

**PRESIDENTIAL VETOES  
AND PRESIDENTIAL  
PERSONALITIES**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The realm of national politics in America can largely be summed up as a battle for power and influence. This battle not only takes place during election years and in the halls of Congress, but also between Congress and the Presidency. Our two most powerful formal institutions engage in a never-ending game of tug-of-war over policy, programs, and law. The personalities in each institution jockey for power and hope that the final outcome as manifest in law or policy is their most desired outcome. The power that our politicians seek, according to James Madison in *Federalist* 51, is of an encroaching nature and each institution must be given the tools and personal motives necessary to resist the encroachment of the others. It is for this reason that the President has been given the power of the veto. Such a power is used to ward off the encroaching power of Congress and gives the President a voice in shaping legislation in a manner that he feels is acceptable.

Presidents in many different fashions for many different reasons use the power of the veto. Each time a regular veto is exercised the outcome is almost never known for certain. An extreme example of the power of the veto and the intense showdown between a president and Congress can easily be seen in the 1995 government shutdown under the Clinton administration. The uncompromising wills of both Congress, mostly spearheaded

by then Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, and President Bill Clinton is indicative of the clash of power that is not necessarily uncommon on Capitol Hill.

It was November in 1995 when President Clinton vetoed the budget bill in order to maintain a balanced budget. It became a showdown between Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and President Clinton. Clinton's vision of a balanced budget clashed with Gingrich's desire to push through Congress a budget bill that would impose sharp increases in Medicare premiums and cuts in educational and environmental programs (U.S. President 1995). The issue was not whether or not to balance the budget (both wanted a balanced budget), but rather how to go about achieving that goal. When Clinton refused to sign the budget bill that would cut into important educational and environmental programs, and when Gingrich and other Republicans refused to amend the budget bill to Clinton's expectations, a large portion federal agencies shut down, leaving roughly half of the federal government employees idle (U.S. President 1995). Neither side was willing to stand down from their positions until public opinion began to take its toll. Once it became clear that the public was blaming the Republicans more than President Clinton for the government shutdown, concessions were made and a budget bill was passed and signed, reopening and funding the shutdown government agencies (Davidson and Oleszek 2000).

The government shutdown of 1995 is certainly an extreme case of the power struggle that exists between our executive and legislative branches. Ordinarily, legislation is passed, the president decides to veto that legislation or sign it into law. In some rare cases, the president may choose to take no action and that bill will become law without a signature – this is a way for a president to distance himself from legislation that he

dislikes, but not enough to actively take a stand against it. If the president chooses to veto the legislation, then Congress has the decision of trying to override the veto, let the bill die, or reformulate the legislation to the president's liking. This is a common form of institutional conflict between Congress and the president - one could argue that the president's power to nominate people to high political offices and the Senate's ability to confirm or block such nominations creates another very common form of institutional conflict. As one of the most common forms of institutional conflict, the veto power has been studied extensively. Mostly, scholars (Copeland 1983, Lee 1975, McKay 1989, Woolley 1991, Watson 1988) research the ways vetoes are used and when they are most likely to occur. Such variables that are studied usually consist of variables that can be considered institutionalized such as party opposition in Congress, the election cycle, presidential approval ratings, party identification, and the type of legislation being proposed. Such variables, however, are incomplete and ignore variations among presidents. For example, the manner and reasons Lyndon Johnson vetoed bills may differ greatly from the reasons that Eisenhower vetoed bills. Johnson's overbearing personality may have led him to veto bills for vindictive reasons or as an absolute show of power, while Eisenhower may have vetoed bills because it was simply the right thing to do (possibly because the bill passed through Congress in a seemingly less than legitimate manner).

Presidential personality and character, although subjective, should be the second half of any discussion of why presidents veto legislation. Unfortunately, the bulk of scholars who focus on veto behavior do not study the psychological reasons why presidents might make a formal stand against legislation. This research will focus on such



a gap in scholarship. It will examine the relationship between a president's propensity to veto legislation and that president's personality. Specifically, this research will focus on any connection that can be drawn between a president's veto inclination and his personality based on James Barber's (1992) active/passive, positive/negative dimensions which will be discussed in more detail further into the paper.

## **II. POWER AND INFLUENCE OF THE VETO**

Although the power of the veto does not necessarily translate into power for a sitting president (McCarty 2000), it has been asserted that it more often than not serves as a very useful tool that the president can use at his discretion. Two such uses can be for pursuing legislation that the president finds more agreeable (Ingberman and Yao 1991; Kiewiet and McCubbins 1988; Schap 1986) and for position-taking postures (Conley and Kreppel 2001).

In the case of the President pursuing agreeable legislation, Kiewiet and McCubbins (1988) found that the president could have a substantial impact on what appropriations legislation looks like. In this situation, the president may use his veto power, or even just the threat of using the veto, to encourage Congress to reduce the amount of spending in a particular bill. This power to affect appropriations, however, is only a one-way street; a president doesn't generally hold the effective power to induce Congress to pass legislation that contains more money than Congress actually wants. Such a finding is consistent with those of David Schap (1986) who found that the president's ability to veto legislation may impact appropriations decisions made by Congress, but only when there is an optimal level of preference revelation. In this situation, political gamesmanship is much more than merely holding the veto power, but

more of a game of revealing the right amount of preferences of what one wants and is willing to compromise on.

Continuing with the discussion of legislative influence, the president's veto power is highlighted and increases with public attention (Ingberman and Yao 1991). In this sense, the president has the ability to make a credible public commitment to encourage Congress to pass agreeable legislation. When a veto is exercised, the bill goes back to Congress and in the absence of a two-third-majority override Congress is forced to revise the legislation to the president's standards or to let the legislation die. Even in the event that Congress can override a president's veto, many times the legislation has already been revised in an attempt to make some concessions to the President's liking, even if the outcome is still a veto (Ingberman and Yao 1991). Such a case is the history behind the Highway Bill of 1987.

The Highway Bill of 1987 originally involved both money for construction and allowed states the right to raise the speed limit of rural highways to 65 miles per hour. Reagan's officials made numerous threats of a veto due to the high "pork" content of the bill. With a veto assured, a modified version of the bill was passed by both the House and the Senate which allowed the bill to enjoy much more widespread support through Congress. Some of the modifications were even to Reagan's liking. Reagan still vetoed the bill, however, declaring it still too high in pork. The veto, however, was overridden by a 67-33 vote in the Senate, thanks in large part to the earlier compromises made (Ingberman and Yao 1991).

Presidents can use the veto power for more than exacting preferred legislation. The power of the veto can be exercised for mere position-taking reasons (Conley and

Kreppel 2001). In this case, the president uses the veto in order to make public his stance over certain issues, regardless of whether or not Congress has the numbers to pass the legislation.

Conley and Kreppel (2001) find that even in the face of a certain veto override from Congress, a president may still veto legislation. This certainly contradicts a rational action taken on the part of a president; a president would not rationally take the time or effort to take a stand on an issue that is all but decided, legislatively. It is in this sense that the veto is not necessarily a tool for exercising power in the inter-branch battle between Congress and the Presidency, but rather is a tool for “going public,” so to speak. Conley and Kreppel (2001) assert that this is the case with many of President Ford’s vetoes that were overridden. Conley and Kreppel (1991) assert that when Democrats gained seats in Congress in the wake of the Watergate scandal, they began to pass bills that Ford believed was full of wasteful spending. Despite the vast support such bills had in Congress, Ford would override such bills, knowing that his veto would be overridden, in order to take a public stand against wasteful spending (Conley and Kreppel 1991).

Despite the fact that the discussion thus far has centered on the veto power being a positive tool for a president’s arsenal, there are some drawbacks to the veto. It has already been discussed that the veto can only work to reduce spending and not increase it. Another downfall of the veto is that it has the potential to be a hindrance to a president’s public approval (Groseclose and McCarty 2001). In the case of a major veto (to be discussed later), the president runs the risk of taking a very unpopular stand, thereby risking public approval points. Groseclose and McCarty (2001) find that in time of a

divided government, when a president makes the decision to veto major legislation, <sup>1</sup>his approval rating drops noticeably. Such a drop can be as drastic as two approval points for a single veto. Such a drop in ratings is roughly equivalent to the difference in approval ratings when there is a two-point drop in GDP, the difference between moderate growth and recession (Groseclose and McCarty 2001).

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<sup>1</sup> Simply because no women have served as American President, references to “the president” will be in a masculine form.

### **III. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE VETO**

Despite the fact that the ability to veto legislation has existed at least since President Washington, it wasn't exercised regularly until James Madison, who only vetoed 7 bills. Washington only cast two vetoes his eight years in office while John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and John Quincy Adams never exercised the veto power once. Moreover, the use of the veto power by early presidents was not only sparse, but it was also exercised almost exclusively based on constitutional objections. Thus, just because a president did not find a bill to be good public policy was not grounds to issue a veto. Such was the case when Madison used his veto power to prevent the passage of legislation related to the Protestant churches, citing the First Amendment and what would become the Establishment Clause (Watson 1988).

