


9-2008

The Political Personality of 2008 Republican Presidential Nominee John McCain

Aubrey Immelman

St. John's University / College of St. Benedict, aimmelman@csbsju.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs

 Part of the [American Politics Commons](#), [Leadership Studies Commons](#), [Military and Veterans Studies Commons](#), [Other Political Science Commons](#), [Other Psychology Commons](#), and the [Personality and Social Contexts Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Immelman, A. (2008, September). *The political personality of 2008 Republican presidential nominee John McCain* (Research report). Collegeville and St. Joseph, MN: St. John's University and the College of St. Benedict, Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics. Retrieved from Digital Commons website: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/115/

**THE POLITICAL PERSONALITY
OF 2008 REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE
JOHN MCCAIN**

Aubrey Immelman

Department of Psychology
Saint John's University

Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics
College of Saint Benedict
St. Joseph, MN 56374
Telephone: (320) 363-5481
E-mail: aimmelman@csbsju.edu

Research report¹
September 2008

¹ Adapted from "The Political Personalities of 2008 Republican Presidential Contenders John McCain and Rudy Giuliani," paper presented at the Thirtieth Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology, Portland, Oregon, July 4-7, 2007.

Abstract

The Political Personality of 2008 Republican Presidential Nominee John McCain

Aubrey Immelman
Saint John's University
College of Saint Benedict
St. Joseph, MN 56374, U.S.A.
Unit for the Study of Personality in Politics
<http://personality-politics.org/>

This paper presents the results of an indirect assessment of the personality of Arizona senator John McCain, Republican nominee in the 2008 U.S. presidential election, from the conceptual perspective of personologist Theodore Millon.

Psychodiagnostically relevant data regarding Sen. McCain was extracted from biographical sources and published reports and synthesized into a personality profile using the second edition of the Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria (MIDC), which yields 34 normal and maladaptive personality classifications congruent with Axis II of *DSM-IV*.

The personality profile yielded by the MIDC was analyzed on the basis of interpretive guidelines provided in the MIDC manual. McCain's primary personality pattern was found to be Dauntless/dissenting, with secondary features of the Outgoing/gregarious and Dominant/controlling patterns.

The combination of Dauntless and Outgoing patterns in McCain's profile suggests a *risk-taking adventurer* personality composite. Leaders with this personality prototype are characteristically bold, fearless, sensation seeking, and driven by a need to prove their mettle.

McCain's major personality strengths in a leadership role are the important personality-based political skills of independence, persuasiveness, and courage, coupled with a socially responsive, outgoing tendency that can be instrumental in connecting with critical constituencies for mobilizing support and implementing policy proposals. His major personality-based limitation is a predisposition to impulsiveness, one manifestation of which is a deficit of emotional restraint.

The major implication of the study is that it offers an empirically based personological framework for anticipating McCain's leadership style as chief executive, thus providing a basis for inferring the character and tenor of a prospective McCain presidency.

Introduction

This paper reports the results of psychodiagnostic case study of John Sidney McCain III, Republican nominee in the 2008 U.S. presidential election. Data collection was conducted in fall 1999, during Sen. McCain's campaign for the Republican nomination in the 2000 U.S. presidential election.

Conceptually, the study is informed by Theodore Millon's model of personality (1969, 1986a, 1986b, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1996, 2003; Millon & Davis, 2000; Millon & Everly, 1985) as adapted (Immelman, 1993, 1998, 2002, 2003) for the study of personality in politics.

I employ the terms *personality* and *politics* in Fred Greenstein's (1992) narrowly construed sense. Politics, by this definition, "refers to the politics most often studied by political scientists — that of civil government and of the extra-governmental processes that more or less directly impinge upon government, such as political parties" and campaigns. Personality, as narrowly construed in political psychology, "excludes political attitudes and opinions ... and applies only to nonpolitical personal differences" (p. 107).

Personality may be concisely defined as:

a complex pattern of deeply embedded psychological characteristics that are largely nonconscious and not easily altered, expressing themselves automatically in almost every facet of functioning. Intrinsic and pervasive, these traits emerge from a complicated matrix of biological dispositions and experiential learnings, and ultimately comprise the individual's distinctive pattern of perceiving, feeling, thinking, coping, and behaving. (Millon, 1996, p. 4)

Greenstein (1992) makes a compelling case for studying personality in government and politics: "Political institutions and processes operate through human agency. It would be remarkable if they were *not* influenced by the properties that distinguish one individual from another" (p. 124).

That perspective provides the context for the current paper, which presents an analysis of the personality of John McCain and examines the political implications of his respective personality profiles with respect to presidential leadership and executive performance.

The methodology employed in this study involves the construction of a theoretically grounded personality profile derived from empirical analysis of biographical source materials (see Immelman, 1999, 2003, 2005).

A comprehensive review of Millon's personological model and its applicability to political personality has been provided elsewhere (e.g., Immelman, 1993, 2003, 2005). Briefly, Millon's model encompasses eight attribute domains: expressive behavior, interpersonal conduct, cognitive style, mood/temperament, self-image, regulatory mechanisms, object representations, and morphologic organization (see Table 1).

Table 1
Millon's Eight Attribute Domains

Attribute	Description
Expressive behavior	The individual's characteristic behavior; how the individual typically appears to others; what the individual knowingly or unknowingly reveals about him- or herself; what the individual wishes others to think or to know about him or her.
Interpersonal conduct	How the individual typically interacts with others; the attitudes that underlie, prompt, and give shape to these actions; the methods by which the individual engages others to meet his or her needs; how the individual copes with social tensions and conflicts.
Cognitive style	How the individual focuses and allocates attention, encodes and processes information, organizes thoughts, makes attributions, and communicates reactions and ideas to others.
Mood/temperament	How the individual typically displays emotion; the predominant character of an individual's affect and the intensity and frequency with which he or she expresses it.
Self-image	The individual's perception of self-as-object or the manner in which the individual overtly describes him- or herself.
Regulatory mechanisms	The individual's characteristic mechanisms of self-protection, need gratification, and conflict resolution.
Object representations	The inner imprint left by the individual's significant early experiences with others; the structural residue of significant past experiences, composed of memories, attitudes, and affects that underlie the individual's perceptions of and reactions to ongoing events and serves as a substrate of dispositions for perceiving and reacting to life's ongoing events.
Morphologic organization	The overall architecture that serves as a framework for the individual's psychic interior; the structural strength, interior congruity, and functional efficacy of the personality system (i.e., ego strength).

Note. From *Disorders of Personality: DSM-IV and Beyond* (pp. 141–146) by T. Millon, 1996, New York: Wiley; *Toward a New Personology: An Evolutionary Model* (chapter 5) by T. Millon, 1990, New York: Wiley; and *Personality and Its Disorders: A Biosocial Learning Approach* (p. 32) by T. Millon and G. S. Everly, Jr., 1985, New York: Wiley. Copyright © 1996, © 1990, © 1985 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Adapted by permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and Theodore Millon.

Method

Materials

The materials consisted of biographical sources and the personality inventory employed to systematize and synthesize diagnostically relevant information collected from the literature on John McCain.

Sources of data. Diagnostic information pertaining to John McCain was collected from his campaign biography, *Faith of My Fathers* (McCain, 1999); Robert Timberg's generally admiring biography, *John McCain: An American Odyssey* (1999); and several news media reports selected to shed light on McCain's allegedly volatile temper (Altman, 1999; Berke, 1999; Lawrence, 1999; Matthews, 1999; McCain's temper, 1999).

Personality inventory. The assessment instrument, the second edition of the Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria (MIDC; Immelman & Steinberg, 1999), was compiled and adapted from Millon's (1969, 1986b; 1990, 1996; Millon & Everly, 1985) prototypical features and diagnostic criteria for normal personality styles and their pathological variants. Information concerning the construction, administration, scoring, and interpretation of the MIDC is provided in the Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria manual (Immelman, 1999).² The 12-scale (see Table 2) instrument taps the first five "noninferential" (Millon, 1990, p. 157) attribute domains previously listed in Table 1.

The 12 MIDC scales correspond to major personality patterns posited by Millon (1994, 1996), which are congruent with the syndromes described on Axis II of the fourth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)* of the American Psychiatric Association (APA; 1994) and coordinated with the normal personality styles in which these disorders are rooted, as described by Millon and Everly (1985), Millon (1994), Oldham and Morris (1995), and Strack (1997). Scales 1 through 8 (comprising 10 scales and subscales) have three gradations (a, b, c) yielding 30 personality variants, whereas Scales 9 and 0 have two gradations (d, e) yielding four variants, for a total of 34 personality designations, or types. Table 2 displays the full taxonomy.

² Inventory and manual available to qualified professionals upon request.

