

The Cuban Missile Crisis and Effective Leadership of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy

Bachelor Thesis



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Abstract

This bachelor thesis focusses on the Cuban Missile Crisis (CMC) of 1962 during the Cold War. Different models are used to explain which factors contributed to the outcome we know today. The main question what prevented this conflict to end in a nuclear war? I will do this by explaining the crisis through the three models of Allison (1969) who each describe the events during the conflict from another point of view. I will add a fourth model which discusses the events and outcomes of the Cuban Missile Crisis through the Leadership Traits of President Kennedy. Finally, I will conclude if the Leadership Traits of Kennedy played a significant role in determining the outcome of the crisis.

Introduction

It was during the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 when the world came very close to a nuclear disaster in which more lives could end than before in the entire human history. United States' President John F. Kennedy estimated the probability of this disaster to be 'one out of three' (Allison, 1969). On the 16th of October 1962 at 9 a.m. president Kennedy was informed about the nuclear missiles on Cuba which were installed by the Soviet Union. Within three hours he gathered a group consisting his top advisors, which became known as the Executive Committee of the National Security Council, often referred to as the 'ExComm' (Gibson, 2011, pp. 361-362). An American U-2 aircraft had made photo's of the missiles which were presented by an intelligence report. Many deliberations followed between the group members, from Soviet intentions and suitable U.S. responses to consequences of these responses. Various forms of diplomacy were discussed, from doing nothing to an immediate military strike. On October 22, president Kennedy announced the naval blockade of Cuba, while negotiating with Khrushchev about the NATO missiles placed by the United States in Turkey. On October 28 the ExComm met for the last time when Khrushchev agreed on removing the missiles in Cuba on two conditions: 'a public pledge from the United States not to invade Cuba, and a back-channel promise that Kennedy would remove the missiles from Turkey sometime soon thereafter' (Gibson, 2011, p. 362).

The offensive nuclear missiles in Cuba, placed by the Soviet Union, were perceived by the United States and the presidential apparatus of Kennedy 'as an aggressive intervention by the Soviet Union into the strategic balance of power' (May & Zelikow, 2001). According to Robert McNamara, President Kennedy's secretary of Defense who was part of the operation ExComm it was mostly 'luck' that directed the outcome we know today. If it would have been another leader the result might have been less fortunate (Blight & Lang, 2005, p. 61 in Chase, 2005, p. 63). Since the documents have been released, it is now clear that president Kennedy, with the help and advise of his team, considered the crisis from different angles. The response had a range between a more traditional response to the perceived aggression and a 'transactional leadership' where the removal of the Soviet missiles in Cuba would be traded for the removal of the American missiles who were based in Italy and Turkey. As is clear now, the solution of the Cuban missile crisis required much more than transactional leadership (Chase, 2005, p. 63).

According to Allison (1969), this event symbolizes a fact about our existence. Namely, that such possibly (nuclear) disasters could follow from choices and actions of governments. That is why participants as well as students of government should think about these problems beforehand, because a better understanding of this crisis starts in collecting more information and analyzing available evidence. Allison uses the Cuban Missile Crisis in his study 'as grist for a more general investigation'; the purpose of his study is to contribute to the efforts of understanding such crises better to avoid them possibly in the future. He has found three models who each provide essentially different answers to the Cuban Missile Crisis. These models are Model I) The Rational Policy Model, Model II) The Organizational Process Model, and Model III) The Bureaucratic Politics model (Allison, 1969, p. 689).

The three models of Allison attempt to explain the Cuban Missile Crisis but lack to explain the crisis from an actor centric approach, in other words, the role of the leaders in this. However, this could be a crucial aspect in determining the outcome. Saunders (2011) has shown in her book about the president's influence in shaping military interventions that 'leaders play an independent and systematic role in shaping decisions to intervene and the choice of intervention strategy' (Saunders, 2011, p. 212).

This thesis attempts to explain the course of events during the Cuban Missile Crises from an actor centric approach in which the analysis is based on the specific traits and leadership style of president Kennedy. His leadership style is measured by performing a Leadership Trait Analysis on his interviews and speeches. The decisions made and the course of events during the crisis are connected to his leadership style and together this analysis forms the 'fourth' Model. This model stands next to the three Models of Allison which analyze the Cuban Missile Crisis from other perspectives and it aims to fill the gap of the Models of Allison which lack an actor centric approach e.g. the leadership style of Kennedy.

2 Actor Centric Approach in the International Relations

When explaining the history of the 20th Century, it is nearly impossible to do that without its leaders such as Joseph Stalin, Winston Churchill, Adolf Hitler, Vladimir Lenin and Mao Zedong. Individuals are the central players who shape international relations with its alliances, causes of wars and other important international relations areas (Byman & Pollack, 2001, p. 114). Even in today's world, it is unimaginable to explain political events without taking the personal beliefs and goals of Vladimir Putin and Jiang Zemin among others into account. The personalities of political leaders are often scrutinized during elections crisis and scandals, and in general, there is a public interest in the personality of political leaders and understanding what determines their behavior and process of decision making. This is also due to the fact that leaders's emotions, speech, body language and many other personal characteristics are in front of the public eye and everyone who has access to the media. Many attempts have been made to analyze their personality, however, 'mostly by people who have not even studied human psychology' (Volkan, 2014, p. 77).

Henry Kissinger once reformulated his previous belief that history was run by impersonal forces, when he saw the difference that personalities make in practice. When determining the events that shape international relations, one cannot ignore the importance of personal traits and human error. The failure to explain all the variances in the politics of nations is because political scientists have not attempted to explain the roles of personality and human mistakes in international relations (Byman & Pollack, 2001, p. 108).

The 'fable of inevitability' is another dangerous myth in the study of international relations and it is essential to recognize the importance of the individual in order to disempower it. Certain events in the course of history have occurred because of the decisions of specific individuals and not because of the inevitability of fate. For instance, Germany's tendency towards war in the late nineteenth century would not have happened at all without Wilhelm II, and might have happened earlier without Bismarck (Byman & Pollack, 2001, p. 145).