The presidency of Andrew Jackson marked a new beginning of the veto. With Jackson's presidency, he not only vetoed twelve bills, but some of those vetoes were issued in order to kill bills that he merely felt were poor public policy – not based on constitutional grounds. When he issued a message detailing the reasons he vetoed a bill concerning a national bank, Jackson not only cited constitutional grounds for such disapproval, but he also emphasized social and economic justice as concerns as he hoped to gain public support for his action (Watson 1988). The presidents that followed Jackson

differed in the frequency and rationale of vetoing bills. Some vetoed bills because the legislation encroached upon presidential independence; others because the legislation would be difficult to be administered; and still others vetoed bills because doing so would be less costly for the government (Davidson and Oleszek 2000). Some would veto less than 10 bills during their entire tenure; some would refuse to issue any vetoes at all; still others would veto a high number of bills. By the time Grover Cleveland took office, however, the veto would be exercised much more frequently – Cleveland vetoed 414 bills in his eight years as president (Watson 1988).

Looking at veto data from president to president, the time between Cleveland and Franklin Roosevelt saw rises and falls in the frequency of vetoes being cast, with the number of vetoes peaking with FDR's years in the White House, which also marks the beginning of the modern presidency. The number of vetoes per president never fell below 37 during this period, with the exception of Harding who spent only a short time in the Presidency – less than a full term. Truman and Eisenhower both continued to veto large numbers of bills (250 and 181, respectively), but Kennedy was the first modern president to curb the number of vetoes issued, vetoing only 21. Among the remaining modern presidents, only Ford and Reagan vetoed more than 50 bills during their tenure in office (Kosar 2005).

While the modern presidents have begun to limit the number of vetoes issued, there is no doubt that the reasons modern presidents exercise the veto power is increasing. Bills aren't just vetoed because they are constitutionally controversial, but because they are politically contentious or because a president wishes to make a public stand (Conley and Kreppel 1991). Furthermore, the example of the 1995 government

shutdown illustrates a president issuing a veto simply because he believed doing so would just not be economically feasible.

General trends also seem to surface when scanning the veto records of various presidents. In some cases, personality may account for such a high number of vetoes. President Franklin Roosevelt was known for being a pro-active president. Indeed, Congress brought him 635 bills that he would eventually veto (Kosar 2005). His penchant for exercising the veto may be less of an institutional reason, based on the rules and inherent structure of the government and more of a personality-centered reason. Still, in other instances the political climate may have played some role in the number of vetoes that were issued. For instance, President Grover Cleveland has already been noted as one of the presidents who liked to veto bills (Watson 1988). Interestingly enough, however, is that although he vetoed a large number of bills, there is a disparity in the number of vetoes that he cast between the two different terms he was in office. Cleveland, the only president to serve two non-consecutive terms, vetoed 414 bills the first four years he sat in the White House. After a four year hiatus as president, Cleveland would return to office for a second term and would only veto 170 bills (Kosar 2005). Such a large disparity in the number of vetoes issued is a curious phenomenon, especially if personality might have something to do with using the veto power. A cursory look at history would give us another explanation – simply, when there is divided government, there are a higher number of vetoes cast. In the case of President Cleveland, his first four years he was president were also four years of an opposition Congress. Cleveland's second four years in office, however, had an opposition Congress for only one Congress, not two. Moreover, Cleveland's veto numbers were high for this time period which may



also indicate that his numbers weren't strictly due to divided government – his personality may have played a role in his frequent use of the veto power.

The trend of vetoing more legislation during times of divided government also carries into the modern presidents, of course, because it is simply common sense that an opposition Congress is more likely to pass legislation that is not to the liking of an opposing president. The current administration of George W. Bush is an example of the modern presidents who began to use the veto power when his party lost control of Congress. Until the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress convened, both houses of Congress under President George W. Bush's administration were held by the Republican Party. During that time, only one veto had been exercised. The 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, however, is held by Democrats in both houses. During this Congress, President Bush has vetoed 8 bills. There may be many explanations for this increase of vetoes, but the most obvious answer and the answer that seems to arise frequently is that the veto power is exercised more regularly when there is political tension between Congress and the White House.

#### **IV. FACTORS INFLUENCING USE OF VETOES**

The power and usefulness of the veto is obvious to even the most untrained observer. What are less obvious are the variables that influence when and why a president chooses to exercise veto powers. The independent variables used to explain a president's decision to veto legislation are many in number and have been studied extensively. The following discussion will focus on seven of the more common variables that have been studied when searching for causal mechanism for the executive veto. The discussion will also include two variables that have been less extensively studied, but have been shown to exert an influence in a president's decision to exercise veto power and are statistically significant.

##### Major vs. Minor Legislation

While it is useful to look at aggregate data to get a broad sense of the behavior of an individual president's veto inclination, scrutiny will help to focus results in a more exact manner. In the case of vetoes, researchers have divided the group into two subgroups: Major vetoes and minor vetoes, referring to the type of legislation being vetoed. According to McKay (1989), major bills are defined as: "bills accepted at the time to be major constitutional/political importance; revenue and appropriations bills involving requests of more than \$5 billion (in constant 1980 dollars); appropriations bills involving differences between Congress and administration versions in excess of \$1 billion; bills challenging established administration policy in foreign and economic

policy” (p. 458). Minor bills are all other bills. McKay’s research determined that not only do presidents invoke veto power more often today than they used to, but they invoke that power much more often in order to veto major bills (1989).

Not surprisingly, the same general results showed up in other research projects. Both Watson (1988) and Woolley (1991) study major and minor vetoes as well, in coordination with other variables. Both researchers found that major bills have a tendency to get vetoed by the President. In the case of Watson’s (1988) research, public bills that were vetoed also happened to be bills considered to be major legislation. In Woolley’s case, the likelihood of a major bill being vetoed is almost entirely a function of the variation in the president’s power resources, such as the number of seats his party controls in Congress and his approval ratings. Thus, an increase in the number of seats in Congress controlled by the president’s party translates as a decrease in the likelihood that the president will veto a major bill. Also, an increase in approval rating will be accompanied by an increased propensity to veto major legislation. Minor vetoes are affected by election cycle variables. Thus, during an election year the president has a higher inclination to veto minor legislation (Woolley 1991).

#### Public vs. Private Bills

The second variable that is commonly examined is the difference between public and private bills. According to Watson (1988) a private bill “names a particular individual or entity such as a business that is to receive relief from the federal government in the form of a claim based on a financial loss, the payment of a pension, a granting of citizenship, and the like” (p. 40). In contrast, a public bill “relates to matters affecting all individuals and businesses, or those belonging to certain categories or

classifications (p. 40). Having already divided the bills into private and public bills, Watson (1988) finds that within their time frame, the three most recent presidents (Nixon, Ford, and Carter at the time of his study) vetoed a much higher proportion of public bills than private ones.

Watson's (1988) research only examined eight presidents and the results concerning public and private bills was only applicable to the latter three presidents examined. However, Lee (1975) had conducted research concerning the vetoes from Washington to Nixon and found a statistically significant correlation between the number of public bills passed and the president's propensity to veto legislation. So, the higher the number of public bills passed in Congress, the more inclined a president is to veto legislation. Although Lee's research does not explicitly address whether or not the president vetoed the public bills, it does provide insight into the connection between public bills and vetoes. It would probably be worthwhile to examine if the increased number of vetoes in Lee's case led to higher rate of public bills being vetoed as well.

The division of bills into public and private bills may, however, become more of an obsolete manner of researching vetoes. This is due, in large part, to the fact that there aren't nearly as many private bills being passed in contemporary times. The bulk of legislation passed in Congress are public bills.

#### Party Identification

The third variable that is commonly examined is party identification. Party identification refers to one's party membership. Thus, if a president belongs to the Republican Party, his party ID is Republican. Likewise, if a president belongs to the Democratic Party, his party ID is Democrat. The concept of party identification can take

on a different meaning, however, defining whether or not a president serves under a time of divided or unified government.

The first manner in which party identification is conceptualized is simply whether the president being examined is a Democrat or a Republican. Using this conceptualization of party identification, McKay (1989), Lee (1975), and Copeland (1983) all find that being a Democrat leads to some predisposition to veto legislation. Lee (1975) asserts that this may be because Democrats may be more activist in nature, due to their views on the role of government – more interventionist. However, McKay (1989) finds that when one accounts for only the modern presidencies, Democrats are not more likely than Republicans to veto legislation. Thus, in this sense, party ID may be seen as an artifact of the past when examining veto tendencies and not having any independent effect on the use of the veto.

The second way to conceptualize party identification is whether the president has unified or divided government. For this, we use the term “divided government.” Whether or not the president holds the same party ID as the controlling party in Congress – whether or not there is divided government - is shown to have a significant effect on a president’s decision to veto legislation coming out of that Congress (Copeland 1983; Lee 1975; Rohde and Simon 1985). The logic behind this correlation is that when a president and at least one chamber of Congress share different party identification, there is a larger ideological distance between what kind of legislation is passed and what kind of legislation is acceptable to an opposing president. Research indicates that when the opposing party holds at least one chamber in Congress, the president is more likely to

veto legislation coming from that Congress, for the reason just discussed (Copeland 1983; Lee 1975; Rohde and Simon 1985).

#### Electoral Mandate

The fourth variable that is often examined in conjunction with presidential vetoes is the number of electoral votes a president received on Election Day. When a president is elected by a large margin, then they see that as a sign that their decisions in the policy arena are legitimate. They believe that the people have elected them to the office of the presidency in order to complete a job, based on an electoral platform. The use of the veto is a tool by which presidents may complete those platform promises and they feel legitimated by a large electoral victory (Copeland 1983). This is indeed what both Copeland (1983) and Lee (1975) find in their research. The larger the margin of victory, the more likely a president is to exercise his right to veto unsatisfactory legislation.

