 5, 2015. Abstract and link for full-text (15 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/forum_lectures/136/

**The Political Personality of 2012 Republican Presidential Candidate Mitt Romney**. Paper presented by Aubrey Immelman at the 35th Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology, Chicago, July 6–9, 2012. Abstract and link for full-text (35 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/98/


**Foreign Leaders**

**The Leadership Style of North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un**. Working paper by Aubrey Immelman, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St.
The Personality Profile of North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un. Working paper by Aubrey Immelman, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John’s University/College of St. Benedict, April 2018. Abstract and link for full-text (32 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/119/

The Political Personality of Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin. Working paper by Aubrey Immelman and Joe Trenzeluk, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John’s University/College of St. Benedict, January 2017. Abstract and link for full-text (36 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/104/


The Political Personality of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe. Paper presented by Aubrey Immelman and Adam Beatty at the 26th Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology, Boston, MA, July 6–9, 2003. Abstract and link for full-text (28 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/30/


Terrorist Leaders


"Bin Laden 's Brain": The Abrasively Negativistic Personality of Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri. Paper presented by Aubrey Immelman and Kathryn Kuhlmann at the 26th Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology, Boston, MA, July 6–9, 2003. Abstract and link for full-text (38 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/31/


The Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics (USPP) is a research program in the psychology of politics at St. John’s University and the College of St. Benedict in Minnesota, directed by Aubrey Immelman, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology, who specializes in the psychological assessment of presidential candidates and world leaders.
February 22, 2017

**Is Donald Trump a “malignant narcissist”?**

An indirect personality assessment of Donald Trump conducted 2015-2016 from the conceptual perspective of psychologist Theodore Millon, employing the Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria (MIDC), which is congruent with Axis II of DSM-IV, revealed that Trump’s predominant personality patterns are Ambitious/exploitative (Scale 2: a measure of narcissistic tendencies) and Outgoing/impulsive (Scale 3: a measure of histrionic tendencies), infused with secondary features of the Dominant/controlling pattern (Scale 1A: a measure of sadistic tendencies) and supplemented by a Dauntless/adventurous tendency (Scale 1B: a measure of antisocial and sensation-seeking tendencies).

The study found no empirical evidence of a Distrusting personality pattern (Scale 9: a measure of paranoid tendencies) — an integral component of malignant narcissism, a severely disturbed personality disorder characterized by narcissistic grandiosity, self-absorption, and lack of empathy; no constraints of conscience (an antisocial tendency); a paranoid orientation; and unconstrained aggression (sadism). Notably, Scale 1A (sadistic) and Scale 1B (antisocial) also failed to reach the MIDC scale elevation threshold of 24 required for inferring the existence of a personality disorder. Consequently, it cannot be concluded that Donald Trump is a malignant narcissist.
According to the *Psychology Today* report, psychiatrist Allen Frances — who helped write the criteria for personality disorders — views “public diagnoses being bandied about” as inaccurate and missing the point, because “they ignore the criterion that symptoms must be causing distress and impairment.” Donald Trump, according to Frances, “causes distress to others, not to himself … [and] is rewarded for his behaviors.”

---

Update: February 23, 2017
Trump's mental health: 'The elephant in the room' (*The Last Word with Lawrence O'Donnell,* MSNBC, Feb. 23, 2017) — As psychologists and psychiatrists continue to warn about President Trump's mental health, the Columbia Journalism Review called Trump’s mental health “the elephant in the room.” Lee Siegel, who wrote the CJR column, and Dr. Lance Dodes join Lawrence. [Duration: 7:04]

Update: May 6, 2017

"Duty to Warn" — Yale psychologist spearheads Donald Trump 'Hitler Lite' campaign

Jesse Watters vs. psychologist that claims Trump is mentally ill (*Watters’ World, Fox News Channel, May 6, 2017*) — Yale’s Dr. John Gartner, founder of "Duty to Warn." [Duration: 06:42]

Related report

Donald Trump’s Narcissism Is Not the Main Issue (*Aug. 11, 2016*)
Russia compiling psychological dossier on Donald Trump for Vladimir Putin

A number of mental health professionals have queried President Trump’s psychological traits; Vladimir Putin seems to be taking the same route.

