

The secret title of any book is "how to be more like me."

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In this chapter I undertake three tasks: First, I will test the relevance of the five traditional theories summarized in chapter 2 for identifying the effects of personal emotional predispositions on foreign policy choices; second, I will describe the policy tendencies and internal ambivalences that tend to be created by the modal personality of these mid-elite respondents; and third, I will present a summary theory that major foreign policy decisions are crucially the personal self-expression of the policy maker, the view that "what you decide depends ultimately on who you are."

What the data analysis in this chapter does is to match each man's personality trait score with his policy attitude score. Such matching can be represented by points on a graph; this allows a researcher to view the results for all of the men taken together. A "best fit" straight line is put through the scatter of points, and its slope describes directly the relation between scores: a line which slopes upward (positive) shows that an increase in the personality trait score tends to be associated with (causes) a higher attitude score.¹ When the slope of the line is downward (negative) it shows that an increase in the personality trait score is associated with (causes) a lower attitude score. In this chapter we will be concerned primarily with two policy attitude scores: the percentage of the five scenarios in which a man advocated the use of force (0% to 100%), and the "number of wars" capability a man wanted America to maintain (from ½ to 2½).

For readers familiar with the mathematics used to compare scores and derive descriptive equations, I have placed details of the best-fit equations in appendixes A and B. In the text I will simply summarize their main features, and describe how these equations are to be read.

A best-fit equation is of the straight-line form $Y = a_0 + b_1X$, where Y is the dependent (policy) score, a_0 is a constant term which is the estimated value of Y when an individual scores at 0 (the lowest score) on the value of X (the personality trait score).² The term b_1 , a derived coefficient, is the slope of the line. A positive value of b_1 means the line slopes upward (as the score on the personality trait X increases by 1 unit there tends to be a shift of b_1 units upward in the Y score). A negative b_1 means that the line

slopes downward, so that people who score higher on X tend to have lower scores on Y .

Two important summary numbers in the tables in appendix B are R^2 and $p(F)$. R^2 is a number between 0 and 1 which tells how tightly the points cluster around the line. If R^2 equals 1, this implies that the difference in X scores are the sole cause of differences in Y scores; if R^2 is low it means that changes in Y are affected by many forces other than simply the X being considered. In every case in this chapter and the next, R^2 will be low—showing that a single personality trait is only one element in a complex set of other personality traits and situational and other factors that enter into the policy decisions in any specific case.

Another way to say this is that b , estimates the impact of a different decision maker (different on only this trait) if everything else were held constant.³ R^2 estimates the size of the other factors that have to be held constant in order for this estimate to be accurate.

The final important number is $p(F)$. It is relevant because scores sometimes can vary together due to the happenstance of random processes, and this possibility must be known to be small before an equation can be taken seriously. The $p(F)$ estimate is the probability that the equation estimate could be produced by random fluctuations rather than by real effects.⁴ A typical statement for an equation in this study would be " $p(F) < .001$," which means that there is less than one chance in a thousand that the derived equation could have resulted if the subjects had simply written down their choices for X and Y at random.⁵ Thus we can have confidence that we are viewing real relationships.

The tables and resultant equations set forth in appendix B are slightly more complex than the foregoing. This is because the study allowed for the possibility that the different groups might have best-fit lines that differed from one common line. It also allowed for the possibility that other unexpressed differences between groups might make for different propensities in policy attitudes between groups. Significant slope shifts for the National War College (NWC) or Office of Management and Budget (OMB) are noted. Significantly different constant terms for NWC or OMB are expressed as intercept shifts for each group.

As noted in chapter 2, a characteristic assumed for these men was their

personal identification with American foreign policy. This assumption, a basis for the specific predictions of later theories, was confirmed by a comparison of the images these men held of American foreign policy and their images of themselves provided by the adjective rating scales with evaluative and activity-power connotations discussed earlier.⁶ The image of American foreign policy was close to the self-image and differences in self-image were associated with corresponding differences in the image of American foreign policy.⁷

Let me now turn to evaluating my results in terms of the five traditional theories listed in chapter 2: (a1) interpersonal generalization, (a2) displacement of subjective fantasy goals, (a3) ethnocentrism and inverse interpersonal generalization, (a4) defects in mental health, and (a5) the interaction of personality and organizational setting.