#### Electoral Cycle

The fifth variable that is often examined in research concerning presidential vetoes is the electoral cycle. Woolley (1991) and Rohde and Simon (1985) find that during election years there is an increase in the number of vetoes, possibly as a public display of effectiveness while in office. For Rohde and Simon (1985), however, this change in veto behavior is only visible in midterm elections and not presidential elections, which is surprising considering the electoral stakes are higher for presidential cycles than midterm cycles. In Woolley's (1991) case, the increase in vetoes is only an increase in vetoing minor legislation. In general, though, the inclination to veto remains largely unchanged. The number of vetoes may increase during election years, but so does the amount of legislation that is passed (Woolley 1991). This rationale falls in line with

the widely held belief that legislators create and pass bills at a higher rate during election years as a reminder to the constituents that they are doing their job. This is also considered to be the best time to bring home projects to one's constituency.

### International Conflict

The sixth variable that is usually examined is international conflict. International conflict refers to U.S. involvement in a major hostility in a foreign country during the entire legislative year. The rationale behind studying this variable is that if the country is engaged in intense hostilities in a foreign country, such hostilities will divert presidential attention from the legislative arena to focus more on his role as commander-in-chief. This in turn will reduce the use of the veto (Rohde and Simon 1985). Moreover, Copeland (1983) argues that being engaged in an international crisis promotes a sense of cohesiveness in government, a "rally 'round the flag" effect. Congress and the president usually avoid any overt action that might make the country look divided, so the use of vetoes drops, as does any legislation that might motivate the president to use a veto.

Interestingly enough, results for this variable are varied. Rohde and Simon (1985) find the variable to be a statistically significant indicator of when the president is least likely to issue a veto. The two variables are negatively related, so when the country is engaged in hostilities, the president is least likely to issue a veto.

Copeland (1983), however, finds that the variable of international conflict to not reach statistical significance. This discrepancy may be corrected when considering Woolley's (1991) explanation. Although Rohde and Simon (1985) find a statistically significant relationship between international conflict and the use of the veto, Woolley's contention is that during the times of international conflict, Congress passed far fewer

bills than normal. This decrease in the amount of legislation accounts for the significant drop in the number of vetoes that are issued. It would seem as though the variable of international conflict is a variable of institutional interaction, in general, rather than any strategic planning on the part of the president and members of Congress.

### Economic Affairs

The seventh commonly examined variable is economic affairs. Economic affairs can be conceptualized in two different manners. In the first sense, economic affairs refer to those years in which the economy is a significant issue during election time (Rohde and Simon 1985). Rohde and Simon (1985) find statistical significance between this concept of economic affairs and the use of the veto. This finding lends some credence to Copeland's (1983) concept of economic affairs.

Copeland (1983) conceptualizes economic affairs differently. Economic affairs merely refer to the state of the economy in any given year. He rationalizes his expected findings, arguing that in difficult economic times the institutions are more combative. Neither legislators nor the president want to bear the burden of a bad economy. Thus, there is a lot of finger pointing involved and a lot of jockeying to take any kind of credit and deflect the negative feelings about the economy toward the other institution (Copeland 1983). This is, however, not what Copeland finds in his research. He finds that there is no statistical significance between the status of the economy and the inclination of the president to issue a veto. Although the statistic does not reach significance, the direction of the correlation is correct.



### Previous Overrides

Copeland (1983) studies another variable, but isn't a variable that is seen in a lot of literature surrounding presidential vetoes. This variable is the previous veto override. Copeland contends that presidents are intelligent beings who are able to learn from the past. When a president is handed a veto override, he will hesitate the next time he thinks about issuing a veto. Overrides are considered to be embarrassing moments for presidents to handle and being handed a series of overrides might even make the president look bad in the eyes of the public. With that in mind, presidents who have been exposed to overrides in the past will be less likely to veto bills. Copeland (1983) finds that a president being overridden is a statistically significant indicator that a president will refrain from vetoing future bills. It is, in fact, a major factor in limiting the president's veto power.

### Scope of Government

The final variable that this discussion will touch on is the scope of government. Easily conceptualized as the amount of legislation that is passed, the scope of government, according to Copeland (1983), is a dominant influence on the logged number of vetoes, achieving statistical significance. Thus, the raw number of vetoes a president is likely to issue is related to the number of bills that he receives to sign. This effect, although significant, is less important in Copeland's study because his model already accounts for the volume of legislation. This, of course, is not always the case as has already been discussed. Rohde and Simon's (1985) research on the international conflict variable failed to account for sheer volume of legislation that was being passed which is why they find a statistically significant international conflict variable when other

researchers do not. Both Woolley (1991) and Copeland (1983) account for the volume of legislation being passed. Accounting for the amount of volume passed also account for the amount of interaction that occurs between a president and Congress. With more chances to veto bills, the more vetoes will actually be used.

## **V. PRESIDENTIAL PERSONALITY**

The previous discussion has focused on variables that are exogenous to a president (with the exception of party ID, which is endogenous) and his propensity to veto legislation as a reaction to such variables. The remainder of the discussion will focus on the personal attributes that may influence a president's decision to veto legislation. This is not only the direction that the remainder of the discussion will head in, but it is also the central focus of this research project.

### Individual Influences

John Gilmour's (2002) research on the influences on vetoes serves as a good starting point to begin the discussion of personal attributes and their influences on veto behavior. In his research, Gilmour (2002) examines "president" and "presidency" centered explanations for a president's propensity to use the veto power. A president-centered explanation refers to any personality or personal background influence that affects the behavior of a president. A presidency-centered explanation focuses on the institutional forces and rules that dictate how a president will ultimately act while in office - the person in the office is irrelevant. This research effectively sought to divide the possible influences on veto behavior into institutional influences (exogenous to a president) and individual, or personal influences.

Gilmour (2002) finds that there are without a doubt institutional forces that influence a president's decision to use his veto power. Says Gilmour, "To a substantial degree, presidential vetoes are a direct and predictable consequence of congressional behavior and the kind of legislation Congress passes" (p. 212). This, however, is not all that the research suggests. Gilmour goes on to remark that the institutional variables do not account for all of the variation in veto use. In his conclusion, Gilmour states, "Different presidents in fact behave differently even in similar contexts because they have unique propensities to veto" (p. 216).

### Surrounding Personalities

Gilmour's (2002) research came about two decades after Wayne, Cole, and Hyde, Jr. (1979) published their work on executive influences. Their work focused on cue taking by the president on which enrolled bills should be vetoed. Different presidents concurred differently with agencies on how to react to enrolled legislation. Nixon was more willing to follow the lead agency's positive recommendations. Meanwhile, Ford was prone to following the OMB's negative advice (Wayne, Cole, and Hyde, Jr. 1979). Such actions, while seemingly exogenous, are also indicative of the individual nature of presidents when dealing with the decision of whether or not to veto legislation. In some instances, the OMB held considerable clout.

In many instances, the decision to veto a bill is the last action of a chain of events. As legislation is passed in Congress, copies of the bills are sent to the Legislative Reference Division within the OMB, where they are then sent to the appropriate executive agencies. While the executive agencies are reviewing the piece of legislation, budget examiners within the OMB are being solicited for opinions. Usually, forty-eight

hours is given to each executive department to prepare recommendations on a given bill along with messages, advocating bill passage or a veto. Those recommendations are then sent to the Legislative Reference Division where they are compiled into a cover memo for the president, describing the purpose of the bill, the agencies' positions, and the OMB recommendation. For some administrations, these OMB memos constituted the bulk of information given to the president when considering legislation (Wayne, Cole and Hyde, Jr. 1979). It is in this respect that the OMB potentially possesses the power to influence the number of vetoes a president issues.

Moreover, the researchers (Wayne, Cole, and Hyde, Jr. 1979) hypothesize that the decision to follow some agencies' advice and ignore others' is a reflection to the size of staff and organization that the president maintained. Who and how many people surrounded the president when making a decision is an individual personality trait that is discussed throughout books relating to presidential personalities. Some presidents may prefer to be at the center of all decision-making, hearing the advice and opinions of everyone around them before making a decision. Such a situation would be classified as a spoke-and-wheel manner of obtaining and utilizing information. Other presidents opt for a more streamlined manner of receiving information. In a hierarchical order of receiving information, the president sits at the top of the information pyramid, hearing only the suggestions and views of a few people directly under him, who, in turn, only hear the views and ideas of a few people under them, and so on. Thus, the president receives filtered points of views and information. Thus, who the president was surrounded by and by how many people may play a large role in how and when one goes about deciding to take action while in the White House.

### Presidential Background

Jong Lee's (1975) work is another example of how researchers have found personality traits permeate a president's decision to veto legislation. One of the most important aspects of studying personalities is understanding the subject's history. Lee (1975) takes a step in the right direction in determining any personality traits that might affect presidential veto behavior. While researching presidents' backgrounds in politics, Lee finds that presidents who have previous experience as members of Congress are less likely to veto legislation. This is arguably a reflection of the president's past experiences as a legislator and a feeling that he should not use coercive measures like the veto power because of a familiarity with the structure of Congress or because he had developed a respect for the legislative body as an institution (Lee 1975). A somewhat more disappointing finding, however, is that experience as a governor (another executive post) is not statistically significant. Thus, it does not seem that experience with the veto and dealing with legislators as an executive instills any statistically significant propensity to veto legislation as a president.