Saunders (2011) who has developed a framework to divide leaders in a typology, acknowledges also that 'International Relations scholars have long shied away from incorporating leaders into their theories' (Saunders, 2011, p. 212). This has been either because scholars did not believe that leaders would have an independent role in determining

state behavior or when they did believe that the role of leaders is considered important, they were still not able to specify in which ways and how leaders matter. Saunders has shown in her book that leaders do 'play an independent and systematic role in shaping decisions to intervene and the choice of intervention strategy' (Saunders, 2011, p. 212). They are able to be consistent in their behavior and they are aware of the objective cues from the international environment. Moreover, leaders are an important aspect of the 'two-level game', the level of domestic politics versus the level of international bargaining in which they are the central actors who have to reach a balance between responding to domestic pressures while perceiving possible threats from the international arena (Herman & Hagan, 1998, p. 129).

The importance of focusing on the individual appears to be effective in numerous ways. For instance, leaders have to estimate their opponents in order to calculate their own moves and foresee the consequences. As how Alexander George states it: 'leaders must try to see events, and indeed, their own behavior from the perspective of opponents' (Post, 2004, p. ix). In the Cuban Missile Crisis, the image that the political leaders had of each other shaped the start and the eventual resolving of the crisis. Khrushchev on the one hand who had an incorrect image of Kennedy: a young and inexperienced leader who could be pushed and played around with, yet rational enough not to risk a war while solving the missile problem in Cuba. In contrast, Kennedy's correct image of Khrushchev as a leader capable of realizing his mistakes and withdrawing his forces if asked to do so. It was the wrong image that Khrushchev had that made him underestimate the risk of his missile deployment. It was also the right image that Kennedy had, which played a role in his choice for the strategy of coercive persuasion rather than brute military force (Post, 2004, p. x), and this may have saved the Cuban Missile Crisis from turning into a Cuban Missile War.

Consequently, it is considerable to have an actor centric approach in the International Relations. The main actors in the international Relations are states, political leaders stand behind these states and are likely to have a substantial influence on the decisions and actions of these states. Each leaders individual characteristics and beliefs are therefore an essential part in standardizing leadership traits and using these standardized profiles in scientific ways to compare and analyze these leaders and their ways of approaching situations.

3. Theoretical Framework

The Cuban Missile Crisis has been examined many times after it took place. One of the significant assessments of the Cuban Missile Crisis has been done by Allison (1969) and his three models through which he describes the events of the crisis each time with a slightly different perspective.

4. 1 Rational Policy Model (Model I)

According to Model I analysis, 'nations quit when costs outweigh the benefits' (Allison, 1969, p. 717). However, surrender will only happen when a nation is aware that it is not in the winning team.

Following Model I, the goal of the blockade was to maintain the local superiority of the United States and its determination to let the blockades be removed, yet allowing the Soviet Union time to withdraw their missiles without humiliation. When President Kennedy was notified about the Soviet missiles in Cuba, he congregated an Executive Committee (ExCom) of the National Security Council. The ExCom was directed to 'set aside all other tasks, to make a prompt and intense survey of the dangers and all possible courses of action' (Allison, 1969, p. 696). These fifteen individuals were all representing the President and they were all equal during the time they were discussing the possible options and their arguments for and against each of the options. Six forms of response were considered but the Committee choose for the blockade. However, the blockade had its flaws too. There was a possibility of Soviet reprisal in Berlin as a counter reaction. That would lead to two blockades and the solution after that would be lifting both blockades and restoring the new status quo in which the Soviets would have extra time to complete their missiles on Cuba. In addition, the consequence of the blockade appeared to be the same as consequences of an air strike. In case the Soviet ships would not stop, the next step for the United States would be firing shots, which could lead to retaliation. Moreover, the blockade was legally not valid in the first place since it denied the freedom of the seas; furthermore, it was a violation of the United Nations Charter and international law (Allison, 1969, p. 697). Finally, at the first view, the blockade was not much related to the real problem, specifically 75 missiles on the island of Cuba.

Still, despite the objections, the blockade had also comparative advantages. First, it was a good middle road between an attack or taking no action at all, enough aggression to show American determination but not so unanticipated as an attack. Second, the burden of taking the next step in this situation was placed on the shoulders of Khrushchev. Third, if there was going to be a military confrontation, the most acceptable place would be a on the Caribbean through a naval confrontation. In brief, the only real option for the United States was the blockade (Allison, 1969, p. 698). One of the powerful arguments was the explanation of the blockade by President Kennedy who stated:

4.2 The Organizational Process Model (Model II)

While the behavior of governments is often summarized as a decision made by an unitary actor, this simplification should not ‘conceal the fact that a government consists of a conglomerate of semi-feudal, loosely allied organizations , each with a substantial life of its own’ (Allison, 1969, p. 698).

The U.S. Blockade of Cuba: through the lens of Model II

Organizational Intelligence:

The decision of the leaders for the blockade was highly determined by the date of discovering the missiles on October 14. This would be an alleged ‘American intelligence failure’ since there were no U-2 flights over the western end of Cuba between September 5 and October 4. In addition, why was there a ten-day delay between the decision to send a flight over western Cuba and the actual implementation of the flight on October 14? On September 19, the United States Intelligence Board (USIB) directed the ‘September estimate’ and the conclusion was that no offensive missiles would be set up by the Soviet Union in Cuba. However, with the information available to the estimators at that time, this was a reasonable judgment. When the evidence started to increase the decision was made to send a flight over Cuba. ‘The ten-day delay between that decision and the flight is another organizational story’ (Allison, 1969, p. 705). Since there was a high chance of the U-2 to be downed, the Defense Department decided that it would be better if the pilot would be an officer instead of an CIA agent. The CIA argued that this was within their jurisdiction because it was an intelligence operation. After five days, the State Department decided to employ drones and the Air Force, thus on October 9 a flight was planned and approved to San Cristobal, performed by Air Force pilots. However, this attempt was unsuccessful due to an engine problem, which forced the pilot to

descend, and the second attempt was the flight on 14 October, which discovered the missiles. Although this delay was some form of ‘failure’, it was also inevitable because jobs within an organization do not fit into precisely delineated jurisdictions (Allison, 1969, p. 705).