Personality Effects on Policy

Interpersonal Generalization (a1)

The first theory considered in chapter 2 was interpersonal generalization. Confirming findings of the present study are that the advocacy of military force will be greater among those whose personalities are characterized by:

1. Greater *interpersonal hostility* among military officers, and possibly among diplomats. However, there is no correlation among domestic policy professionals.⁸ (I will turn later in this chapter to this problem of different strengths of personality-trait engagement in different groups.)
2. *Liking to compete with others* among diplomats and military officers. (In this case only, the Soviet Union scenario is omitted from the analysis, since a further breakdown showed that the relation held only for the four small-country scenarios.)

As already mentioned, R^2 was low (here, about .15) for any single personality-measure equation. In other words, there is no single answer to the problem of war, no single personality trait which, like a bolt of lightning, illuminates the entire landscape. Rather, each equation adds one piece to the puzzle and, while the explanatory power of personality traits in the aggregate will be substantial, the evidence is clear that these are

complex men and complex situations, with subtle themes woven into the tapestry of their decision processes.

These first results support interpersonal generalization theory, but the vanishing effect of interpersonal competition in the case of possible confrontation with the Soviet Union ($r = -.0069$ for all subjects combined) suggests an important subtlety: men who enjoy competition are inclined to assert dominance in small countries but to hold this predisposition in check when faced with a possible direct confrontation by the Soviet Union.

There are also group-based interactions reflected in different positive slopes of the best-fit lines. My summary has emphasized the upper end of these lines (e.g., that more interpersonally hostile and aggressive military officers are more likely to advocate the use of force). G. K. Chesterton's famous sleuth, Father Brown, once warned against being too hasty by looking only in the direction a stick was pointing. "The other end of the stick," he commented, "always points the opposite way."⁹ This caveat applies to the interpretation of these lines: that the interpersonal hostility line is more steeply positive among military officers does mean that hostile military officers are more predisposed than hostile diplomats to advocate the use of force—but the military line is not only steeper going *up*, it is steeper going *down* as well; a friendly military officer is more likely to oppose the use of force, for this reason, than is a friendly diplomat. The steeper line tells us that military officers are more *emotionally engaged* in making their policy recommendations.

Interpersonal generalization also helps to explain the desired level of war capability. Greater war capability levels are desired by:

1. More interpersonally hostile and competitive military officers (but there is no discernible effect of these personality traits among civilians).
2. The *less* dominant domestic policy specialists. In other words, the more dominant a domestic policy specialist at OMB, the more he wants to cut military spending.

Displacement of Subjective Fantasy Goals (a2)

A man's ambitious dreams, his excursions into his Walter Mitty fantasy life, directly affect his predisposition to use force (although not the level

of war capability desired). In all groups a greater desire to feel active and powerful increases the predisposition to advocate the use of military force. The emotional engagement of this dimension is stronger among military officers than among diplomats, and weakest among domestic policy professionals.

A possible reason for this finding is suggested by studies conducted by Kite and by Schlenker and Tedeschi.¹⁰ They report that subjects in experiments who used coercion to produce change *felt more powerful* than did subjects who used rewards to produce change, even though the experimenters manipulated events so that the subjects in both groups actually produced equal amounts of change. The evidence (there and here) suggests that there is a visceral logic which ties feeling powerful more readily to the use of the stick than to the use of the carrot.

But the issue also arises whether ambitious men might advocate the use of force in a specific organizational context because they sense, at least unconsciously, that such policies might further their own careers. This would not be the complete story here—domestic policy specialists, who would have no reason to expect promotion or professional visibility from being hard-line in their foreign policy views, show the same behavior, although to a diminished extent. But it may be a *part* of the story at the State Department and especially among military officers—although among military officers there is a tendency generally to be more emotionally engaged in foreign policy issues on a number of dimensions, and the heightened impact of personal ambition is not unique, among all of the factors considered in this chapter, in its greater engagement.

Ethnocentrism and Inverse Interpersonal Generalization (a3)

So far the evidence has established straightforward interpersonal generalization (rather than inverse generalization) as the major story among these men. There was one exception—at OMB dominant men wanted lower military spending, but in the absence of additional evidence for an ethnocentrism syndrome shown in intra-elite personality differences, it seemed more realistic to interpret this correlation as an interaction of personality with the role of being centrally concerned with domestic programs.