NBC News (Feb. 20, 2017) reports: “A dossier on Donald Trump’s psychological makeup is being prepared for Russian President Vladimir Putin. Among its preliminary conclusions is that the new American leader is a risk-taker who can be naive, according to a senior Kremlin adviser. … The attempt to get inside the U.S. president’s mind is aimed at helping Putin plan for his first meeting with America’s new leader, the date for which is yet to be decided.”

Related reports

A psychological study of Donald Trump conducted at the Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics revealed that Trump’s predominant personality patterns are outgoing/impulsive and ambitious/exploitative (a measure of narcissism), infused with secondary features of the dominant/controlling pattern and low conscientiousness — a personality composite characterized as a “high-dominance charismatic.”

The Leadership Style of U.S. President Donald J. Trump. Working paper, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John’s University/College of St. Benedict, January 2017. Abstract and link for full-text (14 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/107/

The Political Personality of 2016 Republican Presidential Nominee Donald J. Trump. Working paper, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John’s University/College of St. Benedict, October 2016. Abstract and link for full-text (31 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/103/
Prospects for the Trump Presidency

The Eugene J. McCarthy Center for Public Policy & Civic Engagement is hosting a panel discussion on “Donald Trump: What Will Happen in the Next Four Years” on Tuesday, January 31 at 5:15 p.m.

Recent reports by the Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics related to the discussion topic:

The Political Personality of 2016 Republican Presidential Nominee Donald J. Trump » http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/103/

The Leadership Style of U.S. President Donald J. Trump » http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/107/

The personality of U.S. Supreme Court associate justice Clarence Thomas

More than a decade after the study was conducted, the Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics has publicly released its personality profile of U.S. Supreme Court associate justice Clarence Thomas. The report was prepared for the Washington Post’s Kevin Merida as part of the background research for his book, with Michael Fletcher, *Supreme Discomfort: The Divided Soul of Clarence Thomas* (2007).

The Personality of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. Research report, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John’s University/College of St. Benedict, July 2004. Abstract and link for full-text (22 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/108/

Donald Trump’s leadership style

Excerpt from "Supreme Discomfort: The Divided Soul of Clarence Thomas" by Kevin Merida and Michael Fletcher.
The Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics has released its analysis of Donald Trump’s prospective leadership style as president.

**The Leadership Style of U.S. President Donald J. Trump.** Working paper, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics, St. John’s University/College of St. Benedict, January 2017. Abstract and link for full-text (14 pages; PDF) download at Digital Commons:
http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/107/

January 4, 2017

**Explaining Donald Trump’s Twitter habit**

Wall Street Journal Washington bureau chief Gerald F. Seib, in his Jan. 2, 2017 Capital Journal column “The method in Donald Trump’s maddening communications habits,” poses the question “Is it method or madness?” (i.e., reason or emotion) and proceeds to outline three rationales for Donald Trump’s social media communication habits: (1) positioning himself for a negotiation or a deal; (2) seeking to control the agenda; and (3) creating rabbits for others to chase.

All three hypothesized purposes lean in the direction of cognition-driven rational motives. A fourth rationale to consider is the possibility of emotion-driven personality variables.

Specifically, Donald Trump is the most sociable, extraverted president since Bill Clinton — but the many positive implications of those traits for retail politics constitute a double-edged sword on account of that particular personality pattern’s associated features of impulsiveness and a lack of discipline and self-restraint.


Personality has consequences.

---

Related links

**2016 Presidential Election 'Media Tipsheet'**

**Election 2000 Reporters' Tipsheet**

---

FOLLOW:

SEARCH

SEARCH

To search type and hit enter

FEATURED ARTICLES

**LOCAL PROFESSOR PREDICTED TRUMP’S WIN**

2016 Election — USPP ‘Media Tipsheet’
CSB/SJU Professor Predicts Trump Would Beat Clinton

Trump Driven by Narcissistic Dreams of Glory

Putin Should Prepare Himself for Clinton

'Monster'? The Darker Side of Hillary Clinton's Character

Comparing Clinton and Obama, Head-to-Head
August 9, 2015. Diagnostic information concerning Trump was collected from biographical sources and media reports and synthesized into a personality profile using the Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria (MIDC), which taps the attribute domains of expressive behavior, interpersonal
conduct, cognitive style, mood/temperament, and self-image, yielding 34 normal and maladaptive personality classifications congruent with Axis II of DSM–IV.