4. 3 Bureaucratic Politics Model (Model II)

The U.S. blockade of Cuba, through the lens of Model III

When the U-2 showed evidence of the photographs that were taken of the Soviet offensive Missiles in Cuba created for the whole team of the Administration a sense of ‘nakedness’ which resulted in a spectrum of issues and answers. When President Kennedy was informed by McGeorge Bundy about the hard evidence of the offensive missiles in Cuba his first reaction was of surprised anger because he felt he had been betrayed by Khrushchev because the Chairman of the Soviet Union had previously assured Kennedy that ‘nothing would be done done to exacerbate this problem [of his domestic political problems]’, yet now ‘he had chosen the most unhelpful act of all’ (Allison, 1969, p. 713). Kennedy’s first reaction was to remove the missiles, while his two principal advisors advocated for a diplomatic approach or to do nothing. However, with advice of Secretary of Defense McNamara at the ExCom meeting it became clear that there was a high risk of a nuclear war if the United States acted in a way that could result in a crisis with the Soviet Union, which was too high for a conflict that had little strategic implications (Allison, 1969, p. 714). Robert Kennedy the brother of the President and Theodore Sorenson, the Presidents’s Special Council, both acknowledged that the move of Khrushchev was one of betrayal and deceit, and although a counter-move was necessary it should not lead to disaster. On the day that the crisis ended, the President recalled that he was content about having McNamara in his team who prevented the military from an invasion in Cuba.

The Politics of Choice

While the President and his advisors choose initially for the air strike or ‘other steps to render them inoperable’ (Allison, 1969, p. 714), at the end of the week there was merely a minority who still preferred the airstrike. Many factors together have led to the outcome we know today, if any of these factor would be absent, it might have been another option than a blockade. Again it was the Secretary of Defence, McNamara who demonstrated the final arguments for the blockade, and since he had the highest reputation in the Cabinet and the

highest confidence of the President in him the blockade became the ultimate alternative. Also, Robert Kennedy, was firmly against the airstrike and made a comparison to Pearl Harbor and not wanting him to become a 'Tojo', which convinced the President in the process. To deceive the Soviets, the President flew to Connecticut for a campaign commitment and when he came back, a new coalition of Sorenson, Robert Kennedy and McNamara was formed in favor of the blockade. Furthermore Sorensen gave him an outline in which there was a strong argument that about the airstrike and that it could not be a live option. However, this information given to him was false and it remains a mystery why nobody questioned this during the week.

As Allison has showed in his work, the Rational Actor model is not the one and only way of examining policy, since he has shown that bureaucratic politics and organizational processes are able to influence policy as much as the rational actors. The main point of this thesis is to show that another model, which is purely based on the leadership style on President Kennedy is also able to explain the events of the Cuban Missile Crisis and the outcomes that followed. By assessing the leadership style of President Kennedy we are able to explain to a certain extent why he did what he did based on his traits, and how he could have handled situation if he would have had different traits. Through the Leadership Trait Analysis on Kennedy and his decision made during the crisis we can see how much the leadership style of Kennedy influenced the follow up of events that took place during the CMC and the final decisions that were made and resulted in a peaceful outcome instead of a nuclear war.

4. Methodology

This thesis focusses on the course of events and the outcome of the Cuban Missile Crisis and whether it has been significantly influenced by the personal traits and leadership style of President Kennedy.

The analysis is divided into two parts: a quantitative content analysis in which the Leadership Style of Kennedy is determined through the Leadership Trait Analysis of Margaret Hermann (2005) and a qualitative analysis in which dimensions and traits within dimensions of his leadership style are linked with decisions and outcomes of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Part 1 Quantitative analysis

The main sources of data that are used for the Leadership Trait Analysis, are interviews, speeches and other forms of presence in the media. In order to assess the leadership style of political leaders it is useful to analyze the the content of what they say in public settings since it is often not possible to conduct them to usual assessment techniques (Hermann, 2005, p. 178).

The focus is primarily on unrehearsed and ‘natural’ material, such as interviews or other (spontaneous) verbal material. The aim of analyzing the data is to gain more information about the personality characteristics and that's why interviews are preferred over speeches since, ‘leaders are less in control of what they say’ (Hermann, 2005, p. 179), compared to speeches.

While it is common that speeches are written by speechwriters, there is no doubt that a speech that comes from the leader himself is more accurately describing the leader's traits than a speech that is written by a speechwriter. Therefore, when using public statements as the main source for the purpose of analysis and interpretation, one should take potential hazards of this method into account. Public speeches may have more purposes than merely presenting the beliefs and preferences of the speakers, since they can serve other purposes as well, for instance, to manage or persuade an audience's impression. However, the results of analysis conducted by Renshon (2009) of the operational code of United States' president John F. Kennedy which was determined by using the Verbs In Context System (VICS), shows that his code is surprisingly similar in the private and public context. If the public speeches come close to the level of sincerity of the private speeches the validity of using public speech to

analyze the operational codes of leaders increases (Renshon, 2009). Because ‘a minimum of fifty [different] interview responses is needed to develop an adequate assessment of leadership style’ (Hermann et al, 2005, p. 206) and for the limited amount of interviews available, I have chosen to fill the required amount of fifty different moments of public talks with speeches. Furthermore, Hermann states that for ensuring that the leadership style is not time or context specific it is important to choose between a range of topics and spread through the ‘span of the leader’s tenure in office, as well as have occurred in different types of interview settings, and should focus on a variety of topics’ (Hermann, 2005, p. 180). Since President Kennedy was relatively short in office (1960-1963) I have used interviews and speeches from the time that he was a senator as well, because it was not very likely that he had a speechwriter during that time which will increase the reliability of those speeches. Furthermore, I have collected data about a range of topics within domestic politics as well as international relations, however some topics dominate since they had a priority on the presidential agenda, such as the Cold War. For this reason as well, it is preferable for the reliability of the study to use data from the time that he was a senator and talked about a different range of topics. The total time span of the interviews and speeches is 21 years, from 1942 until 1963. An overview of the collected materials and their topics and time can be looked up in the appendix.

The collected data consists of 15 interviews and 44 speeches with a total of 88.650 words. The data of the interviews and speeches will be analyzed apart to see whether there is a difference between spontaneous materials and pre-written public speeches. In case there will be a difference in the outputs, the output of the interviews will be used for his Leadership Trait Analysis since the data of interviews is reflecting his traits more accurately than speeches which could have been written by speechwriters and/or for other purposes (Renshon, 2009). However, this could be problematic because the amount of interviews on itself is far less than fifty, and this could decrease the confidence in his profile: ‘any profile [and its reliability] will suffer if it is determined on fewer than fifty responses’ (Hermann et al, 2005, p. 180). For this reason, I will conduct a third data analysis by Profiler Plus with both the interviews and speeches together in one output.