Lee's work does, however, provide a perfect starting point to begin discussing the work of James Barber (1992), whose work on the personalities of presidents as predictors of performance in the White House is one of the cornerstones of this research. Barber's (1992) work represents a readily-available psychological schema by which presidents may be classified. It represents a foundation by which this thesis may begin to study presidential behavior in a non-institutional approach.

## **VI. BARBER AND PRESIDENTIAL PERSONALITIES**

James Barber's (1992) work on presidential character and personality provides a ready-made framework with which to study presidential behavior as it relates to the use of the veto power. The central argument in Barber's (1992) work is that presidential character – the basic stance a man takes toward his presidential experience – comes in four categories – active/negative, active/positive, passive/positive, and passive/negative. In order to understand and possibly predict presidential performance in the White House based on placement within one of these four categories, one must study the background and history of each president extensively. Such research should account for certain events in the life of a president, beginning in childhood, and how those events affected the psychological make-up of the president. Such events may very well affect how he orients himself toward politics and life, in general – how he views himself, or his role, in life and history. Growing up in a military family and subsequently joining the military may have an effect on how a president views his role as president. Growing up with a love of knowledge and reading may lead to a certain organizational and decision-making making structure when in office. Being blackballed in college may drive the domineering personality of a future president. Every aspect of one's history is relevant to the psychological make-up of a president.

Researching the history of a president leads one to discern a particular style – “the habitual way of performing his three political roles: rhetoric, personal relations, and homework” (Barber 1992, p. 5). While all presidents take on each of these three roles, there is considerable variation in which presidents stress one role over the others (Barber 1992, p. 5). This forms the basis of how a president will eventually take action, although not necessarily *when* he will. Some may choose to research issues as extensively as possible to get things done while others may choose to rely on personal interaction to form the crux of their decision making abilities. Still, others may largely ignore extensive research and forging personal relations to accomplish things and rely solely on their ability to speak well to gain support for action.

Research will also uncover a president’s world view – his “primary, politically relevant beliefs, particularly his conceptions of social causality, human nature, and the central moral conflicts of the time” (Barber 2002, p. 5). A president’s world view shapes the manner in which he sees the world. His perception of reality, the way the world is ordered in his eyes, is skewed in a manner that makes sense to him, creating order out of chaos. This creation of a world view shapes his opinions about politics and even how to go about playing the game of politics. A president’s world view also affects what things he will eventually pay attention to and what things he will come to stress as he sits in the White House (Barber 1992, p. 5).

Research of a president’s past will also uncover his character – “the way the President orients himself toward life (Barber 1992, p. 5),” enduringly. This is a measure, in many ways, of a president’s self-worth. A president will be willing to sacrifice a lot of what he prizes and values in order to advance or maintain his self-worth (Barber 1992, p.



5). Once the background research is complete, one should be able to form general inferences of a pattern of behavior for each president studied as it relates to his placement in one of the four personality categories. The four categories of presidential character alluded to earlier are a combination of two dimensions. The first dimension measures the amount of activity a president exhibits – active vs. passive. This is, in simple terms, a measure of how much energy a president puts into his work. The second dimension of presidential character is the emotional orientation a president has toward his work – positive vs. negative. This is a subjective and relative measure of whether a president seems happy or sad when performing his political duties. Is political life enjoyable or discouraging? Does he view his job as one of obligation or does he genuinely enjoy pursuing his political goals? These are the basic questions that one must ask in order to discern a president's placement on the positive-negative dimension (Barber 1992).

Once a president is placed on both dimensions, active/passive and positive/negative, he falls into one of four categories: active/positive; active/negative; passive/positive; and passive/negative. Each category represents a different set of traits and orientations, which eventually lead to psychological differences that account for how a president acts while in the White House.

Active/positive presidents tend to be very active and confident as presidents, taking an active role in governing and carrying out responsibilities. Moreover, they are very achievement-oriented and there is a genuine enjoyment in carrying out such work, but they aren't rigid in how they go about performing tasks, they are to the contrary – very flexible. There is a sense that he has an orientation toward being productive in the presidency, creating opportunities for action. This type of president has a well-defined

image of himself and he seems to be working toward a realization of that image. There is also an emphasis on personal relationships. Although this emphasis on interpersonal relationships includes being loyal and trusting others, this by no means indicates that they are willing to be submissive or willing to avoid situations in which they might lose the love of others. Nor is it this character-type's personality to engage in excessive sympathy or comforting of others. In some respects it's quite the opposite – they enjoy exercising their power, but never take themselves too seriously. While active/positives don't feel the need to coddle others' feelings, neither do they seek others for guidance, professionally or emotionally. And somewhat to their detriment, they emphasize a rational mastery of the world – so much so that their world tends to be oversimplified, lacking complexity and depth (Barber 1972; 1992).

Active/negative presidents are also active presidents, always taking care of his responsibilities as an executive and being an integral part of the political process. Active/negatives are also achievement-oriented. There is, however, a seeming contradiction in that although the president is quite active, there seems to be a lack of enjoyment of completing tasks. Thus, they take to completing tasks with vigorous energy, but derive very little satisfaction from doing so. This president has a sense of hostility when carrying tasks to fruition. This type of president seems to do a lot of work in order to compensate for something. If a task is undertaken and failed, this personality-type will return to the failed task to complete it to demonstrate a lack of any weaknesses. This can be described as being very rigid in how they go about carrying out tasks. Such an inclination towards rigidity is dangerous as these presidents tend to take a narrow and skewed view of how and when to take action, lacking any outside perspective. Activity is

aggressive and is seen as a drive toward power, but it is a power that always seems to be elusive. He will view other people as obstacles in his pursuits and will likely ignore them. He will have no problem arguing with others in defense of his own position, guarding against criticism at all costs (Barber 1972; 1992).

Passive/positive presidents work toward agreement and cooperation instead of being assertive and strong-willed. He attempts to compensate for his low self-esteem by being an ingratiating personality – something that can only be described as a “political lover” (Barber 1972; 1992). They strive toward being loved and gaining affection from others. The work that is undertaken is a reflection of a need to appease all parties concerned in a search for acceptance and not a reflection of a need to actually get work done. These presidents will seek out as many relationships as possible, being relatively indiscriminate with their choice of friends. As such, they will be the most unwilling to engage in activities that may force them to be assertive or forceful with others – he is more likely to react rather than initiate any activities. When this type of president does act, such action is usually taken in an indecisive manner. Other peoples’ feelings are almost paramount in any evaluation of when, or if, to take action. There is a sense of optimism when a president of this type undertakes work, but it is often a false optimism. Moreover, the amount of work is less than any of the active presidents and is not a reflection of a desire or need to complete tasks (Barber 1992).

Passive/negative presidents are those presidents who perform their duties out of a possible sense of obligation instead of a sense of enjoyment or a sense of pressure; they are, in a sense, a sucker for duty. They tend to have a low self-esteem which is compensated by devoting their lives and careers to service of others. They don’t take on a

large number of tasks above the necessary perfunctory requirements and they don't enjoy doing the work, nor do they initiate actions. Instead, they react to what others initiate and engage in doing. They do, however, tend to be very neat and precise in ordering their lives and work which provides him with a sense of protection from blame and criticism. These presidents don't see themselves as giving in to external forces easily; rather they draw strength from their perceived internal fortitude and ideals, but avoid the negativity of engaging in "politicking." Even though they work well with others and engage in cooperation frequently to complete tasks like active/positives, they do not draw satisfaction from the sharing of feelings that is associated with the work. Rather, they take satisfaction in the efficient accomplishment of a task. And although they are willing to lend aid to others, one is led to believe that this is due to a moral obligation and not from any compassionate feeling. Presidents of this type tend to avoid conflict and uncertainty and emphasize procedural arrangements and vague principles. These presidents are perfectly suited for a climate of expectations that stresses legitimacy and trust (Barber 1972; 1992).

The four personality traits work in tandem with the political situation with which a president is confronted with. How one deals with these situations is not only dependent on the personality traits one is inclined to exhibit, but also what is expected of them. In some instances, the public will look to the President to provide a sense of reassurance, providing the people with the feeling that things will be fine and that they can count on him to take care of things (Barber 1992). In other instances, the political climate calls for the President to be proactive and to take charge of progress. Active/positive presidents are the type of president most fit to answer this call. People want to know, or at least feel

like, the President is working hard to guide the nation's future (Barber 1992). Still, in other situations, the people look to the President to evoke a sense of legitimacy of the Office of the President. People want to know that the President is above the political fray; he is supposed to personify the dignity and propriety of the office. In many ways, when the public seeks a president to evoke a sense of legitimacy, they are calling upon him to act in a manner as if he existed outside the world of politics. This climate is best suited for the passive/negative presidents who are bound by a sense of service and ethics (Barber 1992).

When one accounts for the history and personality of a president and take those in the political context that a president inevitably finds himself, Barber's (1992) presidential personalities should provide a basis on which to predict White House performance of individual presidents.