Table 2
Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria: Scales and Gradations

Scale 1A:	Dominant pattern a. Asserting b. Controlling c. Aggressive (Sadistic; <i>DSM-III-R</i> , Appendix A)
Scale 1B:	Dauntless pattern a. Adventurous b. Dissenting c. Aggrandizing (Antisocial; <i>DSM-IV</i> , 301.7)
Scale 2:	Ambitious pattern a. Confident b. Self-serving c. Exploitative (Narcissistic; <i>DSM-IV</i> , 301.81)
Scale 3:	Outgoing pattern a. Congenial b. Gregarious c. Impulsive (Histrionic; <i>DSM-IV</i> , 301.50)
Scale 4:	Accommodating pattern a. Cooperative b. Agreeable c. Submissive (Dependent; <i>DSM-IV</i> , 301.6)
Scale 5A:	Aggrieved pattern a. Unpresuming b. Self-denying c. Self-defeating (<i>DSM-III-R</i> , Appendix A)
Scale 5B:	Contentious pattern a. Resolute b. Oppositional c. Negativistic (Passive-aggressive; <i>DSM-III-R</i> , 301.84)
Scale 6:	Conscientious pattern a. Respectful b. Dutiful c. Compulsive (Obsessive-compulsive; <i>DSM-IV</i> , 301.4)
Scale 7:	Reticent pattern a. Circumspect b. Inhibited c. Withdrawn (Avoidant; <i>DSM-IV</i> , 301.82)
Scale 8:	Retiring pattern a. Reserved b. Aloof c. Solitary (Schizoid; <i>DSM-IV</i> , 301.20)
Scale 9:	Distrusting pattern d. Suspicious e. Paranoid (<i>DSM-IV</i> , 301.0)
Scale 0:	Erratic pattern d. Unstable e. Borderline (<i>DSM-IV</i> , 301.83)

Note. Equivalent *DSM* terminology and codes are specified in parentheses.

Diagnostic Procedure

The diagnostic procedure, termed *psychodiagnostic meta-analysis*, can be conceptualized as a three-part process: first, an *analysis* phase (data collection) during which source materials are reviewed and analyzed to extract and code diagnostically relevant content; second, a *synthesis* phase (scoring and interpretation) during which the unifying framework provided by the MIDC prototypal features, keyed for attribute domain and personality pattern, is employed to classify the diagnostically relevant information extracted in phase 1; and finally, an *evaluation* phase (inference) during which theoretically grounded descriptions, explanations, inferences, and predictions are extrapolated from Millon's theory of personality based on the personality profile constructed in phase 2 (see Immelman, 1999, 2003, 2005, for a more extensive account of the procedure).

Results

The analysis of the data includes a summary of descriptive statistics yielded by the MIDC scoring procedure, the MIDC profile for John McCain, diagnostic classification of the subject, and the clinical interpretation of significant MIDC scale elevations derived from the diagnostic procedure.

McCain received 30 endorsements on the 170-item MIDC. Judging from endorsement rates below the mean, the domains of mood/temperament and cognitive style were the most difficult to gauge. The assessment of cognitive style in particular relies substantially on inference, a difficult task when appraising a subject at a distance. As might be expected, the more directly observable domain of expressive behavior yielded an endorsement frequency above the mean, as — more atypically — did self-image.

Descriptive statistics for McCain's MIDC ratings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
MIDC Item Endorsement Rate by Attribute Domain

Expressive behavior	8
Interpersonal conduct	6
Cognitive style	5
Mood/temperament	4
Self-image	7
Sum	30
Mean	6.0
Standard deviation	1.4

McCain's MIDC scale scores are reported in Table 4. The same data are presented graphically in the profile depicted in Figure 1.

Table 4
MIDC Scale Scores for John McCain

Scale	Personality pattern	Raw	RT%
1A	Dominant: Asserting–Controlling–Aggressive	10	23.8
1B	Dauntless: Adventurous–Dissenting–Aggrandizing	16	38.1
2	Ambitious: Confident–Self-serving–Exploitative	5	11.9
3	Outgoing: Congenial–Gregarious–Impulsive	11	26.2
4	Accommodating: Cooperative–Agreeable–Submissive	0	0.0
5A	Aggrieved: Unpresuming–Self-denying–Self-defeating	0	0.0
5B	Contentious: Resolute–Oppositional–Negativistic	0	0.0
6	Conscientious: Respectful–Dutiful–Compulsive	0	0.0
7	Reticent: Circumspect–Inhibited–Withdrawn	0	0.0
8	Retiring: Reserved–Aloof–Solitary	0	0.0
	Subtotal for basic personality scales	42	100
9	Distrusting: Suspicious–Paranoid	0	0.0
0	Erratic: Unstable–Borderline	0	0.0
	Full-scale total	42	100.0

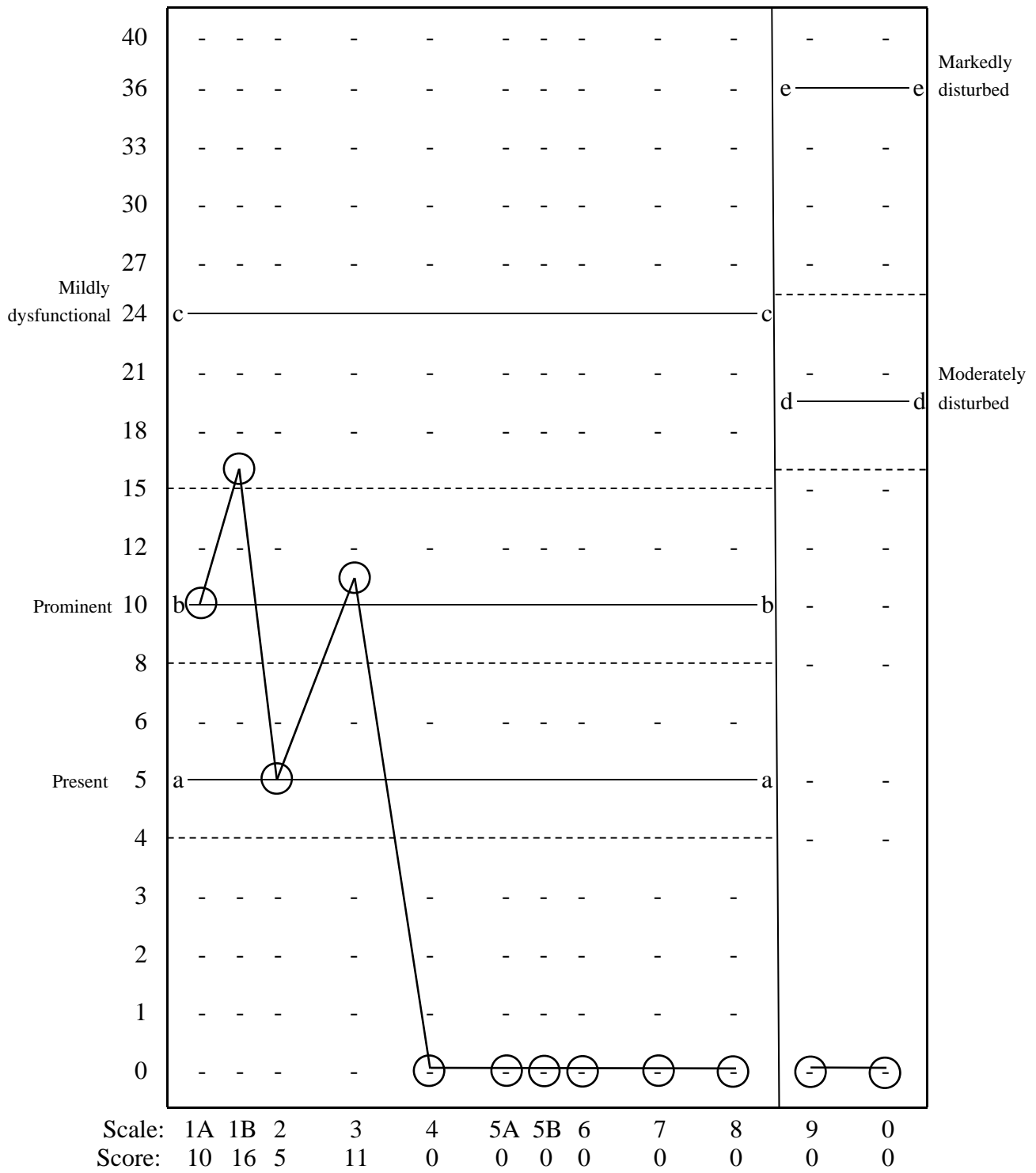
Note. For Scales 1–8, ratio-transformed (RT%) scores are the scores for each scale expressed as a percentage of the sum of raw scores for the ten basic scales only. For Scales 9 and 0, ratio-transformed scores are scores expressed as a percentage of the sum of raw scores for all twelve MIDC scales (therefore, full-scale RT% totals can exceed 100). Personality patterns are enumerated with scale gradations.