This analysis will go through a software: Profiler + version 7.3.2, that will automatically code the traits, the use of certain words and phrases and the frequency of their use will determine the leadership traits that will form together a leadership style (Hermann, 2005, p. 186). When the Leadership Trait Analysis is conducted, it will be compared to a comparison study of Hermann, which includes completing profiles of leadership styles of 122 political leaders and 87 heads of states. An overview of this study which will be used as comparing material can be looked up in the Appendix. With the LTA the Leadership Style of Kennedy will be determined. This Leadership Style will be the base for the fourth model which examines the CMS through the Leadership Style of Kennedy.

Results

Across the past two decades, Hermann (1980, 2001, 2003, 2005) has examined the individual differences of 87 heads of states and 122 political leaders. She has discovered that there are a set of leadership styles give direction to leaders how to interact with the people they lead or the ones they share power with. The Leadership Trait Analysis (LTA) of Margaret Hermann (1999) examines the leadership traits on three dimensions. These dimensions are the main questions and the answers to them build a specific leadership style. These three questions are: (I) the reaction to political constraints in the environment. Do political leaders respect such constraints or challenge them? (II) The openness of leaders to incoming information. Do they select information before responding to them or are they openly directing their response to information? And (III), the motives of the leaders for taking a position like theirs. Are they driven by relationships that can be formed or is is their focus of attention directed inwards? (Hermann et al, 2005, pp. 181-182).

Each of these dimensions is determined by the interaction between specific sets of traits.

Traits	Score	Dimensions	Leadership style
Belief in control events	AVG	Respects constraints	
Need for power	LOW		
Self confidence	AVG	Open to contextual information	Opportunistic
Conceptual Complexity	HIGH		&
Task focus	AVG	Both relationship and task focus	Collegial
In-Group bias	LOW	Motivation towards world	
Distrust in others	LOW	Focus on advantage taking of opportunities and relationships	

A remarkable, yet not unforeseen finding of comparing the Profiler plus outputs of the speeches and the interviews is that both have nearly the same outputs, which confirms the conclusion of Renshon about the little differences in Kennedy's private and public profile (2009). This will also solve the reliability problem of the relatively few interviews used in comparison to the amount of speeches and the required amount of fifty different interview responses.

In other words, the outputs of the nearly sufficient amounts of speeches (that could lack validity since they are less spontaneous and could be written by speech writers) and the more valid yet less reliable amount of interviews, both have nearly the same outputs. Assumably this could increase both the validity and reliability of both the speeches and interviews and thus the data in overall. However, I believe this statement should be approached with caution. The only difference between the two outputs is the trait self-confidence which is 'average' according to the interviews and 'low' according to the speeches. An 'average' and/or a 'low' self-confidence do not change his dimension of 'Openness towards information' because in both cases his trait 'contextual complexity' remains higher than the trait 'self-confidence', thus this difference does not influence his dimension nor his leadership style.

Data results interviews

Personality Trait	Value	Comparison 87 heads of state	Result
Belief in ability to control events	0.3567	Mean = .44 Low < .30 High > .58	AVERAGE
Need for Power	0.2816	Mean = .50 Low < .37 High > .62	LOW
Self-Confidence	0.6729	Mean =.62 Low < .44 High > .81	AVERAGE
Conceptual Complexity	0.7014	Mean = .44 Low < 0.32 High > 0.56	HIGH
Task or relationship orientated	0.6364	Mean = .59 Low < .46 High > .71	AVERAGE
In-group Bias	0.1412	Mean = .42 Low < .32 High > .53	LOW
Mistrust in others	0.0887	Mean = 0.41 Low < .25 High > .56	LOW

Data results Speeches

Personality Trait	Value	Comparison 87 heads of state	Result
Belief in ability to control events	0.3254	Mean = .44 Low < .30 High > .58	AVERAGE
Need for Power	0.2788	Mean = .50 Low < .37 High > .62	LOW
Self-Confidence	0.3542	Mean = .62 Low < .44 High > .81	LOW
Conceptual Complexity	0.5754	Mean = .44 Low < 0.32 High > 0.56	HIGH
Task or relationship orientated	0.5868	Mean = .59 Low < .46 High > .71	AVERAGE
In-group Bias	0.1698	Mean = .42 Low < .32 High > .53	LOW
Mistrust in others	0.1644	Mean = 0.41 Low < .25 High > .56	LOW

Explaining results and expectations of Kennedy's Leadership Style

All three answers to these questions will determine if the leader (1) has a need for control over things that happen or does not feel the need and happens to be an agent for the viewpoint of others. (2) The sensitivity of the leader towards the political context. To have a clear and structured understanding of these three main questions and their possible combination of answers it is best to put them in a structured scheme (Hermann, 2005). All the answers together will lead to put a leader in one of the leadership styles: expansionistic, evangelistic, actively independent, directive, incremental, influential, opportunistic and, collegial (Herman, 1999).

TABLE 8.1. LEADERSHIP STYLE AS A FUNCTION OF RESPONSIVENESS TO CONSTRAINTS, OPENNESS TO INFORMATION, AND MOTIVATION

Responsiveness to Constraints	Openness to Information	Motivation	
		Problem Focus	Relationship Focus
Challenges constraints	Closed to information	<i>Expansionistic</i> (Focus of attention is on expanding leader's, government's, and state's span of control)	<i>Evangelistic</i> (Focus of attention is on persuading others to join in one's mission, in mobilizing others around one's message)
Challenges constraints	Open to information	<i>Actively Independent</i> (Focus of attention is on maintaining one's own and the government's maneuverability and independence in a world that is perceived to continually try to limit both)	<i>Directive</i> (Focus of attention is on maintaining one's own and the government's status and acceptance by others by engaging in actions on the world stage that enhance the state's reputation)
Respects constraints	Closed to information	<i>Incremental</i> (Focus of attention is on improving state's economy and/or security in incremental steps while avoiding the obstacles that will inevitably arise along the way)	<i>Influential</i> (Focus of attention is on building cooperative relationships with other governments and states in order to play a leadership role; by working with others, one can gain more than is possible on one's own)
Respects constraints	Open to information	<i>Opportunistic</i> (Focus of attention is on assessing what is possible in the current situation and context given what one wants to achieve and considering what important constituencies will allow)	<i>Collegial</i> (Focus of attention is on reconciling differences and building consensus—on gaining prestige and status through empowering others and sharing accountability)

Hermann, M.G. (2005). Assessing leadership style: A trait analysis. In J.M. Post (ed), *The psychological assessment of political leaders* (178-212). Michigan: University of Michigan.