#### Limitations of Barber's Work

Although the personality dimensions created and used by Barber (1992) form an integral component of this study, it is necessary to account for some of their limitations. These limitations have even been addressed by Barber (1972), himself. The first criticism is that Barber has skewed and chosen facts that fit his theory, omitting facts that may contradict his work (Barber 1972). His response to this criticism is simple: The evidence presented is public knowledge – which is quite extensive (Barber 1972). If someone has a contradictory take on the events of a president's life, then such evidence should be presented, but none has yet to be.

The second criticism that Barber (1972) addresses is that he places too much emphasis on the psychology of a president and lacks any substantive reference to

institutional forces, or the specific situation that a president faces when he takes office. This criticism is countered, however, by Barber's reference to the climate of expectations and the power situation that each president is faced with. Barber believes that the Presidency is in fact a personalized office. While institutional and situational forces are abundant, how they are interpreted is also a matter of interpretation by the president and his personal aides (Barber 1972).

The third criticism centers around who Barber's (1972) work is intended for. Because it is written for the general public, it is asserted that it perhaps is not serious social science. Barber counters, asserting that writing for the public is more rigorous than writing for specialists (Barber 1972). This work encourages the lay person to evaluate the psychology and character of a president or presidential hopeful. The average person not only must make such evaluations, but he/she does, in fact, make such evaluations when they make the decision to vote (Barber 1972).

The fourth criticism is that Barber's (1972) work is not needed, as it appears to be psychoanalytic work suited for treating some kind of presidential psychosis. The work, however, is not intended for such an undertaking. Instead, Barber (1972) seeks to identify a discernable pattern of behavior which will provide a framework for predicting actions in the White House. The goal of Barber's (1972) work is to aid in the president-picking system by systematically telling what one sees in light of similarities among other cases that have been observed throughout the years.

The fifth criticism is that presidential personalities, or personalities in general, are varied – so much so that people cannot be grouped into just a few personality types. People within one group may differ significantly in many different ways, so how can they

be grouped into the same group? Some may exhibit both active and passive traits, or both positive and negative traits at the same time. How can one classify such people? The answer, according to Barber (1972) is that although people differ in many different ways, they may be similar in crucial ways. When all of history is accounted, those presidents who are grouped together, on balance, exhibit similar personalities (Barber 1972).

The sixth criticism is that the attributes of the active/positive personality may be fake. While campaigning, every candidate is willing to put on a façade of being happy and energetic. It is difficult to imagine any candidate campaigning as the one candidate who feels burdened by the position and that he/she will only take the position out of a sense of duty. Such a downfall, however, is rectified when we search through the pasts of candidates and presidents, researching how they have expressed themselves on key questions. By focusing on the life before the person wanted to become President, one can leap beyond campaign impressions and find the true personality of a candidate/president (Barber 1972).

The seventh criticism centers on methodology. The fact that there are no set guidelines of how to interpret events and personally histories leaves room for skepticism – there is a lack of a consistent methodology for determining who belongs in which personality dimension. The answer, according to Barber (1972), is the use of common sense when reviewing biographies and take note of the relevant materials as they relate to hypothesized key concepts.

The eighth criticism is that Barber (1972) does not allow for enough personality change in adulthood. His work treats worldview, character, and style as set by the time young adulthood is over. While Barber (1972) contends that he does allow for some

pliability and growth throughout the entire life of a president, he believes that his research has indicated that there is a broad sense of continuity in these traits throughout adulthood and that they do not, in fact, change decisively or frequently.

A final criticism is that worldview does not receive enough attention and that it is downplayed significantly (Barber 1972). Barber (1972) counters that worldview is, in fact, included in his categorizing. However, worldview has yet to be proven as truly predictive in reference to presidential behavior. Moreover, Barber (1972) contends that critics have readily forgotten that American political theory has been noticeably pragmatic and that politicians in particular have been prone to prod for public opinion rather than relying on entrenched worldviews and concepts.

These limitations are certainly noteworthy and worth investigating further. Despite some of Barber's defenses, some of these limitations cast serious doubt onto the actual utility of Barber's placement of presidents. Despite these limitations, however, Barber's (1992) work does provide ready-made categories by which to view presidents. The purpose of this study is not to reinvent Barber's personality dimensions, nor to questions them. Rather, the focus of this study will be to use those dimensions as a springboard to study an area of presidential vetoes that has received little scholarly attention. In some ways, this thesis will explore whether or not Barber's (1972, 1992) presidential personalities are helpful predictors of presidential action, at least as it relates to one kind of presidential action – vetoing.



## VII. HYPOTHESES

The four categories of presidential character provide a framework from which to study veto power. If such categories provide insight into how a president will act while in office, then those categories may be able to account for a president's inclination, or lack thereof, toward exercising the veto power.

Because active presidents are more likely to take on tasks and view work as a necessary component of the office - regardless of how one feels about doing such work – and passive presidents do not view activity as central to the office, it seems likely that active presidents will exercise the veto power more often than passive presidents. Thus, my first hypothesis is as follows:

*H<sub>1</sub>: If a president exhibits an active orientation, then he will be more likely to veto legislation than a president who exhibits a passive orientation.*

The parallel drawn between activity and the inclination to veto legislation seems rational and logical enough. Finding the connection between the positive/negative dimension and the inclination to veto legislation, however, is more elusive. The combination of dimensions makes it difficult to discern a pattern of behavior that can be readily observable as it relates to using the veto power. In some instances, it seems like the negative president will be more likely to veto while in others it seems like he would

be less likely to do so. In the case of active presidents, the power ambitions of the negative oriented presidents may very well be more inclined to veto legislation. In the case of passive presidents, the tendency to withdraw from confrontation by negative presidents may inhibit his willingness to engage in a power struggle with Congress. Such distinctions are difficult to make, though, so two null hypotheses will be posited here:

*H<sub>2</sub>: If a president exhibits the active/negative traits, then he will not be more likely to veto legislation than a president who exhibits active-positive traits;*

*H<sub>3</sub>: If a president exhibits the passive/positive traits, then he will be neither more likely nor less likely to veto legislation than a president who exhibits passive/negative traits.*

In addition to the aforementioned hypotheses, a second set of hypotheses will be tested. Because Passive presidents might very well be less likely to engage in conflicts with Congress, when confronted with a bill that he feels is contrary to his beliefs or ideals, then he may be more inclined to issue a pocket veto to avoid any active conflict with Congress. Also, the dynamic of the positive/negative dimension will be explored. There is little rationale, in general, to explain why a positive president might veto more legislation than a negative president, or vice-versa. So, this paper will posit a null hypothesis concerning the positive/negative dimension. Thus, there are two additional hypotheses to be posited here:

*H<sub>4</sub>: If a president exhibits the passive traits, then he will be more likely to veto legislation using a pocket veto than a president who exhibits active traits;*

*H<sub>5</sub>: If a president exhibits positive traits, then he will be neither more likely nor less likely to veto legislation than a president who exhibits negative traits.*

## **VIII. DATA AND METHODS**

### Data

Data for this project was collected through multiple sources that provided relevant information for the purpose of this project. Such sources include the THOMAS website at the Library of Congress, the Office of the Clerk at the United States House of Representatives, and the presidential libraries for each of the U.S. Presidents starting from Truman and ending with George W. Bush.

This study begins with the Truman Presidency in the 80<sup>th</sup> Congress. This study was originally intended to encompass FDR's entire presidency, as he is considered to be the first of the modern presidents. However, because information for the legislative histories of individual Congresses was only available from the 80<sup>th</sup> Congress and later, this study will focus on this earliest Congress with information available.

Data collected from the aforementioned sources ranged from the specific number of laws enacted during each of the previous Congresses (beginning with the 80<sup>th</sup> Congress) to the party composition of each congressional chamber. The following is a list of the information that was collected from the various sources:

The total number of vetoes issued by each President during each Congress;  
The number of regular vetoes issued by each President during each Congress;  
The number of pocket vetoes issued by each President during each Congress;

The number of vetoes overturned by each Congress;  
The number of laws enacted during each Congress;  
The controlling party in the House of Representatives for each Congress;  
The controlling party in the Senate for each Congress.

In addition to the quantitative information that is needed for this project, James Barber's book, *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House* (1992) was consulted to produce the presidential personality dimensions that are used in the study – active/positive, active/negative, passive/positive, and passive/negative.

Each of the pieces of information was then compiled to create a variable. Then, some variables were combined to create new variables that are important for the study. Such merged variables include the percentage of vetoes issued in relation to the total number of bills sent to the President, the percentage of the regular vetoes issued in relation to the total number of bills sent to the President, the percentage of pocket vetoes issued in relation to the total number of bills sent to the President, public bills and private bills were merged, and whether the government was considered to be divided or unified. Tables 1 and 2 are visual representations of the data collected and the manner in which it has been organized.

To measure personality, two dummy variables were added by merging the presidential personality variables. A variable indicating a “passive” president was created by merging the variables for a passive/positive president and a passive/negative president. Likewise, a variable indicating an “active” president was created by merging the variables for an active/positive president and an active/negative president.