However, a second set of tests can be conducted to see whether the

tendency to idealize group characteristics (in this case, American foreign policy) is associated with greater hostility and aggression toward other nations. There was only one significant correlation: at OMB the tendency to advocate force was positively related to the idealization of American foreign policy. Thus it may be that these men on the periphery of foreign policy are characterized by personality-based ethnocentrism. But this conclusion is more likely spurious: we saw in chapter 3 that men at OMB tended to be lower in their idealization of American foreign policy (they were more disillusioned by it). Thus the observed correlation probably tells us only that the "low" end of the ethnocentrism line is true—that disillusionment with government policy and opposition to military force go together. There is no evidence that those professionals with high levels of national pride are more hostile to other nations. On the contrary, as the evidence reported on p. 26 suggests, these men, even those who would use force, are internationalists.

Defects in Mental Health (a4)

The questionnaire was designed to explore four traits reflecting interpersonal relations and mental health: neurotic symptoms, trust, self-esteem, and political transcendence.

The first of these traits, the score on the Maudsley inventory of intrapsychic conflict, shows:

1. A greater incidence of internal conflict increases a predisposition to be either a stronger *advocate* or a stronger *opponent* of the use of force than average.
2. Among military officers, a greater incidence of internal conflict produces only a greater tendency to use force.

These results, in agreement with earlier research (see chapter 2) suggest that internal conflict leads a man to prefer simple, definitive modes of dealing with the world; he becomes more strongly militarist or antimilitarist. The evidence also suggests that the organizational setting affects which direction is chosen, so that among military officers the more internally conflicted are more likely to adopt a hardline stance.

The comparison between interpersonal trust scores and scores for the use of force and desired military capability shows:

1. The greater the interpersonal trust, the greater the reluctance to use force.^{11,12}
2. At OMB, and perhaps at State and NWC, greater interpersonal trust leads a man to favor lower levels of military capability.¹³

The next significant set of causal effects involve self-esteem:

1. High self-esteem diplomats (and to an even greater extent, high self-esteem men at OMB) *oppose* the use of force. But high self-esteem military officers are much more likely to *advocate* military responses.
2. High self-esteem diplomats and high self-esteem OMB respondents favor a *higher* war capability. But high self-esteem military officers favor a *lower* war capability.¹⁴

The first result appears straightforward: high self-esteem civilians believe more confidently in nonmilitary approaches, high self-esteem military officers place more confidence in military approaches. The second result apparently means that high self-esteem civilians, while less likely to use force, also want a "big stick" available if the necessity to use it arises. High self-esteem military officers may be expressing pride in the competence of the American military and believe the job can be done with the present 1½ war capability.¹⁵

Finally, political transcendence (of psychological subordination to American foreign policy) shows systematic causal effects:

1. The greater the political transcendence, the greater the opposition to the use of force (a tendency which may be slightly stronger at OMB).
2. The greater the political transcendence, the lower the war capability desired.

A further exploration showed additional effects of political transcendence. It increases (in all groups) the relative priority for rapid economic development in underdeveloped countries, reduces (in all groups and especially at OMB) the concern for maintaining neutral or pro-American

governments, and (at OMB) leads a man to care more strongly about promoting civil liberties.

In short, political transcendence does seem to catalyze a "neighborly" state of mind: men become less drawn to coercion, become more generous and altruistic in the policies they would advocate, less likely to require non-Communist governments in the underdeveloped world.¹⁶

Relative Impact of Various Personality Traits and (a5) the Organizational Setting

Table 4.1 summarizes the expected impact of the personality traits studied on the advocacy of force. This is the difference in the percentage of cases in which force is advocated that would be predicted to result, all other things being equal, if a man scoring "0" on a personality trait were replaced by a man obtaining the highest score for that trait.¹⁷ The table shows that, among diplomats, the greatest impact, if all other factors were held constant, obtain for political transcendence, self-esteem, ambition, and hostility, producing shifts ranging from 26% to 61%.¹⁸

Table 4.2 summarizes the expected impact of selected personality traits on desired war capability, if everything else were held constant. Political transcendence, self-esteem, and trust each have impacts of between .6 and 1.2 war capabilities.¹⁹

These results, derived simply by substituting values into the derived equations and subtracting to obtain the difference, demonstrate a major result: while R^2 is always small, reflecting the fact that many forces interact to produce a policy, nevertheless the impact of personality traits, everything else being held constant, is very large.

The different patterns of personality engagement are also summarized in Tables 4.1 and 4.2.²⁰ On most measures the degree of emotional engagement by career diplomats is equal to or greater than that of domestic policy professionals. Clearly there is no good case to be made that norms of rationality within foreign policy elites systematically prevent emotional engagement in their areas of expertise.