1 Reaction to Constraints

The Leadership Trait Analysis is constructed by the traits that belong to certain leadership dimensions, the specific combination of dimensions will lead to the leadership style. The interaction between the 'Belief in the ability to control event & Need for Power' suggests **the dimension whether leaders respect or challenge constraints** in their situation. Kennedy holds **an average belief to control events**, leaders who believe they can have an influence in what happens, have in general more interest in the policy-making process and do this actively.

This is confirmed by the fact that he delegated tasks within his team, something leaders who are high in the belief are less likely to do. Leaders who are low in the belief that they have control over what happens, wait to see how situation are before they act, moreover they will not prefer to take initiatives so that others can take responsibility for the consequences (Hermann, 2005, p. 190).

As described by Allison, Kennedy made the first decision (air strike) immediately when he found out about the Soviet missiles in Cuba, however he also took the expertise of his team in consideration when they disapproved about the airstrike. Kennedy's **need for power and influence is low**, which means he has less need to be in charge among others, and he is also fine for them if others receive credit for events. Leaders who have a Low score, will create a team and are willing to sacrifice own interest for the groups interests. In this process, they will create a good 'team spirit' and a clear team goal. Their intention is to create a team in which everyone shares the same responsibility and accountability for what happens. This was also the case in the forming of the ExComm and its fifteen equal members during the crisis (Hermann, 2005, p. 192). In contrast, leaders who have a high need for power will manipulate their environment and use it as an instrument for their own goals. They have a high need for control and want to negotiate 'until the end' to make sure if their they can push towards their goals (Hermann, 2005, pp. 191-192).

Combining this average belief to control events with a low need for power puts Kennedy more in the category of the **constraints respecters**, since he formed a committee in which he was open to negotiate and respected the opinions of his in-group.

TABLE 8.2. LEADERS' REACTIONS TO CONSTRAINTS

Belief Can Control Events		
Need for Power	Low	High
Low	Respect constraints; work within such parameters toward goals; compromise and consensus building important.	Challenge constraints but less successful in doing so because too direct and open in use of power; less able to read how to manipulate people and setting behind the scenes to have desired influence.
High	Challenge constraints but more comfortable doing so in an indirect fashion—behind the scenes; good at being "power behind the throne" where they can pull strings but are less accountable for result.	Challenge constraints; are skillful in both direct and indirect influence; know what they want and take charge to see it happens,

Hermann, M.G. (2005). Assessing leadership style: A trait analysis. In J.M. Post (ed), *The psychological assessment of political leaders* (178-212). Michigan: University of

Michigan.

2 Openness to Information

The relation between scores on Conceptual Complexity & Self-Confidence will determine the degree of the **second dimension, leader's openness to information**. According to the data, Kennedy has an **average self-confidence** in combination with **an high conceptual complexity** which makes him **Open to Contextual Information**. Leaders with an higher conceptual complexity than self-confidence are pragmatic, open and reactive to the ideas, needs and demands of others. Generally, this kind of leaders are chosen during elections in the United States. 'They are sensitive to situational cues and act based on what they sense is acceptable under current conditions' (Hermann, 2005, p. 193). This kind of leaders will create an environment in which information is exchanged freely in order to increase the contextual information about the needs and opinions of their surroundings. Events and problems are handled each as a unique case (Hermann, 2005, p. 193).

TABLE 8.3. RULES FOR DETERMINING OPENNESS TO INFORMATION

Scores on Conceptual Complexity and Self-Confidence	Openness to Contextual Information
Conceptual Complexity > Self-Confidence	Open
Self-Confidence > Conceptual Complexity	Closed
Conceptual Complexity and Self-Confidence Both High	Open
Conceptual Complexity and Self-Confidence Both Low	Closed

Hermann, M.G. (2005). Assessing leadership style: A trait analysis. In J.M. Post (ed), *The psychological assessment of political leaders* (178-212). Michigan: University of Michigan.

3 Motivation

When we examine the **third dimension of motivation**, the main focus is on 1) what the motivation for seeking office is and 2) ‘their need to preserve and secure the group they are leading’ (Hermann, 2005, p. 198). To measure these motivations three traits will be used: task or relationship focus, in-group bias and leader’s distrust of others. Firstly the task or relationship focus will be explained. Kennedy has a **moderate score on Task Focus** which means (according to the data) that his **motivation for seeking office is of both problem and relationship depending on the context**. Task focused leaders are emphasized on dealing with the problem or task and they go for leadership to reach a goal with a specific group such as their nation or government. Those leaders who are low in task focus, have their focus on establishing relationships and the central function of his leadership is keeping the loyalty of the voter. It is important to note that those leaders who fall in the moderate level are the charismatic ones who feel when it is the right time to focus on building relationships and when to focus on problems (Hermann, 2005, p. 199).

TABLE 8.4. RULES FOR ASSESSING MOTIVATION FOR SEEKING OFFICE

Score on Task Focus	Motivation for Seeking Office
High	Problem
Moderate	Both problem and relationship depending on the context
Low	Relationship

Hermann, M.G. (2005). Assessing leadership style: A trait analysis. In J.M. Post (ed), *The psychological assessment of political leaders* (178-212). Michigan: University of Michigan.