The data that has been collected dates back only to the 80<sup>th</sup> Congress and extends to the current Congress, 110<sup>th</sup>. Data for the legislative histories of the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 79<sup>th</sup>

**Table 1. Summary of Vetoes and Laws**

<b>Congress</b>	<b>#Reg. Vetoes</b>	<b>%Reg. Veto</b>	<b>#Pocket Vetoes</b>	<b>%Pocket Veto</b>	<b>Total Vetoes</b>	<b>%Total Veto</b>	<b>#Laws</b>	<b>Over- rides</b>
80 <sup>th</sup>	42	2.93	33	2.30	75	5.23	1364	6
81 <sup>st</sup>	70	3.33	9	.42	79	3.76	2024	3
82 <sup>nd</sup>	14	.85	8	.48	22	1.34	1617	3
83 <sup>rd</sup>	21	1.14	31	1.68	52	2.83	1783	0
84 <sup>th</sup>	12	.61	22	1.12	34	1.73	1921	0
85 <sup>th</sup>	18	1.01	33	1.86	51	2.87	1720	0
86 <sup>th</sup>	22	1.64	22	1.64	44	3.29	1292	2
87 <sup>th</sup>	11	.69	9	.56	20	1.25	1569	0
88 <sup>th</sup>	1	.34	0	0	1	0.34	292	0
88 <sup>th</sup>	4	.53	4	.53	8	1.07	734	0
89 <sup>th</sup>	10	.77	4	.30	14	1.07	1283	0
90 <sup>th</sup>	2	.19	6	.59	8	0.79	1002	0
91 <sup>st</sup>	7	.73	3	.31	10	1.05	945	3
92 <sup>nd</sup>	7	.88	14	1.77	21	2.66	768	2
93 <sup>rd</sup>	12	2.55	0	0	12	2.55	459	2
93 <sup>rd</sup>	16	4.69	11	3.22	27	7.91	318	4
94 <sup>th</sup>	32	4.21	7	.92	39	5.13	729	8
95 <sup>th</sup>	14	1.70	5	.60	19	2.31	803	0
96 <sup>th</sup>	10	1.34	2	.26	12	1.60	736	2
97 <sup>th</sup>	10	1.84	5	.92	15	2.76	529	2
98 <sup>th</sup>	9	1.28	5	.71	24	3.43	677	2
99 <sup>th</sup>	13	1.84	7	.99	20	2.83	687	2
100 <sup>th</sup>	8	1.02	11	1.41	19	2.44	761	3
101 <sup>st</sup>	15	2.18	5	.72	20	2.91	666	0
102 <sup>nd</sup>	14	2.21	10	1.57	24	3.79	610	1
103 <sup>rd</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0	473	0
104 <sup>th</sup>	17	4.81	0	0	17	4.81	337	1
105 <sup>th</sup>	8	1.94	0	0	8	1.94	404	1
106 <sup>th</sup>	11	1.78	1	.16	12	1.94	604	0
107 <sup>th</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0	383	0
108 <sup>th</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0	504	0
109 <sup>th</sup>	1	.20	0	0	1	0	483	0
110 <sup>th</sup>	8	3.17	0	0	8	3.17	247	3

**Table 2. Summary of Personalities and Party in Government**

<b>President</b>	<b>Presidential Personality Type</b>	<b>Congress</b>	<b>Party in Congress (H/S)</b>	<b>Type of Government</b>
Truman	Active/Positive	80 <sup>th</sup>	R/R	Divided
Truman	Active/Positive	81 <sup>st</sup>	D/D	Unified
Truman	Active/Positive	82 <sup>nd</sup>	D/D	Unified
Eisenhower	Passive/Negative	83 <sup>rd</sup>	R/R	Unified
Eisenhower	Passive/Negative	84 <sup>th</sup>	D/D	Divided
Eisenhower	Passive/Negative	85 <sup>th</sup>	D/D	Divided
Eisenhower	Passive/Negative	86 <sup>th</sup>	D/D	Divided
Kennedy	Active/Positive	87 <sup>th</sup>	D/D	Unified
Kennedy	Active/Positive	88 <sup>th</sup>	D/D	Unified
Johnson	Active/Negative	88 <sup>th</sup>	D/D	Unified
Johnson	Active/Negative	89 <sup>th</sup>	D/D	Unified
Johnson	Active/Negative	90 <sup>th</sup>	D/D	Unified
Nixon	Active/Negative	91 <sup>st</sup>	D/D	Divided
Nixon	Active/Negative	92 <sup>nd</sup>	D/D	Divided
Nixon	Active/Negative	93 <sup>rd</sup>	D/D	Divided
Ford	Active/Positive	93 <sup>rd</sup>	D/D	Divided
Ford	Active/Positive	94 <sup>th</sup>	D/D	Divided
Carter	Active/Positive	95 <sup>th</sup>	D/D	Unified
Carter	Active/Positive	96 <sup>th</sup>	D/D	Unified
Reagan	Passive/Positive	97 <sup>th</sup>	D/R	Divided
Reagan	Passive/Positive	98 <sup>th</sup>	D/R	Divided
Reagan	Passive/Positive	99 <sup>th</sup>	D/R	Divided
Reagan	Passive/Positive	100 <sup>th</sup>	D/D	Divided
H.W. Bush	Active/Positive	101 <sup>st</sup>	D/D	Divided
H.W. Bush	Active/Positive	102 <sup>nd</sup>	D/D	Divided
Clinton	Active/Positive	103 <sup>rd</sup>	D/D	Unified
Clinton	Active/Positive	104 <sup>th</sup>	R/R	Divided
Clinton	Active/Positive	105 <sup>th</sup>	R/R	Divided
Clinton	Active/Positive	106 <sup>th</sup>	R/R	Divided
W. Bush	Passive Positive	107 <sup>th</sup>	R/D*	Divided*
W. Bush	Passive Positive	108 <sup>th</sup>	R/R	Unified
W. Bush	Passive Positive	109 <sup>th</sup>	R/R	Unified
W. Bush	Passive Positive	110 <sup>th</sup>	D/D	Divided

Congress have been, thus far, unattainable. It is also important to comment on two noticeable irregularities from tables 1 and 2. The first irregularity is that although the 80<sup>th</sup> through the 110<sup>th</sup> Congresses only account for thirty-one cases, there are thirty-three cases represented in both tables. This irregularity is due to the fact that the 88<sup>th</sup> and 93<sup>rd</sup> Congresses were both split by two different presidents. The 88<sup>th</sup> Congress began with President Kennedy in office, but after his assassination that Congress ended with Lyndon Johnson as President. The 93<sup>rd</sup> Congress encompasses the Nixon resignation in the wake of the Watergate scandal. Thus, the 93<sup>rd</sup> Congress began with Nixon, but ended with Ford. Thus, those two Congresses have been entered twice with the relevant information for each president.

The second noticeable irregularity, which is noted with an asterisk, is that the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress is listed as having a Democrat majority in the Senate. The 107<sup>th</sup> Congress began with a Republican majority in the Senate until the beginning of June of its first year when the Democrats earned a majority. Because the Senate was held by a Democrat majority for over 3/4 of its duration, it has been listed as a divided Congress and therefore a divided government.

### Methods

As mentioned earlier, the data collected and placed into tables 1 and 2 were created into numeric variables to be placed into an SPSS Data Editor. The following is a list of the variables used, their corresponding meaning, and how they were coded:

#### CONTROL VARIABLES:

*“Divided”* – Refers to whether or not the government was held by a single party in both congress and the White House. It was coded as 1 if the government was divided and 0 if it was unified. This is a control variable.

*“Overrides”* – Refers to the number of vetoes that Congress overturned. It is simply coded as the number of vetoes that were challenged and subsequently overturned for a president’s previous Congress. If a president takes office, his “overrides” coding is considered to be 0 since he has yet to be overturned. This is a control variable.

*“Activepos”* – Refers to the presidential personality type of Active/Positive. If a president was classified as Active/Positive, then it was coded as a 1. If not, then it was coded as a 0. This is a dummy variable used as an independent variable.

*“Activeneg”* – Refers to the presidential personality type of Active/Negative. If a president was classified as Active/Negative, then it was coded as a 1. If not, then it was coded as a 0. This is a dummy variable used as an independent variable.

*“Passpos”* – Refers to the presidential personality type of Passive/Positive. If a president was classified as Passive/Positive, then it was coded as a 1. If not, then it was coded as 0. This is a dummy variable used as an independent variable.

#### PERSONALITY VARIABLES:

*“Passneg”* – Refers to the presidential personality type of Passive/Negative. If a president was classified as Passive/Negative, then it was coded as a 1. If not, then it was coded as a 0. This is a dummy variable used as an independent variable.

*“Passpres”* – Refers to any presidents classified as Passive. If a president was classified as Passive, then it was coded as a 1. If not, then it was coded as a 0. This is a dummy variable used as an independent variable.

*“Activepres”* – Refers to any presidents classified as Active. If a president was classified as Active, then it was coded as a 1. If not, then it was coded as a 0. This is a dummy variable used as an independent variable.

*“Positivepres”* – Refers to any presidents classified as Positive. If a president was classified as Positive, then it was coded as a 1. If not, then it was coded as a 0. This is a dummy variable used as an independent variable.

*“Negativepres”* – Refers to an president classified as Negative. If a president was classified as Negative, then it was coded as a 1. If not, then it was coded as a 0. This is a dummy variable used as an independent variable.

#### DEPENDENT VARIABLES:

*“Percentregveto”* – Refers to the percentage of regular vetoes issued compared to the number of bills sent to the sitting president to sign. It is simply coded as the numerical percentage of bills that were vetoed as a result of a regular veto. This is a dependent variable.



*“Percentveto”* – Refers to the total percentage of bills vetoed by a president during a Congress. It is simply coded as the numerical percentage of bills that were vetoed as a result of both regular vetoes and pocket vetoes. This is a dependent variable.