The single most striking factor across groups is the higher emotional involvement among military officers. On the predisposition to use force they are more strongly engaged along the hostility and activity-power am-

bition dimension. Their hostility and competitiveness are also more strongly engaged in their views of what constitutes a desirable war capability. Their military directness, their tendency to be more emotionally involved in their decisions and less inhibited by intervening ambiguities, has been noted by others. As Charles Lerche, writing in the US Army's *Strategic Subjects Handbook*, put it:

One basic proposition should be made at the outset: there is a generic difference between the way military personnel approach and solve foreign policy problems and the way their civilian opposite numbers do the same thing. . . . Probably the most significant characteristic of the military's approach to foreign policy is a strong belief in "can do." There is a great temptation among orthodox policy makers, when complex and ambiguous situations are faced, to delay commitment and action until only one course becomes feasible. . . . To this tendency military spokesmen generally find themselves opposed; the American military strongly emphasizes the necessity of solving problems. . . .²¹

Elite Modal Personality and Policy Ambivalence

As the evidence reviewed in chapter 3 demonstrates, these men are not randomly-distributed on these policy-relevant personality traits: there is a psychological "center of gravity," and thus there are predictable consequences for mutual reinforcement of foreign policy consensus from the patterns of self-selection, recruitment, and socialization which produce the modal personality of these American elites.

Several factors *increase* a consensus favorable to American use of force—especially the personal ambition and competitiveness which characterize the typical elite respondent. As well, a modest (rather than strong) political liberalism operates in this direction at the State Department, while conservatism moves military officers still further to the hard-line end of the scale. The high self-esteem among military officers also tends to increase the confidence with which they support military solutions. Their lower degree of psychological transcendence—in other words, their relatively greater tendency to subordinate themselves psychologically to American foreign policy—would, in comparison with a higher degree of psychological freedom, increase advocacy of the use of force.

Table 4.1

Impact, Everything Else Held Constant, of Selected Personality Traits on Force Advocacy (Percent)

	OMB	FSO	NWC
1 Hostility	+5	+26	+62
2 Competitiveness (for smaller country scenarios only)	ns	+11	+11
3 Ambition to Feel Active and Powerful	+20	+34	+56
4 Idealization of American Foreign Policy	+97	ns	ns
5 Neurotic Conflict ^a	ns	ns	+27
6 Trust	-16	-16	-16
7 Self-Esteem	-37	-54	+200 ^b
8 Political Transcendence	-73	-61	-61
9 Domestic Conservatism ^c	+41	+41	+41

Impact is defined as the difference in the scores on the dependent variable, *ceteris paribus*, predicted for those obtaining the highest and lowest scores on the trait dimension.

+ or - refers to the direction of impact of an increase of the trait listed.

^aWith *deviations* from overall mean as the dependent variable. In the straightforward test, impact is +9% in all groups.

^bThis figure's magnitude is partly an artifact of small true score variance which makes the regression coefficient take on some of the characteristics of a dummy variable highly collinear with the intercept term—i.e., the estimate is a poor one since there were no truly low self-esteem military officers from which to derive an accurate slope estimate.

^cDomestic conservatism equation: Percent of cases = 27.36 + 10.9(NWC dummy variable) + 4.06(conservatism score). $p(t)$ for dummy variable < .02; $p(t)$ for conservatism < 4×10^{-8} , $p(F)$ < 1×10^{-12} , $R^2 = .23$, SE = 24.02.

Table 4.2

Impact, Everything Else Held Constant, of Selected Personality Traits on Desired War Capability

	OMB	FSO	NWC
1 Hostility	ns	ns	+4
2 Competitiveness	ns	ns	+2
3 Dominance	-.03	ns	ns
4 Trust	-1.3	-.6	-.6
5 Self-Esteem	+1.2	+1.2	-4.9 ^a
6 Political Transcendence	-1.1	-1.1	-1.1
7 Domestic Conservatism ^b	+5	+5	+5

Impact is defined as the difference in the scores on the dependent variable, *ceteris paribus*, predicted for those obtaining the highest and lowest scores on the trait dimension.

+ or - refers to the direction of impact of an increase of the listed trait.

The desired war capability scale range is from ½ to 2½ wars.

^aThis estimate is uncertain due to the absence of low self-esteem military officers—whose presence would allow a more reliable slope estimation—and the resultant presence of a nearly collinear dummy variable in the equation.