The MIDC profile yielded by McCain’s raw scores is displayed in Figure 1.³ McCain’s most elevated scale, with a score of 16, is Scale 1B (Dauntless), followed by Scale 3 (Outgoing), with a score of 11, and Scale 1A (Dominant), with a score of 10. The primary Scale 1B elevation is well within the *prominent* (10–23) range and the two secondary elevations (Scales 3 and 1A) are just within this range. The only additional scale elevation of psychodiagnostic significance is the score of 5 on Scale 2 (Ambitious), which is at the lower threshold of the *present* (5–9) range. The scale score for all other scales was 0, which is unusual. McCain seems to have a relatively clear-cut personality configuration.

Based on the cut-off score guidelines provided in the MIDC manual, all of McCain’s scale elevations (see Figure 1) are within normal limits, though Scale 1B (Dauntless), Scale 3 (Outgoing), and Scale 1A (Dominant) were moderately elevated, in the *prominent* range.

³ See Table 2 for scale names. Solid horizontal lines on the profile form signify cut-off scores between adjacent scale gradations. For Scales 1–8, scores of 5 through 9 signify the *presence* (gradation *a*) of the personality pattern in question; scores of 10 through 23 indicate a *prominent* (gradation *b*) variant; and scores of 24 to 30 indicate an exaggerated, *mildly dysfunctional* (gradation *c*) variation of the pattern. For Scales 9 and 0, scores of 20 through 35 indicate a *moderately disturbed* syndrome and scores of 36 through 45 a *markedly disturbed* syndrome.

Figure 1. Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria: Profile for John McCain



In terms of MIDC scale gradation (see Table 2 and Figure 1) criteria, McCain was classified as a Dauntless/dissenting (Scale 1B) personality, with secondary features of the Outgoing/gregarious (Scale 3) and Dominant/controlling (Scale 1A) patterns.⁴ He also has an Ambitious/confident tendency, though this is a peripheral feature of his personality.

Discussion

The discussion of the results examines John McCain's MIDC scale elevations from the perspective of Millon's (1994, 1996; Millon & Davis, 2000) model of personality, supplemented by the theoretically congruent portraits of Oldham and Morris (1995) and Strack (1997). The discussion concludes with a brief synthesis of the practical implications of McCain's personality profile.

With his elevated Scale 1B, McCain emerged from the assessment as a clearly *dissenting* type, an adaptive, slightly exaggerated variant of the Dauntless pattern. The interpretation of McCain's profile must also account for secondary elevations on Scale 3 (Outgoing) and Scale 1A (Dominant).

Scale 1B: The Dauntless Pattern

The Dauntless pattern, as do all personality patterns, occurs on a continuum ranging from normal to maladaptive. At the well-adjusted pole are individualistic, daring, adventurous personalities.⁵ Exaggerated Dauntless features occur in somewhat unconscientious, risk-taking, dissenting personalities.⁶ In its most deeply ingrained, inflexible form, the Dauntless pattern displays itself in reckless, irresponsible, self-aggrandizing behavior patterns that may be consistent with a clinical diagnosis of antisocial personality disorder.⁷

Normal, adaptive variants of the Dauntless pattern (i.e., adventurous and dissenting types) are congruent with Oldham and Morris's (1995) *Adventurous* style, Millon's (1994) *Dissenting* pattern, and the low pole of Simonton's (1988) *interpersonal* executive leadership style. Theoretically, the normal, adaptive variant of the Dauntless pattern incorporates facets of the five-factor model's *Extraversion* factor and the low pole of its *Agreeableness* factor; however, the Dissenting scale of the Millon Index of Personality Styles (Millon, 1994) is uncorrelated with the NEO Personality Inventory's (Costa & McCrae, 1985) *Extraversion* factor, though — as expected — this scale is negatively correlated with its *Agreeableness* factor. In addition, the Dissenting pattern is moderately correlated with the NEO Personality Inventory's *Neuroticism* factor, has a small negative correlation with its *Conscientiousness* factor, and is uncorrelated with its *Openness to Experience* factor (see Millon, 1994, p. 82). The Dauntless pattern, as

⁴ In each case the label preceding the slash signifies the categorical personality pattern, whereas the label following the slash indicates the specific scale gradation, or personality type, on the dimensional continuum; see Table 2.

⁵ Relevant to John McCain.

⁶ Some of these exaggerated features have featured prominently throughout McCain's life course; however, it is common for these traits to become attenuated by middle adulthood (see APA, 1994, p. 648).

⁷ Not applicable to John McCain.

conceptualized in the MIDC, is congruent with the low poles of Simonton's (1988) *deliberative* and *interpersonal* leadership styles and incorporates elements of his *neurotic* and *charismatic* styles.

According to Oldham and Morris (1995, pp. 227–228), the following eight traits and behaviors are reliable clues to the presence of an Adventurous style:

1. *Nonconformity*. Live by their own internal code of values; not strongly influenced by the norms of society.
2. *Challenge*. Routinely engage in high-risk activities.
3. *Mutual independence*. Not overly concerned about others; expect each individual to be responsible for him- or herself.
4. *Persuasiveness*. “Silver-tongued” charmers talented in the art of social influence.
5. *Wanderlust*. Like to keep moving; live by their talents, skills, ingenuity, and wits.
6. *Wild oats*. History of childhood and adolescent mischief and hell-raising.
7. *True grit*. Courageous, physically bold, and tough.
8. *No regrets*. Live in the present; little guilt about the past or anxiety about the future.

Oldham and Morris (1995) provide the following description of the *Adventurous* style:

[People] with this personality style venture where most mortals fear to tread. ... They live on the edge, challenging boundaries and restrictions, pitting themselves for better or for worse in a thrilling game against their own mortality. No risk, no reward, they say. Indeed, for people with the Adventurous personality style, the risk is the reward. (p. 227)

Ultimately, adventurous types “are fundamentally out for themselves” (Oldham & Morris, 1995, p. 228); they “do not need others to fuel their self-esteem or to provide purpose to their lives, and they don’t make sacrifices for other people, at least not easily” (p. 229). Furthermore, they believe in themselves and do not require anyone’s approval; they have “a definite sense of what is right or wrong for them, and if something is important to them, they’ll do it no matter what anyone thinks” (p. 229). This may be one of McCain’s political strengths, because career politicians are usually socialized or at least conditioned to be responsive to public and peer approval. Despite their self-orientation, adventurous people are capable of advancing a cause incidentally in the service of their personal desires or ambition; but, fundamentally, what matters is the momentary excitement, emotional vitality, or sense of aliveness that they experience, not love of person, country, or cause (p. 229).

Technically, Oldham and Morris’s Adventurous style appears to be a more adaptive variant of Millon’s “risk-taking psychopath,” a composite of his aggrandizing (antisocial) and gregarious (histrionic) personality patterns (see Millon, 1996, p. 452; Millon & Davis, 1998, p. 164; Millon & Davis, 2000, pp. 111–112). Notably, these two patterns, though in attenuated, socially adaptive form, represent McCain’s predominant MIDC elevations.

Millon (1994), who uses the term *Dissenting* as a label for the normal, adaptive variant of the aggrandizing, antisocial pattern, asserts that these individuals tend to “flout tradition,” “act in a notably autonomous fashion,” “are not social-minded,” and “are not inclined to adhere to conventional standards, cultural mores, and organizational regulations” (p. 32). They are

unconventional persons who seek to do things their own way and are willing to take the consequences for doing so. They act as they see fit regardless of how others judge them. Inclined at times to elaborate on or shade the truth, as well as ride close to the edge of the law, they are not conscientious — that is, they do not assume customary responsibilities. Rather, they frequently assert that too many rules stand in the way of people who wish to be free and inventive, and that they prefer to think and act in an independent and often creative way. Many believe that persons in authority are too hard on people who don't conform. Dissenters dislike following the same routine day after day and, at times, act impulsively and irresponsibly. They will do what they want or believe to be best without much concern for the effects of their actions on others. Being skeptical about the motives of most people, and refusing to be fettered or coerced, they exhibit a strong need for autonomy and self-determination. (p. 33)

Millon's description⁸ provides theoretical underpinnings for the widespread perception of McCain as a "maverick." Moreover, the *DSM-IV* description of antisocial personalities as being "excessively opinionated, self-assured, or cocky" (APA, 1994, p. 646) is not far removed from biographical accounts of the young John McCain as a Naval Academy cadet and naval aviator.