The relation between in-group bias and distrust of others determines the second aspect of this dimension. In-group bias is the view that someone’s ‘own’ group such as political, social and ethnic group is the most important and the best. Furthermore, there is a strong focus on maintaining a certain status for the group. Kennedy has a **Low score on In-Group Bias**, which does not mean he is not interested in the maintenance of his own group as an apart identity, but that he is ‘less prone to view the world in black-and-white terms’ (Hermann, 2005, p. 203). He has also a **Low score on Distrust of Others**, whereas leaders who have a high score on distrust of others often have general feelings of doubt, distrust, uneasiness and concerns about what these groups or persons are doing. These acts are often perceived as wrong or harmful, because there is suspiciousness about motives of others and especially people from another ideology or another goal. These kind of leaders have a zero-sum view of the world in which they believe that one must lose if the other wins, therefore they always want to stay a step forward to make sure nobody is challenging its authority (Hermann, 2005, p. 204). The combination of the Low scores on both traits puts Kennedy and his motivation towards the world as focusing on taking advantage of opportunities and relationships, while accepting that every country has to deal with some constraints. This will make cooperation with others possible.

TABLE 8.5. MOTIVATION TOWARD WORLD

In-group Bias	Distrust of Others	
	Low	High
Low	<p>World is not a threatening place; conflicts are perceived as context-specific and are reacted to on a case-by-case basis; leaders recognize that their country, like many others, has to deal with certain constraints that limit what one can do and call for flexibility of response; moreover, there are certain international arenas where cooperation with others is both possible and feasible. <i>(Focus is on taking advantage of opportunities and relationships)</i></p>	<p>World is perceived as conflict-prone, but because other countries are viewed as having constraints on what they can do, some flexibility in response is possible; leaders, however, must vigilantly monitor developments in the international arena and prudently prepare to contain an adversary's actions while still pursuing their countries' interests. <i>(Focus is on taking advantage of opportunities and building relationships while remaining vigilant)</i></p>
High	<p>While the international system is essentially a zero-sum game, leaders view that it is bounded by a specified set of international norms; even so, adversaries are perceived as inherently threatening and confrontation is viewed to be ongoing as leaders work to limit the threat and enhance their countries' capabilities and relative status. <i>(Focus is on dealing with threats and solving problems even though some situations may appear to offer opportunities)</i></p>	<p>International politics is centered around a set of adversaries that are viewed as "evil" and intent on spreading their ideology or extending their power at the expense of others; leaders perceive that they have a moral imperative to confront these adversaries; as a result, they are likely to take risks and to engage in highly aggressive and assertive behavior. <i>(Focus is on eliminating potential threats and problems)</i></p>

Hermann, M.G. (2005). Assessing leadership style: A trait analysis. In J.M. Post (ed), *The psychological assessment of political leaders* (178-212). Michigan: University of Michigan.

Overall Leadership style and expectations

Kennedy's scores on the seven traits helps to determine his kind of leadership style. (I) He will generally respect constraints, (II) he is open to information in his political context and he will search out information, (III) his motivations for seeking office are both problem solving and relationship building and his motivation towards the world is determined by his focus on taking advantage of relationships and opportunities to reach the goals. He sees the world as a non-threatening place where he approaches problems in a context-specific and case-by-case manner.

Thus, his leadership style is one between Opportunistic and Collegial, with a tendency towards a Collegial leadership style. The expectation of his leadership style is that he is able to move between solving problems and building relationships and he can also shift between the opportunistic and collegial leadership styles. As a result, he is able to focus on solving the problem while maintaining relationships and shifting between the two. The shift depends on the circumstances and if some situations offer opportunity to move towards his goal. Especially during the Cuban Missile Crisis, this was an important factor because it was important to maintain a balance between the in-group opinions and outcomes and the outer world relations. Based on his leadership style I expect that this has helped him through the crisis. The collegial leadership style will predispose him towards a team building approach to politics in which he prefers a group of people in which he will be the center of the process of information gathering. Advisors are able to work with him through all aspects of the policy-making process, in case they are able to share the accountability for the consequences (Hermann, 2005, p. 320).

Part 2. Qualitative analyse

After all these years, as is clear now, Kennedy saw the Cuban Missile Crisis in the light of worldwide events which had happened before it and would happen after. While his initial reaction to the missiles in Cuba was a full-scale assault to destroy them, his view on previous catastrophic events in history held him back. As Sidey (1982) stated Kennedy's approach: 'First, learn more. Then communicate. Don't humiliate. Be patient. And strong' (Sidey, 1982, p. 28), and it were these characteristics that helped him to make the right decisions and get through the Cuban Missile Crisis without a catastrophe.

This paper will use a qualitative method to determine whether the LTA of Kennedy has had a significant effect on the decisions that were made during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the outcomes of events and the prevention of a nuclear war. President Kennedy's score on each of the three dimensions and their underlying traits, and whether these traits/dimensions have had a significant influence on the Cuban Missile crisis will form the guideline of the fourth model. I will do this qualitative analysis with the use of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources such as the letters that have been exchanged between President Kennedy and the Chairman Khrushchev during the crisis, secondary sources who have examined primary sources such as recorded tapes of the ExComm deliberations and other secondary sources which have good insights in the decision making process. Furthermore, I will contrast these findings with the conclusion of Allison and his the conclusions of his models. Lastly, the analysis will form a conclusion whether President Kennedy's leadership style has been of significant influence on the course of events during the Crisis and whether another leader with another leadership style could have influenced the crisis to another direction.

Leadership Trait Model (Model IV)

First dimension: Respecting Constraints

President Kennedy's average score (tending towards low) on the belief that he could control events led him to order a meeting between diplomats, U.S. military and politicians (ExComm), immediately after he was informed by McGeorge Bundy about the photographs of the missiles in Cuba (Schier, 2008, p. 7). It is interesting to note that his average score reflects his interest in the policy-making process and his active approach, yet the tendency towards low is reflected in his willingness to delegate authority by forming the ExComm (Post, 2005, p. 189). This committee has been a major influence on the crisis as it turns out now. While the President's initial reaction during the debates of the first day was a surgical airstrike, by the third day this option was moved to the background after intensive deliberations. George Bal, under secretary of state, had commented that such an attack would be very similar to the U.S. surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and also an act not expected from the United States. This concern opened the way to develop another strategy, one in which the United States would gain more time to reflect and therefore giving other nations the chance to decide whether they support the United States in this crisis. By letting the President publicly announce the findings about the missiles in Cuba, and in the meantime, forming a quarantine in order to prevent the import of further missiles (May, 2013). In contrast, if Kennedy would have believed that he alone was able to control events, it is not likely that he would have taken the many opinions and advises into account, or he might not even have made the group at all. Since leaders who strongly believe they can control events are 'less prone to compromise or to work out a deal with others. Once they decide, they know what should be done' (Post, 2005, 189).