^bDomestic conservatism equation: Capability desired = 1.28 + .049(conservatism score). $p(t)$ and $p(F)$ < 7×10^{-5} , $R^2 = .08$, SE = .43.

On the other side, there are several characteristics that work *against* a consensus in Washington favorable to the use of force. These men tend to be more friendly than hostile. Of primary importance is the high degree of trust most have in their fellow men: it is a substantially higher degree of trust than the average American has for his fellow citizen, and it increases support for nonmilitary responses to foreign policy problems. Also of importance (given previous research, cited in the notes to chapter 2) is the relative freedom of these men from major problems of neurotic conflict (and, at least in the State Department, their low degree of dogmatic rigidity and reflexive authoritarianism). Also decreasing support for military responses is the high level of self-esteem within the State Department.

This picture of modal tendencies with both reinforcing and conflicting policy implications suggests that the *typical* FSO, when he advocates or opposes the use of force, will be *ambivalent*, pulled in opposing directions within himself. He will experience policy making as *complex*. He will be unsure of himself, and will feel that each option is to some degree unsatisfactory. He will rarely experience a complete and bold self-confidence or peace of mind. However, military officers, with their higher ambition, higher competitiveness, greater conservatism, and high self-esteem interacting with their professional expertise, will more self-confidently recommend hard-line policies.

Alchemy Versus Science: Foreign Policy as Self-Expression

There is, perhaps, an implicit model in the minds of many people about how foreign policy is made: policy makers operate as rational scientific professionals, like engineers. First they specify American national values and objectives; then they assemble data and evaluate theories about what effects follow from what causes. Finally they collect relevant data on the situation at hand, evaluate it, and simply select the best policy.

In practice, of course, there is only a surface resemblance between the formation of foreign policy (and public policy generally) and what a scientist would accept as a scientific activity. Assuming, for example, that "national security" is one objective, a scientist would propose that a first step would be to decide clearly what is meant by "national security." Yet there

is major disagreement about even so fundamental a concept; in chapter 3 we saw most military officers tended to think of national security as a matter of capability—of American weapons relative to Russian weapons, and the will to use them. Diplomats tended to think of American security as dependent upon Russian intentions and the quality of the mutual understanding, maturity, and perspective developed in Russian-American relations.

The source of the disagreement is, I think, masked by the fiction that men are talking about some common objective reality when they speak of "security." Rather, security, like much of the objectives in public policy, is a *structure of meaning in the mind of the beholder*.

If scientists disagree about the efficient way to produce a chemical compound, say H_2SO_4 , they at least can agree objectively about how that compound looks; but "national security" means different things to different people. Military officers are saying, I think, that they would *personally* feel secure only when America has preponderant strength and destructive potential and the other side knows that it might be used; their personal feelings (private meanings) are displaced onto the topic of "national security." Diplomats tend to feel secure under a different set of circumstances, and their conception of national security reflects a difference in their personal experience of what security means. There is, I suspect, little room for resolving these differences rationally or scientifically because it is only on the surface (i.e., because they use the same words) that these men seem to desire the same external reality.

It is not only with respect to the criteria of national security that men who make foreign policy find themselves in disagreement. This chapter has summarized the evidence that multiple personal predispositions enter into policy preferences. The next chapter analyzes how people implicitly draw upon themselves to create and live within qualitatively different realities.

In a sense these data can be summarized by saying that, regardless of the surface form of the debate, one of the main features of American foreign policy is its exercise as a metaphor for self-expression, "how to be more like me." The mistrustful, competitive, and ambitious men seeking heroic power and excitement think America ought to adopt their style; the cooperative, less ambitious, trusting men think their different approach is to be recommended.

Self-expression in politics can be beneficial, to be sure; perhaps some manifestation of it should be encouraged. It may be that it is one of the generators of values and vision. Self-expression would be entirely appropriate if these men were acting as artists or poets, where it is precisely the personal self-expression of an individual that is valuable. But the problem in foreign policy is that there is an objective reality out there whose structure is independent of the mind and personality of the beholder. You do not turn people loose in a chemical laboratory to mix compounds and chemicals in accordance with their personal styles—not, that is, unless you are completely indifferent to the possibilities that explosions can result from this freedom for self-expressive creativity. Self-expression could be valuable to the art of diplomacy if it were *flexible*, if it were sensitively selected to be effective in reality. Unfortunately, the data in this chapter show that it now operates in a systematic and mechanistic way, even among professionals, always discounting some classes of options in favor of others.