Although the Adventurous (Oldham & Morris, 1995) and Dissenting (Millon, 1994) personality styles are adaptive variants of antisocial personality disorder, it should be noted that antisocial-spectrum personality patterns commonly become less pervasive, intrusive, and maladaptive by early middle age. According to *DSM-IV*, "Antisocial Personality Disorder has a chronic course but may become less evident or remit as the individual grows older, particularly in the fourth decade of life" (APA, 1994, p. 648).

Millon (1996), in examining the developmental background of these so-called "socially sublimated antisocials" (p. 462), asserts that their experiential history often is characterized by secondary status in the family. He writes:

It is not only in socially underprivileged families or underclass communities that we see the emergence of antisocial individuals. The key problem for all has been their failure to experience the feeling of being treated fairly and having been viewed as a person/child of value in the family context. Such situations occur in many middle- and upper-middle class families. (p. 462)

The circumstances of John McCain's itinerant youth and absent father (a naval officer) may both have played a part in the emergence of these dynamics.

Millon and Davis (2000) specifically address the relevance of the Dauntless pattern to leadership — notably the intermediate range of the continuum, where normality shades into the more aggrandizing variant of this pattern. They suggest that within this range "we find persons [e.g., successful industrialists, entrepreneurs, and corporate executives] who have never come into conflict with the law, but only because they are very effective in covering their tracks":

⁸ All Millon 1994 citations in this report refer to the Manual of the *Millon Index of Personality Styles* (MIPS). Copyright © 1994 by Dicandrien, Inc. "MIPS" is a trademark of The Psychological Corporation registered in the United States of America and/or other jurisdictions. Reproduced by permission of the publisher, The Psychological Corporation, a Harcourt Assessment Company. All rights reserved.

For many politicians, the deception of doublespeak is a talent necessary for survival. Skirting the edge of deceitfulness, they “spin” objective events by minimizing negatives and exaggerating positives. When cornered, they focus attention on mitigating circumstances and lie by omission by failing to report the total circumstances and full motives of their actions. Moreover, they deliberately create public policy so complex that any particular aspect might be singled out to impress the special interest of the moment. (p. 107)

Millon’s personality patterns have well-established diagnostic indicators associated with each of the eight attribute domains of expressive behavior, interpersonal conduct, cognitive style, mood/temperament, self-image, regulatory mechanisms, object-representations, and morphologic organization. The diagnostic features of the Dauntless pattern with respect to each of these domains are summarized below. Because of the clinical emphasis of his model, Millon’s (1996) attribute domains accentuate the maladaptive range of the personality patterns in his taxonomy — in the case of the Dauntless pattern, the aggrandizing pole of the adventurous–dissenting–aggrandizing continuum. The “normalized” (i.e., de-pathologized; cf. Millon & Davis, 2000, pp. 107–109) diagnostic features of the Dauntless pattern are summarized below; nonetheless, some of the designated traits may be attenuated or less pronounced, and more adaptive in the case of well-functioning political leaders — especially in cases where dauntlessness constitutes a less elevated or secondary pattern in the leader’s overall personality configuration.

Expressive behavior. Dauntless personalities are typically adventurous, fearless, and daring, attracted to challenge and undeterred by personal risk. They do things their own way and are willing to accept the consequences for doing so. Not surprisingly, they often act hastily and spontaneously, failing to plan ahead or heed consequences, making spur-of-the-moment decisions without carefully considering alternatives. This penchant for shooting from the hip can signify boldness and the courage of one’s convictions as easily as it may constitute shortsighted imprudence and poor judgment. (Millon, 1996, pp. 444–445, 449–450; Millon & Davis, 1998, p. 164)

Interpersonal conduct. Dauntless personalities are rugged individualists, not compromisers or conciliators. They take clear stands on the issues that matter, backed up by the self-confidence and personal skills and talents to prevail. Though generally jovial and convivial, they become confrontational and defiant when obstructed or crossed. (Millon, 1996, pp. 445–446, 449–450; Millon & Davis, 1998, p. 164)

Cognitive style. Dauntless personalities are original, independent-minded, and unconventional. At their best, these personalities are enterprising, innovative, and creative. They are nonconformists first and foremost, disdainful — even contemptuous — of traditional ideals and values. Moreover, Dauntless personalities shirk orthodoxy and typically believe that too many rules stand in the way of freedom. In politics, these individuals may be described as “mavericks.” (Millon, 1996, pp. 446–447, 449–450; Millon & Davis, 1998, p. 164)

Mood/temperament. Dauntless personalities are untroubled and easygoing, but quickly become irritable and aggressive when crossed. They are cool, calm, and collected under pressure, restless and disgruntled when restricted or confined. Tough-minded and unsentimental, they display their feelings openly and directly. (Millon, 1996, pp. 448–449, 449–450; Millon & Davis, 1998, p. 164)

Self-image. Dauntless personalities are self-confident, with a corresponding view of themselves as self-sufficient and autonomous. They pride themselves on their independence, competence, strength, and their ability to prevail without social support, and they expect the same of others (Millon, 1996, pp. 447, 449–450; Millon & Davis, 1998, p. 164)

Regulatory mechanisms. Dauntless personalities are unconstrained. They express their impulses directly, often in rash and precipitous fashion, and generally without regret or remorse. They rarely refashion their thoughts and actions to fit a socially desirable mold. (Millon, 1996, p. 448)

Object representations. Dauntless personalities are driven by restive impulses to discredit established cultural ideals and mores, yet are skilled in arrogating for themselves what material spoils they can garner from society. Though fundamentally driven by self-serving motives, they are capable of incidentally advancing social causes in the service of their own ambition. (Millon, 1996, p. 447)

Morphologic organization. The inner drives and impulses of Dauntless personalities are unruly, recalcitrant, and rebellious, which gives rise to unfettered self-expression, a marked intolerance of delay or frustration, and low thresholds for emotional discharge, particularly those of a hostile nature. (Millon, 1996, p. 448)

Scale 3: The Outgoing Pattern

Few people exhibit personality patterns in “pure” or prototypal form; more often, individual personalities represent a blend of two or more primary orientations. In interpreting McCain’s profile, due consideration must be given to his concurrent elevation on Scale 3 (Outgoing), which modulates his Dauntless pattern. Specifically, McCain’s loading on this scale classifies him as a gregarious type, an adaptive, slightly exaggerated variant the Outgoing pattern.

The Outgoing pattern, as do all personality patterns, occurs on a continuum ranging from normal to maladaptive. At the well-adjusted pole are warm, congenial personalities.⁹ Slightly exaggerated Outgoing features occur in sociable, gregarious personalities.¹⁰ In its most deeply ingrained, inflexible form, extraversion manifests itself in impulsive, self-centered, overdramatizing behavior patterns that may be consistent with a clinical diagnosis of histrionic personality disorder.¹¹

Normal, adaptive variants of the Outgoing pattern (i.e., congenial and gregarious types) correspond to Strack’s (1997) *sociable* style and Millon’s (1994) *Outgoing* pattern. It overlaps with the *cooperative* segment of Leary’s (1957) *cooperative–overconventional* continuum (which is, however, more congruent with the Accommodating pattern). Millon’s Outgoing

⁹ Relevant to John McCain.

¹⁰ Marginally relevant to John McCain.

¹¹ Not applicable to John McCain.

pattern is highly correlated with the five-factor model's *Extraversion* factor, moderately correlated with its *Conscientiousness* and *Openness to Experience* factors, has a moderate negative correlation with its *Neuroticism* factor, and is uncorrelated with its *Agreeableness* factor (see Millon, 1994, p. 82).

In combination with the Ambitious pattern (Scale 2; marginally present in McCain), the Outgoing pattern bears some resemblance to Simonton's (1988) *charismatic* executive leadership style; and in combination with the Accommodating pattern (Scale 4; negligible in McCain's profile), with Simonton's *interpersonal* style.

Chief executives with an elevated Outgoing scale, accompanied by prominent Dauntless (Scale 1B) and Ambitious (Scale 2) patterns and a low score on Scale 6 (Conscientious), as is the case with McCain, may be susceptible to errors of judgment related to "neglect of the role demands of political office, low resistance to corrupting influences, and impulsiveness. ... [as well as] favoring loyalty and friendship over competence-for-the-position in making appointments to high-level public office" (Immelman, 1993, p. 736). However, for McCain, the experience of attending military school, a family history of military service, lessons learned from the "Keating Five" scandal, and the attenuating effect of aging may well combine to temper any such tendency towards such lapses of judgment.