The ExComm's role was advisory and therefore not obligatory for the president to follow the advices, given that; it is remarkable that in reality the ExComm's deliberations strongly influenced and 'actually shaped Kennedy's perceptions and ultimate decisions' (Gibson, 2012, p. 364). When most of his advisers choose for the quarantine as the first move, Kennedy selected that. When the blockade was put into action and the question about letting ships go through came across, most of the members favored to do so and that is what happened. At each stage Kennedy followed the conversations and the outcomes and decided upon that (Gibson, 2011, p. 365). After assessing the leadership profile of president Kennedy it is not surprising that he was willing to make decisions based on group consensus and it

perfectly reflects his trait of low need for power. Leaders with a low need for power, 'have less need to be in charge; they can be one among several who have influence' (Post, 2005, p. 191). Such leaders do not mind if others receive credits and 'they are willing to sacrifice their own interest for those of the group' (ibid). Also, a low need for power comes together with a sense of goal clarity, a relationship build on trust and a shared responsibility and accountability for the consequences. The creation of the ExComm was a good move of the president because it was able to form six major categories of action and each actions possible consequences and restraints (Allison, 1969, p. 696). The intense deliberations and actions of the ExComm have had a good result since the crisis did not escalate into war. Had the president been high in the need for power, the situation could have escalated. Leaders who are high in need for power push the limits and are willing to bargain for what they want until the last moment. However, for such leaders it is highly important to do these negotiation's face-to-face in order to be able to judge how far they can go and sensing the ideas and assumptions of the other leader (Post, 2005, p. 191). In the case of the Cuban Missile Crisis, its short period of time and its need for immediate response, it is not likely that the president of the United States could have had face-to-face negotiations with the Chairman of the Soviet Union. For this reason, President Kennedy's low need for power may have been of strong influence of the decided forms of action during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

If we look at these deliberations of the ExComm, Allison's Model III which was mostly about the decision and policy making during the CMS, concludes on the one hand that the ultimate decision lay in the hands of the President, yet concludes that the outcomes are resultants, and therefore were unintended by any of the actors involved. In other words, the actors do not decide but these decisions form themselves during the bargaining process. Following this logic, one can conclude that the president did not intend the choice of the blockade. However, Allison fails to explain what the favorable choice of the president was and second, the bargaining process even lacks in his statement (Bendor & Hammond, 1992, p. 316).

Second dimension: Openness to information

This dimension is largely based on whether the trait Conceptual Complexity is higher or equally as high as the trait self-confidence. This will determine the openness or closeness towards information. Since President Kennedy had a high conceptual complexity and an average self-confidence, he was open towards information. As explained above with the creation of the ExComm, the president sought a 'variety of perspectives through which to organize the situation in which they find themselves' which is an important aspect of leaders who are high in conceptual complexity. These kind of leaders are flexible and involve many actors in the decision making process (Post, 2005, p. 196).

In practice, this trait made president Kennedy more open to the ideas and point of views of others and open and reactive to the demands of others. President Kennedy received a private letter of Khrushchev on October 26, in which the Chairman offered to withdraw the missiles if the United States would not attack Cuba, (Blight et al, 2012, pp. 134-138). However, before discussing this offer, the ExComm received another offer the next day, this time publicly announced through the radio in which Khrushchev offered the withdraw of the Soviet missiles on Cuba if the United States would do the same with their missiles in Turkey. While the ExComm team choose to only react on the private letter, President Kennedy refused to do so. He was aware that the Chairman would not be satisfied with only meeting his first offer now that he did his publicly announced second offer. Therefore he sent a private letter to Khrushchev in which he offered to take his missiles of Turkey on the condition that he would not make this part of the deal public. Khrushchev agreed and by the month of December 1962 all the offensive weapons were taken out of Cuba (Dobbs, 2008). This reflects his open and pragmatic response to the interest of Khrushchev, and he was therefore able to react in way that would fit the situational cues and in an acceptable manner under the conditions of that moment (Post, 2005, p. 192).

'The second Khrushchev message provoked furious debate. With Ball in the lead, Kennedy's advisers said almost unanimously that Khrushchev's new condition was unacceptable. America's NATO allies would think the United States was sacrificing their security for the sake of its own. Kennedy alone seemed unconvinced. When Ball said, 'If we talked to the Turks... this would be an extremely unsettling business', Kennedy replied with asperity, 'Well, this is unsettling now, George, because ... most people would regard this as not an unreasonable proposal ... I think you're going to have it very difficult to explain why we are going to take hostile military action in

Cuba ... when he's saying, "If you'll get yours out of Turkey, we'll get ours out of Cuba.'

(May, 2013, BBC)

If Kennedy would not have been open to contextual information, he probably would have agreed with the ExComm to accept the first offer only. Ignoring Khrushchev's offer in front of the watchful eyes of the world in an era of Cold War between the two, this would have been an highly provocative act. We cannot predict exactly what Khrushchev's response would be in that case, but if these circumstances lead to the outcome we know today, it is highly assumable that other decisions would have led to other results.

Thus Kennedy was able to base his decision on the circumstances of the opponent as well as maintaining the image of the United States while meeting the conditions of Khrushchev's offer's. In the first model of Allison, the Rational Actor Model, the rationality of the actor is based on a single-time-period model. While it is understandable that such a model suits crises, Bendor and Hammond (1992) argue that the consequences of decisions are spread over long periods of time. And indeed, Kennedy based his decisions on future based relations of trust between the United States and the NATO, and therefore asked the Chairman to not make some parts of the deal public. Allison's models fail to incorporate multiple time periods in the rational choice model and also problems of uncertainty (Gibson, 2011, p. 306).

Third dimension: motivation towards world and motivation for seeking office

Because he focused on both problem solving and maintaining relationships, he was able to foresee the consequences on his people instead of only focusing on solving the problem. Furthermore, when his brother and closest confidant Robert Kennedy, came forward with his arguments against the airstrike on moral grounds, 'struck a chord in the President' (Allison, 1969, p. 715). This also reveals the relationship building focus of the president, which made him impressionable by his environment.