*“Percentpocketveto”* – Refers to the percentage of bills vetoed by a president during a Congress using the pocket veto power. It is simply coded as the numerical percentage of bills that were vetoed as a result of a pocket veto. This is a dependent variable.

The aforementioned thirteen variables will be used to determine if any of the presidential personality traits exhibit an inclination to vetoing legislation more than the others. For such a task, SPSS 15.0 will be used. All of the variables created, using tables 1 and 2, will be entered into an SPSS Data Editor, but only the thirteen variables just discussed in the preceding paragraph will be used.

Of those previously researched influences on presidential vetoes, the only controls used will be divided government and previous overrides. While some influences were shown to have a limited or non-statistical impact – party ID, economic affairs – others are implicitly accounted for. Because this thesis uses the percentage of vetoes, the percentage of pocket vetoes, and the percentage of regular vetoes issued in reference to the number of all bills passed, influences like the scope of government, the electoral cycle, and international conflict are implicitly accounted for because these influences are also artifacts of the amount of legislation passed. Electoral mandate was shown to be a statistically significant influence (Copeland 1983, Lee 1975), but within the confines of this study, a correlation analysis revealed that it was a weak and statistically insignificant relationship in reference to the percentage of all vetoes cast<sup>2</sup>. Thus, it was not included as a control variable.

Correlation analyses will be run in order to estimate the strength of any relationship between the number of times a president’s veto is overturned and his

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<sup>2</sup> No statistical significance with a correlation relationship of 0.158.

likelihood of vetoing legislation. A second correlation will be run to define the strength of any relationship between the likelihood of a president vetoing legislation when he faces a Congress in which at least one chamber is held by the opposition party. If strong correlations are found, such relationships will be included as a control in order to account for such interactions when testing for a relationship between presidential personalities and a veto inclination.

Once relationships are found, then linear regression analyses will be performed in order to find any relationship between presidential personalities and an inclination toward vetoing legislation. All four presidential personalities will be included in the initial analyses. Analyses examining each personality's inclination to veto will be conducted looking at three specific areas of vetoes: The percentage of total vetoes cast; the percentage of regular vetoes cast; and the percentage of pocket vetoes cast.

Then, the general personality dimensions (active/passive and positive/negative) will be examined using the percentage of total vetoes cast. Thus, any analysis will uncover if positive presidents are more likely to veto legislation than are negative presidents and if active presidents are more likely to veto legislation than are passive presidents.

## IX. RESULTS

**Table 3. Summary of Correlations of Control Variables**

		percentveto	overrides	divided
percentveto	Pearson Correlation	1	.384(*)	.511(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.028	.002
	N	33	33	33
overrides	Pearson Correlation	.384(*)	1	.102
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028		.572
	N	33	33	33
divided	Pearson Correlation	.511(**)	.102	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.572	
	N	33	33	33

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 indicates that there is a statistically significant, positive relationship between the number of times a president's veto is overturned by Congress and the percentage of vetoes that he is willing to issue. Such an analysis indicates that when the number of times a president's veto is overturned in the previous Congress increases, then the percentage of vetoes that he issues also increases.

Table 3 also indicates that the presence of divided government influences whether or not a president will veto legislation. In this case, there is a statistically significant, positive relationship between a divided government and the likelihood of a president vetoing legislation. Because the divided government variable is coded as 0 if the

government is unified and 1 if it is divided, when the government is classified as divided the president is more likely to veto legislation.

Because both correlation analyses revealed statistically significant relationships that affect a president's veto inclination, these variables must be controlled for when conducting further analyses using the various presidential personality types. Before any regression analyses are run, however, descriptive statistics of the variables being used will be presented.

**Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Control and Independent Variables**

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Frequency	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
activepos	33	1.00	.00	1.00	16.00	.4848	.50752	.258
activeneg	33	1.00	.00	1.00	5.00	.1515	.36411	.133
passpos	33	1.00	.00	1.00	8.00	.2424	.43519	.189
passneg	33	1.00	.00	1.00	4.00	.1212	.33143	.110
divided	33	1.00	.00	1.00	20.00	.6061	.49620	.246
activepres	33	1.00	.00	1.00	21.00	.6364	.48850	.239
passpres	33	1.00	.00	1.00	12.00	.3636	.48850	.239
positivepres	33	1.00	.00	1.00	20.00	.6061	.49620	.246
negativepres	33	1.00	.00	1.00	13.00	.3939	.49620	.246
overrides	33	6.00	.00	6.00	29.00	.8788	1.49494	2.235
Valid N (listwise)	33							

**Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Dependent Variables**

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
percentregveto	33	4.81	.00	4.81	1.5879	1.31735
percentveto	33	7.91	.00	7.91	2.4848	1.93999
percentpockveto	33	3.22	.00	3.22	.7588	.79361
Valid N (listwise)	33					

Table 4 is a table that offers descriptive statistics of the dummy variables that are being used, offering a visual representation of the number of times (number of Congresses) that a president with that specific personality was sitting in the White House.

Table 5, on the other hand, offers a visual representation of the percentages of vetoes that were issued – offering the range, the minimum percentage of vetoes issued to the highest percentage of vetoes issued, as well as offering the average percentage of each type of veto issued.

### *Regression Analyses*

**Table 6. Summary of Results for Regression Analysis: Percentage of Total Vetoes**  
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.695(a)	.483	.387	1.51900

a Predictors: (Constant), overrides, passpos, divided, activeneg, passneg

#### Coefficients(a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	1.548	.529		2.925	.007**
	divided	1.959	.564	.501	3.472	.002**
	activeneg	-1.226	.791	-.230	-1.550	.133
	passpos	-1.442	.675	-.323	-2.136	.042*
	passneg	-.338	.892	-.058	-.379	.708
	overrides	.370	.189	.285	1.957	.061

a Dependent Variable: percentveto

\* Significant at the 0.05 level

Table 6 represents an analysis run using divided government and the number of vetoes overturned as control variables. The variable “activepos” was used as the reference variable which is why it does not appear in the analysis by name. The regression analysis reveals multiple statistically significant findings, one for the passive/positive variable, one for each of the two control variables. The statistics for “overrides,” “passpos,” and “divided” all reach statistical significance at the .05 level. Thus, for those variables, we can be confident that their results will be due to random error only 5% of the time. Interestingly, though, the relationship of overrides to vetoes is

in the opposite direction than that found by Copeland (1983), who found a negative relationship. This analysis has shown that there is a positive relationship, meaning that as the number of previous overrides increases, the number of subsequent vetoes increases instead of decreases.

The R Square reveals a good fit for the model, explaining roughly 48% of variance in the percentage of total vetoes being issued. The Unstandardized B Coefficients reveal that if all variables are set at zero, meaning that there is no divided government, nothing is overturned, and the president is active/positive, then 1.548% of all bills sent to the president would be vetoed. If there is a divided government and there is an Active/Positive president, then it is expected that the president would veto 3.507% ( $1.548 + 1.959$ ) of all bills sent to him.

Using the Unstandardized B Coefficients, the regression analysis allows us to form a hierarchy of the presidential personalities in order from the most likely to veto legislation to those that are least likely. According to the coefficients, active/positive presidents are most likely to veto legislation, followed by passive/negative, then active/negative, and finally passive/positive presidents are least likely to use the veto power. Of course, because the statistics for the active/negative and passive/negative variable do not reach statistical significance, their results may be due to random error.

The total percentage of vetoes, however, only encompasses part of the story. The next analysis will focus on the percentage of pocket vetoes issued in an attempt to find if the pocket veto is a specific tool used by a specific type of president.

**Table 7. Summary of Results for Regression Analysis: Percentage of Pocket Vetoes**  
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.613(a)	.376	.261	.68245

a Predictors: (Constant), overrides, passpos, divided, activeneg, passneg

**Coefficients(a)**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	.205	.238		.863	.396
	divided	.492	.254	.307	1.940	.063
	activeneg	.193	.355	.089	.543	.592
	passpos	-.202	.303	-.111	-.665	.512
	passneg	1.001	.401	.418	2.498	.019*
	overrides	.175	.085	.330	2.058	.049

a Dependent Variable: percentpockveto

Table 7 also shows that the model is a solid fit for explaining variation in the percentage of pocket vetoes issued, although less impressive than the model reporting the percentage of all vetoes issued. This analysis reveals only one statistically significant statistics – one accounting for the variable for passive/negative presidents. Again, the variable for the active/positive president has been excluded and used as the reference variable. Based on these Unstandardized B Coefficients, the passive/negative president is the most likely to issue a pocket veto, followed by the active/negative president, followed by the active/positive president, and finally the passive/positive president will be the least likely to use the pocket veto. In the event that there are vetoes overturned and there is a divided government, however, then the order of pocket veto inclination will remain the same. Also, because only one of the six variables that are being used reach statistical significance, the results for the other four variables remains vague and may be due to random error. Thus, any hierarchy in personalities is certainly subject to scrutiny and further research.

Now that pocket vetoes have been examined, our attention will be turned to the percentage of regular vetoes issued by presidents in order to uncover any relationship between presidential personality and the inclination to actively veto legislation.