Millon (1994) summarizes the Outgoing pattern as follows:

At the most extreme levels of the Outgoing pole are persons characterized by features similar to the DSM's histrionic personality. At less extreme levels, gregarious persons go out of their way to be popular with others, have confidence in their social abilities, feel they can readily influence and charm others, and possess a personal style that makes people like them. Most enjoy engaging in social activities. ... Talkative, lively, socially clever, they are often dramatic attention-getters who thrive on being the center of social events. Many become easily bored, especially when faced with repetitive and mundane tasks. ... [Although prone to] intense and shifting moods, gregarious types are sometimes viewed as fickle and excitable. On the other hand, their enthusiasms often prove effective in energizing and motivating others. Inclined to be facile and enterprising, outgoing people may be highly skilled at manipulating others to meet their needs. (pp. 31–32)

Strack (1997) provides the following portrait of the normal (*sociable*) prototype of the Outgoing pattern, based on Millon's theory, empirical findings from studies correlating his Personality Adjective Check List (PACL; 1991) scales with other measures, and clinical experience with the instrument:

They are characterized by an outgoing, talkative, and extraverted style of behavior and tend to be lively, dramatic, and colorful. These people are typically viewed by others as spontaneous, clever, enthusiastic, and vigorous. ... Sociable individuals may also be seen as fickle in their attachments. They may have quickly shifting moods and emotions, and may come across as shallow and ungenune. These persons tend to prefer novelty and excitement, and are bored by ordinary or mundane activities. ... They often do well interacting with the public, may be skilled and adept at rallying or motivating others, and will usually put their best side forward even in difficult circumstances. (From Strack, 1997, p. 489, with minor modifications)

In politics, leadership ability may well be compromised in individuals who "become easily bored, especially when faced with repetitive and mundane tasks," and who are prone to "intense

and shifting moods.” These limitations must, however, be weighed against the high degree of skill with which Outgoing leaders are able to engage their capacity for “energizing and motivating” the public.

Millon’s personality patterns have predictable, reliable, observable psychological indicators (expressive behavior, interpersonal conduct, cognitive style, mood/temperament, self-image, regulatory mechanisms, object representations, and morphologic organization). Because of the clinical emphasis of his model, Millon’s (1996) attribute domains accentuate the maladaptive range of the personality patterns in his taxonomy — in the case of the Outgoing pattern, the impulsive pole of the congenial–gregarious–impulsive continuum. The “normalized” (i.e., de-pathologized; cf. Millon & Davis, 2000, pp. 238–240) diagnostic features of the Outgoing pattern are summarized below, along with the diagnostic features of maladaptive variants of the pattern. Generally, one would expect the designated traits to be attenuated, less pronounced and more adaptive, in the case of well-functioning political leaders.

Expressive behavior. The core diagnostic feature of the expressive acts of Outgoing individuals is *sociability*; they are typically friendly, engaging, lively, extraverted, and gregarious. More exaggerated variants of the Outgoing pattern are predisposed to *impulsiveness*, intolerant of inactivity and inclined to seek sensation or excitement to prevent boredom; such individuals may display a penchant for momentary excitements, fleeting adventures, and short-sighted hedonism. The most extreme variants of this pattern are *dramatic*; they are self-dramatizing, overreactive, and volatile, typically with a highly emotional, theatrical responsiveness. As leaders, Outgoing personalities may be somewhat lacking in “gravitas,” inclined to make spur-of-the-moment decisions without carefully considering alternatives, predisposed to reckless, imprudent behaviors, and prone to scandal. (Millon, 1996, pp. 366–367, 371; Millon & Everly, 1985, p. 33)

Interpersonal conduct. The core diagnostic feature of the interpersonal conduct of Outgoing individuals is *demonstrativeness*; they are amiable and display their feelings openly. More exaggerated variants of the Outgoing pattern tend to be *attention seeking*, being attentive to popular appeal and actively soliciting praise and approval. The most extreme variants of this pattern are interpersonally *seductive*; they are flamboyant, exhibitionistic, or provocative and manipulate others to solicit praise or attract attention to themselves. In a political leadership role, Outgoing personalities display a substantial need for validation, one manifestation of which may be an overreliance on polls as an instrument of policy direction and formulation. (Millon, 1996, pp. 367–368, 371; Millon & Everly, 1985, p. 33)

Cognitive style. The core diagnostic feature of the cognitive style of Outgoing individuals is *unreflectiveness*; they avoid introspective thought and focus on practical, concrete matters. More exaggerated variants of the Outgoing pattern tend to be *superficial*, which is sometimes associated with flightiness in reasoning or thinking. They are not paragons of deep thinking or self-reflection and tend to speak and write in impressionistic generalities; though talkative, they tend to avoid earnest or complex matters and their words may lack detail and substance. The most extreme variants of this pattern have a *scattered* cognitive style; they are poor integrators of experience, which results in scattered learning, difficulty in learning from mistakes, and poor judgment. In politics, more extreme variants of the Outgoing pattern may be associated with

lapses of judgment and flawed decision making. (Millon, 1996, pp. 368–369, 371; Millon & Davis, 2000, p. 236)

Mood/temperament. The core diagnostic feature of the temperamental disposition and prevailing mood of Outgoing individuals is emotional *expressiveness*; they are animated, uninhibited, and affectively responsive. More exaggerated variants of the Outgoing pattern are quite *changeable*, with occasional displays of short-lived and superficial moods. The most extreme variants of this pattern are *impetuous*; they are over-excitabile, capricious, and exhibit a pervasive tendency to be easily enthused and as easily angered or bored. Leaders with an Outgoing personality pattern are skilled at staying in touch with public sentiments, but may be mercurial, volatile, or heedless, prone to periodic emotional outbursts, and easily angered or bored. (Millon, 1996, pp. 370–371)

Self-image. The core diagnostic feature of the self-image of Outgoing individuals is their view of themselves as being socially desirable, well liked, and *charming*. More exaggerated variants of the Outgoing pattern tend to perceive themselves as stimulating, popular, and *gregarious*. The most extreme variants of this pattern are *hedonistic*; they are self-indulgent, enjoying the image of attracting acquaintances by pursuing a busy and pleasure-oriented life. Given their appealing self-image, these personalities are confident in their social abilities. In politics, Outgoing personalities, more than any other character types, are political animals strongly attracted to the lure of campaigning. They thrive on the self-validation offered by adulating crowds and the frenetic, connect-with-people activity of whistlestop tours, political rallies, and town meetings. (Millon, 1996, pp. 369, 371; Millon & Everly, 1985, p. 33)

Regulatory mechanisms. The core diagnostic feature of the regulatory (i.e., ego-defense) mechanisms of Outgoing individuals is *self-distraction*; their preferred stress-management strategy is to engage in relatively mindless activities — for example, games, physical diversions, or other forms of amusement or recreation. The most extreme variants of the Outgoing pattern may employ the defense mechanism of *dissociation* (sometimes referred to as “compartmentalization” by political commentators, but technically a misnomer) to cope with conflict and anxiety. Whereas healthy self-distraction is generally adaptive in coping with the stress of high-level public office, some of its political implications may be troubling — including a leader’s failure to face up to unpleasant or dissonant thoughts, feelings, and actions, which may be compounded by cosmetic image-making as revealed in a succession of socially attractive but changing facades. (Millon, 1996, p. 370)

Object representations. The core diagnostic feature of the internalized object representations of Outgoing individuals is their *shallow* nature. Outgoing personalities characteristically seek stimulation, attention, and excitement, presumably to fill an inner void. The most extreme variants of the Outgoing pattern may lack a core identity apart from others, and therefore must draw sustenance and validation from those around them. In politics, Outgoing leaders thrive on the thrill of political campaigns and the international spotlight, and in office may not be averse to instigating a crisis for instrumental purposes. Thus, although generally conflict averse, they may engage in brinkmanship to force a desired outcome and secure a legacy — especially if narcissistic tendencies feature prominently in their personality profile. (Millon, 1996, p. 369)

Morphologic organization. The core diagnostic feature of the morphologic organization of Outgoing individuals is *exteroceptiveness*; they tend to focus on external matters and the here-and-now, being neither introspective nor dwelling excessively on the past, presumably to blot out awareness of a relatively insubstantial inner self. The most exaggerated variants of the Outgoing pattern tend to have a *disjointed*, loosely knit and haphazard morphological structure that contributes to a disconnection of thoughts, feelings, and actions; their internal controls are relatively scattered and unintegrated, with ad hoc methods for restraining impulses, coordinating defenses, and resolving conflicts. The personal political style of Outgoing leaders, hypothetically, may have a similar quality, with ad hoc strategies sometimes displacing the disciplined pursuit of carefully formulated policy objectives. (Millon, 1996, p. 370)

A Note on John McCain's "Histrionic Pattern of Personality Adjustment"

Psychologically, John McCain may well be the most scrutinized presidential candidate in U.S. history. On December 6, 1999, shortly after completion of the present study of McCain, the McCain 2000 presidential campaign released medical records revealing that McCain participated in a prisoner-of-war study for 20 years following his 1973 release from captivity as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam, in which he was subjected to extensive physical and mental evaluations (Altman, 1999, p. A26; Associated Press, 1999, p. 34).