According to Gibson (2012) and his linguistic analysis of the recorded deliberations at the ExComm, it were certainly his advisors who influenced President Kennedy and his decisions during the crisis. However, in contrast to Allison's Rational Actor model and its assumptions about rationality, most decisions were not rational at all. This was due to the fact that reaching consensus (relationship focus) within the ExComm was a more important need for the members than actually calculating the risks. Furthermore, the deliberations were structured in a way that the members preferred to say something that could be relevant to what was said last and whose turn it was to talk, rather than actively comparing the consequences of each of the course of action (Gibson, 2012). From this evidence of the publicized recordings of the ExComm meetings during the CMC it is clear that the president's average score on the trait of motivation towards solving problems and maintaining relationships is represented accordingly in the way the ExComm meetings were organized. The ExComm's creation and its function to bring the CMC to a good end (problem solving) was as much important as maintaining a good ambiance in the office between the ExComm members (relationship focus).

However, it as it has turned out afterwards, the high need for reaching consensus within the group resulted in the fact that a warhead-laden ship named Aleksandrovsk was able to reach Cuba one day before there was a consensus about the blockade (Gibson, 2012). If the blockade had been put into action one day earlier it would might have come to another path of historic events because the Aleksandrovsk was given the instruction to rather sink itself than to be boarded by the Americans. Thus if the president would have had a high score on the trait of task focus, he probably would have made the decision much quicker without reaching consensus which could have resulted in a much less peaceful course of events after. Thus, despite the rigidity of the consensus, in general it turned out to work in the advantage of Kennedy.

Moreover, Kennedy has both a low score on the traits In-group Bias and Distrusts of Others which determine his motivation towards the world. Leaders such as him are aware that 'their own country has to deal with some constraints that limit what one can do and call for flexibility of response and they perceive conflicts as context-specific and deal with them on a case-by-case basis' (Hermann, 2005). Kennedy had told his colleagues that the Soviet missiles would only be gotten out by trading a deal with the Soviet Union or invading Cuba. However, the problem was that the United States' willingness to bargain with the Soviet Union could put the credibility of its commitment to the NATO in question. The placement of these missiles in Turkey was a commitment from the Americans to the NATO in the first place. Kennedy knew this and this is why he went over to the secret deal, while stating in public that a deal was only wanted by his Democratic rival, Adlai Stevenson (May & Zelikow, 1997). How President Kennedy handled this situation is reflecting his way of dealing with constraints (credibility to the NATO) on the one side and his flexible and creative response to this situation (making a deal with the Soviet Chairman in private). This approach of Kennedy reflects many other traits of him as well. His average belief that he can control events and his self-confidence have helped him through making this decision despite the possible consequences of the leaking out of this deal to his reliability.

Lastly, it is clear that the Leadership Style of Kennedy formed the base of the way that decisions were made, the decisions themselves and the way consequences of those decisions were received by the president and his team. The models of Allison have their shortcomings but the greatest shortcoming is the lack of an actor-centric approach in particular that of President Kennedy.

7 Conclusion

This thesis approached the Cuban Missile Crisis from different angles. The three Models of Allison have tried to analyze the crisis each from a different point of view such as a rational policy, organizational process, and bureaucratic politics. Each of these approaches have added a new dimension to the outcome of the crisis and the events that led up to that outcome, although Allison was clear from the beginning that the Rational Actor model explained the CMC most clearly. However, each of the models had their shortcomings as well and the greatest was the lack of the actor centric approach. For this reason, I have implemented a fourth model to describe the importance of certain leadership traits by its effects on policy, an important aspect of the Cuban Missile Crisis which Allison failed to implement in his models. In the case of the Cuban Missile Crisis, it is clear that the leadership style of Kennedy was an important factor of the outcome of the crisis. His openness towards information and the pragmatic approach made him consider other important aspects before acting. His low need for power led him to form the ExComm which helped him through the stressful moments in which he had to make decisions who each could have fatal consequences, all in front of the eyes of the world. While we will never be able to know precisely what might have happened if different decisions would have been made, it is possible to connect certain leadership traits with certain approaches to constraints, problems and people. In this light, I have connected the leadership traits of President Kennedy with his actions during the crisis and I can conclude that his balance between problem and relationship focus, his openness to information, and his overall Leadership Style have led to the outcome we know today. There is a high probability that a leader with other Leadership Traits would not have made the exact same decisions, resulting in another course of events and another move by the Soviet Union, which may have not ended with a sigh of relief.

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Appendix

Interviews and speeches with a total of 88.750 words have been analyzed through Profiler Plus Version 7.3.2.

	Interviews	Speeches	Total
Amount of documents	15	44	59
Amount of words	12.950	75.700	88.650

Year	Interview	Speech
1942		1
1945		1
1946		1
1947		1
1948		1
1949		1
1950		1
1951	1	1
1952		1
1953		1
1954	1	1
1955		1
1956		1
1957		1
1958		1
1959		1
1960	2	3
1961	3	11
1962	3	4
1963	5	9

Total	15	44
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Interview Topics	Amount of times
Corruption	1
Humanitarian Service	1
Unemployment	1
International Relations	3
Cold War (Soviet Union)	3
Domestic Politics	5

Speech Topics	Amount of times
Domestic Politics	22
University Speeches	4
Nuclear Weapons	2
Communism	2
Cold War	6
International Relations	7

TABLE 8.6. POTENTIAL COMPARISON GROUPS

Personality Trait	87 Heads of State	122 Political Leaders
Belief can control events	Mean = .44	Mean = .45
	Low < .30	Low < .33
	High > .58	High > .57
Need for power	Mean = .50	Mean = .50
	Low < .37	Low < .38
	High > .62	High > .62
Self-confidence	Mean = .62	Mean = .57
	Low < .44	Low < .34
	High > .81	High > .80
Conceptual complexity	Mean = .44	Mean = .45
	Low < .32	Low < .32
	High > .56	High > .58
Task focus	Mean = .59	Mean = .62
	Low < .46	Low < .48
	High > .71	High > .76
In-group bias	Mean = .42	Mean = .43
	Low < .32	Low < .34
	High > .53	High > .53
Distrust of others	Mean = .41	Mean = .38
	Low < .25	Low < .20
	High > .56	High > .56

Hermann, M.G. (2005). Assessing leadership style: A trait analysis. In J.M. Post (ed), *The psychological assessment of political leaders* (178-212). Michigan: University of Michigan.