**Table 8. Summary of Results for Regression Analysis: Percentage of Regular Vetoes**  
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.734(a)	.539	.454	.97323

a Predictors: (Constant), overrides, passpos, divided, activeneg, passneg

**Coefficients(a)**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.239	.339		3.652	.001**
	divided	1.225	.362	.462	3.390	.002**
	activeneg	-1.250	.507	-.345	-2.465	.020*
	passpos	-1.165	.432	-.385	-2.695	.012**
	passneg	-1.058	.571	-.266	-1.851	.075
	overrides	.235	.121	.267	1.940	.063

a Dependent Variable: percentregveto

The results from this analysis are the most encouraging thus far concerning statistical significance and the model's fit. The R Square statistic says that this model explains roughly 53% of variation in the percentage of regular vetoes issued. Moreover, the statistics for four of the six variables used reach some level of acceptable statistical significance. The statistic for the "overturn" variable reaches significance at the .01 level. The statistics for the "divided," "activeneg," and "passpos" variables reach statistical significance at the .05 level.

Based on the Unstandardized B Coefficients, active/positive presidents will be the most willing to veto a higher percentage of bills using a regular veto, followed by



passive/negative presidents, followed by passive/positive presidents, with active/negative presidents being the least likely to veto bills by issuing a regular veto.

Although these results represent the best model thus far, because the statistic for passive/negative presidents is far from statistical significance, the model is far from perfect and further research and a stronger model will be needed.

For now, our attention will move away from deciphering the difference between the four different presidential dimensions and will focus on the active/passive and positive/negative dimensions separately. For this section of regression analyses, the control variables will remain the same (divided government and the number of overturned vetoes), but the personality variables will be simply active and passive, or positive and negative. For brevity sake, the analyses will focus on the percentage of total vetoes issued and not all three variables for vetoes. A separate analysis will be run in order to test H<sub>3</sub>, using the active/passive dimension and the variable for the percentage of pocket vetoes.

**Table 9. Summary of Results for Regression Analysis: Percentage of Total Vetoes - Active/Passive**  
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.639(a)	.409	.348	1.56684

a Predictors: (Constant), passpres, overrides, divided

**Coefficients(a)**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	1.197	.483		2.478	.019**
	divided	2.057	.579	.526	3.551	.001*
	overrides	.377	.191	.291	1.975	.058
	passpres	-.800	.597	-.201	-1.340	.191

a Dependent Variable: percentveto

**Table 10. Summary of Results for Regression Analysis: Percentage of Total Vetoes - Positive/Negative**  
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.648(a)	.420	.360	1.55200

a Predictors: (Constant), negativepres, divided, overrides

**Coefficients(a)**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.469	.552		2.661	.013**
	divided	1.795	.558	.459	3.218	.003**
	overrides	.329	.197	.254	1.673	.105
	negativepres	-.917	.593	-.235	-1.545	.133

The model for Table 9 explains slightly less than half of the variance in the percentage of total vetoes issued, according to the R Square statistic, which isn't necessarily a bad fit for a model – it's just not as strong as previous models. Moreover, two of the four statistics for our variables reach statistical significance at the .05 level.

According to the Unstandardized B Coefficients in Table 9, active presidents will veto a higher percentage of all bills sent to him than will a passive president, even after controlling for divided government and the number of vetoes overturned. Of course, because the statistic for negative presidents does not reach statistical significance, its use is fairly limited as a reliable indicator of how a negative president will behave.

The model used in the analysis for Table 10 provides a slightly better fit for explaining variance in the percentage of all vetoes issued than the model reported in Table 9, explaining roughly 42% of variation. In this model, the variable for the positive president is held constant. Although this model provides a slightly better fit for explaining variance in the percentage of total vetoes issued, only two variables reach

statistical significance. The variable for negative presidents fails to reach significance while the variable for divided government reaches significance at the .05 level.

Based on the Unstandardized B Coefficients, controlling for divided government and overturned vetoes, positive presidents are likely to veto a higher percentage of bills than negative presidents. This assumption, however, is much like the one made concerning Table 9 – such an assumption is made knowing that the statistic for the negative presidential variable may be due to an increase in random error.

**Table 11. Summary of Results for Regression Analysis: Percentage of Pocket Vetoes – Active/Passive**  
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.429(a)	.184	.099	.75319

a Predictors: (Constant), passpres, overrides, divided

**Coefficients(a)**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	.296	.232		1.272	.213
	divided	.495	.278	.310	1.778	.086
	overrides	.133	.092	.250	1.447	.159
	passpres	.127	.287	.078	.444	.660

a Dependent Variable: percentpockveto

The results from this analysis are inconclusive. The R Square statistic indicates that the model explains roughly 20% of variation in vetoes – our lowest percentage of all the analyses performed. Moreover, none of the statistics for any of the variables reach an acceptable level of significance. Thus, although the Unstandardized B Coefficients indicate that passive presidents are more likely to issue a pocket veto than are active

presidents, there is little reason to believe that any of these statistics and findings are not the result of random error.

While the preceding analyses fail to provide statistically significant results for all variables, there are ample results to justify an increased interest in finding relationships between presidential personalities and the use of the veto, especially when we break down vetoes by type.

What we have discovered from the results is that for all vetoes cast, active/positive presidents will veto a higher percentage of bills than will a passive/positive president. Concerning the percentage of regular vetoes cast, analyses have found that active/positive presidents will veto a higher percentage of bills than either active/negative or passive/positive presidents. In turn, active/negative presidents will veto a higher percentage of bills using the regular veto than a passive/positive president.

As for our specific hypotheses, there are mixed results. For our H<sub>1</sub>, *If a president exhibits an active orientation, then he will be more likely to veto legislation than a president who exhibits a passive orientation*, we find limited support. While the Unstandardized B Coefficients do indicate that active presidents veto a higher percentage of bills than passive presidents, the statistic for the passive variable fails to reach statistical significance. Thus, the assertion that active presidents veto more legislation than passive presidents is not fully supported by statistically significant data.

For the second hypothesis, H<sub>2</sub>, *If a president exhibits the active/negative traits, then he will not be more likely to veto legislation than a president who exhibits active-positive traits*, the data indicates the opposite that active/positive presidents will veto

more legislation than active/negative ones, although the statistic for active/negative presidents fails to reach statistical significance.

Looking at the third hypothesis posited, *If a president exhibits the passive/positive traits, then he will be neither more likely nor less likely to veto legislation than a president who exhibits passive/negative traits*, in most instances (percentage of total vetoes, percentage of regular vetoes, and the percentage of pocket vetoes) passive/negative presidents will veto a higher percentage of bills than passive/positive presidents. This assertion is made knowing that in none of the analyses run did both the passive/positive and passive/negative statistics reach statistical significance at the same time.

Now focusing on the fourth hypothesis, *If a president exhibits the passive traits, then he will be more likely to veto legislation using a pocket veto than a president who exhibits active traits*, the results presented in Table 11 provide only vague results. While the coefficients indicate that passive presidents issue pocket vetoes more often than active presidents, the lack of any statistically significant variable statistics is more than enough to declare the results inconclusive. More than just failing to reach statistical significance, the statistic for the passive president variable indicates that over half of the results may be due to random error.

Turning, finally, to the fifth and final hypothesis, *If a president exhibits positive traits, then he will be neither more likely nor less likely to veto legislation than a president who exhibits negative traits*, there is limited reason to believe that positive presidents will veto more bills than negative presidents. The coefficients do indicate that Positive presidents veto a higher percentage of bills, overall, than negative presidents.

However, the statistic for negative presidents does not – it has a 13% chance of occurring because of random error.

## **X. CONCLUSION**

While none of the initial hypotheses are fully supported, and in some cases there is no support, this study has revealed interesting relationships concerning presidential personalities and the inclination to veto bills. Analyses have indicated that active/positive presidents are more likely to use the regular veto than are passive/positive presidents. In turn, passive/positive presidents are more likely to use the regular veto than are active/negative presidents. And while the statistic for the passive/negative president is unclear concerning regular vetoes, we still have a modified hierarchy of presidential personalities and their willingness to veto bills using a regular veto – active/positive being the most likely, followed by passive/negative, followed by passive/positive, and finally active/negative.

Still, other analyses revealed very limited results concerning the statistical significance of variables. Although many of the analyses resulted in producing statistics that were affected by large percentages of random error, they may provide a platform for further research. Because the scope of this particular study was limited by a lack of readily available information from preceding Congresses, further research that expands the size of the data pool may yield more statistically stable results.

Moreover, the limitations of Barber's personality dimensions may also provide a platform for future research. As other scholars produce newer ways for categorizing presidential personalities, such categories may be used to produce more statistically stable results. In addition to new categories, there is the possibility that Barber himself misplaced some presidents, for whatever reasons. If this is true, then the rearranging of some presidents into different personality dimensions may yield more accurate and clearer results.



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## VITA

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Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between presidential personalities and the use of the veto. Personality dimensions were borrowed from James Barber (1992) while the data concerning the legislative history of Congresses was compiled from the Library of Congress and various presidential libraries. Linear regression analyses were used to determine a pattern of veto behavior with respect to personality.

Findings and Conclusions: Regression analyses revealed that active/positive presidents are the most likely to veto bills, followed by passive/negatives, followed by active/negatives, with passive/positives being the least likely veto bills. Active presidents are more likely to veto a higher percentage of bills than a passive president, and a positive president is more likely to veto a higher percentage of bills than a negative president. Results varied in statistical significance, with some reaching the 0.01 level and others not reaching any acceptable level.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Rebekah Herrick