In their report, Dr. Jeffrey L. Moore and Dr. Michael R. Ambrose concluded, “[McCain] has been subject to an extensive battery of psychological tests and following his last examination in 1993, we judged him to be in good physical and mental health.” McCain’s mental evaluation includes reference to “a histrionic pattern of personality adjustment.” Dr. Ambrose, director of the Robert E. Mitchell Center for Prisoner of War Studies, explained that this meant “an outgoing personality” (Associated Press, 1999, p. 34). That assessment is consistent with the independent finding of the present study that McCain has a dauntless, outgoing personality pattern.¹²

Summary and Formulation: The Dauntless–Outgoing Composite Pattern

As noted earlier, Millon describes an antisocial–histrionic composite personality pattern, which he labels “the risk-taking antisocial” (see Millon, 1996, p. 452; Millon & Davis, 1998, p. 164; Millon & Davis, 2000, pp. 111–112). Millon and Davis’s (1998) description of the “risk-taking psychopath,” though less adaptive and socially more obtrusive than Millon’s *dissenting* style, appears to be more closely related to Oldham and Morris’s (1995) *adventurous* style.

Although McCain’s MIDC scale elevations do not rise to a level that would warrant any kind of “antisocial” label, it may be instructive to review the prototypal features of the *risk-taking* type, bearing in mind that McCain may possess some of its features in attenuated form. These personalities are driven by a need to “prove their mettle.” Beyond a tendency to respond before thinking, acting impulsively, and behaving “in an unreflective and uncontrolled manner,” these individuals are “substantially fearless,” undeterred by events “that most people experience as dangerous or frightening.” They are disinclined to give up their need for autonomy and

¹² It is notable that, with the exception of Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter, the more outgoing major-party candidate has prevailed in every presidential contest since Franklin D. Roosevelt.

independence, may lack self-discipline, and “are tempted to prove themselves against new and exciting ventures, traveling on a hyperactive and erratic course of hazardous activity” (Millon & Davis, 1998, p. 164). Elsewhere, Millon and Davis (2000) offer a thumbnail sketch of these individuals as “dauntless, venturesome, intrepid, bold, audacious, [and] ... daring” (p. 110). In short, the essential feature of antisocial-spectrum risk taking is risk taking for its own sake — “for the excitement it provides, and for the sense of feeling alive and involved in life” (Millon & Davis, 1998, p. 164). Unlike prototypal psychopaths, they are *not* driven by motives of envy, avarice, material gain, defense of reputation, or retribution.

As a final caveat, the more flagrant elements of the risk-taking pattern typically diminish considerably by middle age — a developmental milestone McCain reached some decades ago. And, to reiterate, his profile elevation on the MIDC Dauntless scale reached only moderate levels — in large part, it should be noted, on the strength of McCain’s own autobiographical account of his youthful unruliness and indiscretions.

Scale 1A: The Dominant Pattern

Finally, in interpreting McCain’s profile, it should be noted that his secondary elevation on Scale 1A (Dominant) modulates his primary Dauntless–Outgoing orientation. Specifically, McCain’s loading on this scale classifies him as a highly asserting type, an adaptive variant of the Dominant pattern.

The Dominant pattern, as do all personality patterns, occurs on a continuum ranging from normal to maladaptive. At the well-adjusted pole are strong-willed, commanding, assertive personalities.¹³ Slightly exaggerated Dominant features occur in forceful, intimidating, controlling personalities.¹⁴ In its most deeply ingrained, inflexible form, the Dominant pattern displays itself in domineering, belligerent, aggressive behavior patterns that may be consistent with a clinical diagnosis of sadistic personality disorder.¹⁵

Normal, adaptive variants of the Dominant pattern (i.e., asserting and controlling types) correspond to Oldham and Morris’s (1995) *Aggressive* style, Strack’s (1997) *forceful* style, Millon’s (1994) *Controlling* pattern, and the *managerial* segment of Leary’s (1957) managerial–autocratic continuum. Millon’s Controlling pattern is positively correlated with the five-factor model’s *Conscientiousness* factor, has a more modest positive correlation with its *Extraversion* factor, is negatively correlated with its *Agreeableness* and *Neuroticism* factors, and is uncorrelated with its *Openness to Experience* factor (see Millon, 1994, p. 82). Thus, these individuals — though controlling and somewhat disagreeable — tend to be emotionally stable and conscientious. In combination with the Conscientious (Scale 6) and Contentious (Scale 5B) patterns, an elevated Dominant pattern points to Simonton’s (1988) *deliberative* presidential style. According to Millon (1994), Controlling (i.e., Dominant) individuals

¹³ Relevant to John McCain.

¹⁴ Marginally relevant to John McCain.

¹⁵ Not applicable to John McCain.

enjoy the power to direct and intimidate others, and to evoke obedience and respect from them. They tend to be tough and unsentimental, as well as gain satisfaction in actions that dictate and manipulate the lives of others. Although many sublimate their power-oriented tendencies in publicly approved roles and vocations, these inclinations become evident in occasional intransigence, stubbornness, and coercive behaviors. Despite these periodic negative expressions, controlling [Dominant] types typically make effective leaders, being talented in supervising and persuading others to work for the achievement of common goals. (p. 34)

Oldham and Morris (1995) supplement Millon's description with the following portrait of the normal (*Aggressive*) prototype of the Dominant pattern:

While others may aspire to leadership, Aggressive [Dominant] men and women move instinctively to the helm. They are born to assume command as surely as is the top dog in the pack. Theirs is a strong, forceful personality style, more inherently powerful than any of the others. They can undertake huge responsibilities without fear of failure. They wield power with ease. They never back away from a fight. They compete with the supreme confidence of champions. ... When put to the service of the greater good, the Aggressive [Dominant] personality style can inspire a man or woman to great leadership, especially in times of crisis. (p. 345)

Finally, Strack (1997) offers the following description of the normal (*forceful*) prototype of the Dominant pattern, based on Millon's theory, empirical findings from studies correlating his Personality Adjective Check List (PACL; 1991) scales with other measures, and clinical experience with the instrument:

Like confident [Ambitious] persons, forceful [Dominant] individuals can be identified by an inclination to turn toward the self as the primary source of gratification. However, instead of the confident [Ambitious] personality's internalized sense of self-importance, forceful [Dominant] people seem driven to prove their worthiness. They are characterized by an assertive, dominant, and tough-minded personal style. They tend to be strong-willed, ambitious, competitive, and self-determined. Feeling that the world is a harsh place where exploitiveness is needed to assure success, forceful [Dominant] individuals are frequently gruff and insensitive in dealing with others. In contrast to their preferred, outwardly powerful appearance, these individuals may feel inwardly insecure and be afraid of letting down their guard. In work settings, these personalities are often driven to excel. They work hard to achieve their goals, are competitive, and do well where they can take control or work independently. In supervisory or leadership positions, these persons usually take charge and see to it that a job gets done. (From Strack, 1997, p. 490, with minor modifications)

Millon's personality patterns have predictable, reliable, observable psychological indicators (expressive behavior, interpersonal conduct, cognitive style, mood/temperament, self-image, regulatory mechanisms, object representations, and morphologic organization). Millon's (1996) attribute domains accentuate the maladaptive range of the personality patterns in his taxonomy — in the case of the Dominant pattern, the aggressive pole of the asserting–controlling–aggressive continuum. The diagnostic features of the Dominant pattern with respect to each of Millon's eight attribute domains are summarized below, along with “normalized” (i.e., de-pathologized; cf. Millon & Davis, 2000, pp. 514–515) descriptions of the more adaptive variants of this pattern. Nonetheless, some of the designated traits may be less pronounced and more adaptive in the case of individuals for whom this pattern is less elevated.

Expressive behavior. The core diagnostic feature of the expressive acts of Dominant individuals is *assertiveness*; they are tough, strong-willed, outspoken, competitive, and

unsentimental. More exaggerated variants of the Dominant pattern are characteristically *forceful*; they are controlling, contentious, and at times overbearing, their power-oriented tendencies being evident in occasional intransigence, stubbornness, and coercive behaviors. When they feel strongly about something, these individuals can be quite blunt, brusque, and impatient, with sudden, abrupt outbursts of an unwarranted or precipitous nature. The most extreme variants of this pattern are *aggressive*; they are intimidating, domineering, argumentative, and precipitously belligerent. They derive pleasure from humiliating others and can be quite malicious. For this reason, people often shy away from these personalities, sensing them to be cold, callous, and insensitive to the feelings of others. All variants of this pattern tend to view tender emotions as a sign of weakness, avoid expressions of warmth and intimacy, and are suspicious of gentility, compassion, and kindness. Many insist on being seen as faultless; however, they invariably are inflexible and dogmatic, rarely concede on any issue, even in the face of evidence negating the validity of their position. They have a low frustration threshold and are especially sensitive to reproach or deprecation. When pushed on personal matters, they can become furious and are likely to respond reflexively and often vindictively, especially when feeling humiliated or belittled. Thus, they are easily provoked to attack, their first inclination being to dominate and demean their adversaries. (Millon, 1996, pp. 483, 487)

Interpersonal conduct. The core diagnostic feature of the interpersonal conduct of Dominant individuals is their *commanding* presence; they are powerful, authoritative, directive, and persuasive. More exaggerated variants of the Dominant pattern are characteristically *intimidating*; they tend to be abrasive, contentious, coercive, and combative, often dictate to others, and are willing and able to humiliate others to evoke compliance. Their strategy of assertion and dominance has an important instrumental purpose in interpersonal relations, as most people are intimidated by hostility, sarcasm, criticism, and threats. Thus, these personalities are adept at having their way by browbeating others into respect and submission. The most extreme variants of this pattern are *belligerent*; they reveal satisfaction in intimidating, coercing, and humiliating others. Individuals with all gradations of this pattern frequently find a successful niche for themselves in roles where hostile and belligerent behaviors are socially sanctioned or admired, thus providing an outlet for vengeful hostility cloaked in the guise of social responsibility. (Millon, 1996, p. 484; Millon & Everly, 1985, p. 32)

Cognitive style. The core diagnostic feature of the cognitive style of Dominant individuals is its *opinionated* nature; they are outspoken, emphatic, and adamant, holding strong beliefs that they vigorously defend. More exaggerated variants of the Dominant pattern tend to be *dogmatic*; they are inflexible and closed-minded, lacking objectivity and clinging obstinately to preconceived ideas, beliefs, and values. The most extreme variants of this pattern are narrow-mindedly *bigoted*; they are socially intolerant and inherently prejudiced, especially toward envied or derogated social groups. Some of these individuals have a crude, callous exterior and seem coarsely unperceptive. This notwithstanding, all variants of this pattern are finely attuned to the subtle elements of human interaction, keenly aware of the moods and feelings of others, and skilled at using others' foibles and sensitivities to manipulate them for their own purposes. The more extreme variants of this pattern, in particular, are quick to turn another's perceived weaknesses to their own advantage — often in an intentionally callous manner — by upsetting the other's equilibrium in their quest to dominate and control. (Millon, 1996, pp. 484–485)

Mood/temperament. The core diagnostic feature of the characteristic mood and temperament of Dominant individuals is *irritability*; they have an excitable temper that they may at times find difficult to control. More exaggerated variants of the Dominant pattern tend to be *cold* and unfriendly; they are disinclined to experience and express tender feelings, and have a volatile temper that flares readily into contentious argument and physical belligerence. The most extreme variants of this pattern evince pervasive *hostility* and anger; they are fractious, mean-spirited, and malicious, with callous disregard for the rights of others. Their volcanic temper seems perpetually primed to erupt, sometimes into physical belligerence. More than any other personality type, people with this extreme variant of the Dominant pattern are willing to do harm and persecute others if necessary to have their way. All variants of this pattern are prone to anger and to a greater or lesser extent deficient in the capacity to share warm or tender feelings, to experience genuine affection and love for another, or to empathize with the needs of others. (Millon, 1996, p. 486; Millon & Everly, 1985, p. 32)

Self-image. The core diagnostic feature of the self-image of Dominant individuals is that they view themselves as *assertive*; they perceive themselves as forthright, unsentimental, and bold. More exaggerated variants of the Dominant pattern recognize their fundamentally *competitive* nature; they are strong-willed, energetic, and commanding, and may take pride in describing themselves as tough and realistically hardheaded. More exaggerated variants of the Dominant pattern perceive themselves as *powerful*; they are combative, viewing themselves as self-reliant, unyielding, and strong — hard-boiled, perhaps, but unflinching, honest, and realistic. They seem proud to characterize themselves as competitive, vigorous, and militantly hardheaded, which is consistent of their “dog-eat-dog” view of the world. Though more extreme variants may enhance their sense of self by overvaluing aspects of themselves that present a pugnacious, domineering, and power-oriented image, it is rare for these personalities to acknowledge malicious or vindictive motives. Thus, hostile behavior on their part is typically framed in prosocial terms, which enhances their sense of self. (Millon, 1996, p. 485; Millon & Everly, 1985, p. 32)

Regulatory mechanisms. The core diagnostic feature of the regulatory (i.e., ego-defense) mechanisms of highly Dominant individuals is *isolation*; they are able to detach themselves emotionally from the impact of their aggressive acts upon others. In some situations — politics being a case in point — these personalities may have learned that there are times when it is best to restrain and transmute their more aggressive thoughts and feelings. Thus, they may soften and redirect their hostility, typically by employing the mechanisms of *rationalization*, *sublimation*, and *projection*, all of which lend themselves in some fashion to finding plausible and socially acceptable excuses for less than admirable impulses and actions. Thus, blunt directness may be rationalized as signifying frankness and honesty, a lack of hypocrisy, and a willingness to face issues head on. On the longer term, socially sanctioned resolution (i.e., sublimation) of hostile urges is seen in the competitive occupations to which these aggressive personalities gravitate. Finally, these personalities may preempt the disapproval they anticipate from others by projecting their hostility onto them, thereby justifying their aggressive actions as mere counteraction to unjust persecution. Individuals with extreme, malignant variations of this pattern may engage in group scapegoating, viewing the objects of their violations impersonally as despised symbols of a devalued people, devoid of dignity and deserving degradation. (Millon, 1996, pp. 485–486)

Object representations. The core diagnostic feature of the internalized object representations of highly Dominant individuals is their *pernicious* nature. Characteristically, there is a marked paucity of tender and sentimental objects, and an underdevelopment of images that activate feelings of shame or guilt. For individuals with extreme, malignant variations of this pattern, the inner imprint of significant early experiences that serves as a substrate of dispositions (i.e., templates) for perceiving and reacting to current life events, are composed of aggressive feelings and memories, and images comprising harsh relationships and malicious attitudes. Consequently, their life experience is recast to reflect the expectancy of hostility and the need to preempt it. These dynamics undergird a “jungle philosophy” of life where the only perceived recourse is to act in a bold, critical, assertive, and ruthless manner. Of particular relevance to politics is the harsh, antihumanistic disposition of the more extreme variants of these personalities. Some are adept at pointing out the hypocrisy and ineffectuality of so-called “do-gooders”; they rail against the devastating consequences of international appeasement. Others justify their toughness and cunning by pointing to the hostile and exploitative behavior of others; to them, the only way to survive in this world is to dominate and control. (Millon, 1996, p. 485)

Morphologic organization. The core diagnostic feature of the morphologic organization of highly Dominant individuals is its *eruptiveness*; powerful energies are so forceful that they periodically overwhelm these personalities’ otherwise adequate modulating controls, defense operations, and expressive channels, resulting in the harsh behavior commonly seen in these personalities. This tendency is exacerbated by the unrestrained expression of intense and explosive emotions stemming from early life experiences. Moreover, these personalities dread the thought of being vulnerable, of being deceived, and of being humiliated. Viewing people as basically ruthless, these personalities are driven to gain power over others, to dominate them and outmaneuver or outfox them at their own game. Personal feelings are regarded as a sign of weakness and dismissed as mere maudlin sentimentality. (Millon, 1996, p. 486)

John McCain and the “Temper Question”

In his 2000 presidential campaign for the Republican nomination, John McCain was dogged by persistent reports of a “volcanic temper,” raising doubts about his fitness to govern. The story — though nascent for some time in whispered rumors — surfaced with a vengeance on October 25, 1999 when the *New York Times* reported that McCain’s “flaring temper and sometimes prickly personality ... may complicate his climb to the nomination” (Berke, 1999, p. A1). The story grew legs when the senator’s hometown newspaper, the *Arizona Republic*, editorialized on October 31, 1999: “Many Arizonans active in policymaking have been the victim of McCain’s volcanic temper and his practice of surrounding himself with aides who regard politics ... as a ‘blood sport’” (McCain’s temper, 1999, p. B6). The editorial called McCain’s attempt to spin the *New York Times* story “hogwash,” noting that McCain “often insults people and flies off the handle,” concluding, “There is also reason to seriously question whether McCain has the temperament, and the political approach and skills, we want in the next president of the United States” (McCain’s temper, 1999, p. B6).

What does McCain’s Dauntless–Outgoing profile have to say about his alleged temper and what are the implications for his fitness to govern? Resolving that question calls for

consideration of Millon's domain of mood/temperament, which focuses on activity level and the character and intensity of emotional experience. Dauntless personalities are temperamentally untroubled and easygoing, but quickly become irritable and aggressive when crossed. Outgoing personalities are emotionally expressive, with frequent but short-lived emotional displays. Leaders with an Outgoing personality pattern, though skilled at staying in touch with the mood of the people, are prone to periodic rages, though they usually reestablish emotional equilibrium in short order and typically do not hold grudges.

Turning to the relationship between temperament and leadership, Stanley Renshon, in *The Psychological Assessment of Presidential Candidates* (1996), asserted that the meaning of anger hinges on five critical questions. First, are the temper outbursts occasional or regular? (p. 373). In spite of the *Arizona Republic's* claims that McCain "often insults people and flies off the handle" (McCain's temper, 1999, p. B6), none of the news accounts examined in the present study suggested that the outbursts were particularly frequent. Though sometimes characterized as "volcanic" or "volatile," indications are that McCain's lapses in emotional restraint, though recurrent, are intermittent and sporadic. Occasional displays of anger, withering as they may be to those at the receiving end of his wrath, probably do not constitute an unmitigated failure in presidential temperament and may, in fact, have an adaptive aspect.

Second, are there particular issues that set off the displays of temper? (Renshon, 1996, p. 373). In his autobiography, *Faith of My Fathers* (1999), McCain blamed affronts to his honor or dignity as triggers for his anger. However, a report in *USA Today* by Jill Lawrence suggests that McCain does not select the targets of his anger as precisely as his autobiography would have the reader believe, quoting Tennessee senator Fred Thompson ("a McCain friend and supporter") as saying that McCain "has been known not to suffer fools very gladly" (Lawrence, 1999, p. 12A).

Third, does the candidate easily recover from angry episodes, or does he nurse grudges? (Renshon, 1996, p. 373). Jill Lawrence (1999, p. 12A), writing in *USA Today*, noted that former New Hampshire senator Warren Rudman, national co-chair of the 2000 McCain campaign, has pointed to McCain's efforts to normalize U.S. relations with Vietnam and lauded McCain for his compassion and lack of vindictiveness. However, Arizona's governor at the time, Republican Jane Dee Hull — whose comments to the *New York Times* prompted the brouhaha over McCain's temper — contradicted Rudman by asserting that "John has a long memory" for personal slights. According to the *USA Today* report, McCain "can hold a grudge for years" (p. 12A). But Mike Hellon, at the time a Republican National Committee member from Arizona, told *USA Today*, "Once he's blown, it's over, it's done with" (Lawrence, 1999, p. 12A).

Fourth, does the candidate berate or belittle those unlikely or unable to retaliate? (Renshon, 1996, p. 373). For the most part, McCain's wrath as reported in the media has been directed at political peers or reporters from the *Arizona Republic*, whom he has allegedly assailed as "liars" and "idiots" (McCain's temper, 1999, p. B6). Apparently, McCain's temper is not directed primarily at subordinates and defenseless victims.

The tentative conclusion is that McCain's anger is expressed directly and appropriately, yet the "temper question" deserves closer scrutiny as the campaign unfolds, and for good reason:

Displacing one's anger onto groups or individuals unlikely or unable to retaliate may be indicative of an authoritarian character structure or an underlying sadistic tendency (a deeply ingrained, maladaptively aggressive predilection to revel in the humiliation and misfortune of others). Although the *Arizona Republic's* characterization of McCain as "sarcastic and condescending" (McCain's temper, 1999, p. B6) on the face of it may point in that direction, it is not supported by the present findings.

Fifth, is the candidate aware of, and does he try to control his temper? (Renshon, 1996, p. 373). The *Arizona Republic* reported that McCain acknowledges his "propensity for passion," though denying the suggestion that he insults people and is quick to "fly off the handle" (McCain's temper, 1999, p. B6). And, by his own admission in his autobiography, McCain is aware of his anger. In fact, McCain has spoken openly of his lifelong "outsized temper." For example, he had this to say to host Chris Matthews on the CNBC program *Hardball* (Sept. 10, 1999): "I used to lose [my temper] ... all the time. Every time I lost it, either in captivity or out, I said something I regretted, usually harming someone. ... So I not only count to ten, every day I get up and pray, 'I don't want to lose my temper today'."

One should not lose sight of the fact that it is precisely McCain's temperament, toughness, and resilience that earned him his reputation as a fighter — both in Vietnam, where he verbally assailed his captors, and on Capitol Hill. Thus, in one sense, McCain's temper, in addition to its more socially intrusive aspects, also embodies passion, courage, and straight-shooting candor. But whatever the deeper meaning and political implications of an unruly temper — and getting to the bottom of matters such as these is, in part, what election campaigns are all about — character, personality, and temperament are legitimate public issues. (For another perspective on this issue, see Renshon, 2001, pp. 237–242.)

Conclusion

This preliminary assessment of John McCain, conducted during the 2000 election cycle, suggests that McCain's major personality strengths on the campaign trail and in a leadership role are the important personality-based political skills of independence, persuasiveness, and courage, coupled with a socially responsive, outgoing tendency that will enable him to connect with critical constituencies in mobilizing political support and — if elected — implementing his policy vision. His major personality-based limitation is a predisposition to impulsiveness, one manifestation of which is a deficit of emotional restraint.

References

- Altman, Lawrence K. (1999, December 6). Release of McCain's medical records provides unusually broad psychological profile. *The New York Times*, p. A26.
- American Psychiatric Association. (1994). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Associated Press (1999, December 5). McCain releases medical files to counter "whisper campaign." *The New York Times*, Section 1, p. 34. (Online: <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/12/05/us/mccain-releases-medical-files-to-counter-whisper-campaign.html>)
- Berke, Richard L. (1999, October 25). McCain having to prove himself even in Arizona. *The New York Times*, p. A1.
- Costa, P. T., Jr., & McCrae, R. R. (Eds.). (1985). *The NEO Personality Inventory manual*. Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.
- Greenstein, F. I. (1992). Can personality and politics be studied systematically? *Political Psychology*, 13, 105–128.
- Immelman, A. (1993). The assessment of political personality: A psychodiagnostically relevant conceptualization and methodology. *Political Psychology*, 14, 725–741.
- Immelman, A. (1998). The political personalities of 1996 U.S. presidential candidates Bill Clinton and Bob Dole. *Leadership Quarterly*, 9, 335–366.
- Immelman, A. (1999). *Millon inventory of diagnostic criteria manual* (2nd ed.). Unpublished manuscript, St. John's University, Collegetown, MN.
- Immelman, A. (2002). The political personality of U.S. president George W. Bush. In L. O. Valenty & O. Feldman (Eds.), *Political leadership for the new century: Personality and behavior among American leaders* (pp. 81–103). Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Immelman, A. (2003). Personality in political psychology. In I. B. Weiner (Series Ed.), T. Millon & M. J. Lerner (Vol. Eds.), *Handbook of psychology: Vol. 5. Personality and social psychology* (pp. 599–625). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Immelman, A. (2005). Political psychology and personality. In S. Strack (Ed.), *Handbook of personology and psychopathology* (pp. 198–225). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Immelman, A., & Steinberg, B. S. (Compilers) (1999). *Millon inventory of diagnostic criteria* (2nd ed.). Unpublished research scale, St. John's University, Collegetown, MN.
- Lawrence, Jill (1999, November 2). McCain's fiery temper under fire. *USA Today*, p. 12A.
- Leary, T. (1957). *Interpersonal diagnosis of personality: A functional theory and methodology for personality evaluation*. New York: Ronald Press.
- Matthews, Chris (1999, September 10). "Hardball." CNBC.

- McCain, John [with Mark Salter]. (1999). *Faith of my fathers*. New York: Random House.
- McCain's temper is legitimate issue [Op-Ed]. (1999, October 31). *The Arizona Republic*, p. B6.
- Millon, T. (1969). *Modern psychopathology: A biosocial approach to maladaptive learning and functioning*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders. (Reprinted 1985 by Waveland Press, Prospect Heights, IL)
- Millon, T. (1986a). A theoretical derivation of pathological personalities. In T. Millon & G. L. Klerman (Eds.), *Contemporary directions in psychopathology: Toward the DSM-IV* (pp. 639–669). New York: Guilford.
- Millon, T. (1986b). Personality prototypes and their diagnostic criteria. In T. Millon & G. L. Klerman (Eds.), *Contemporary directions in psychopathology: Toward the DSM-IV* (pp. 671–712). New York: Guilford.
- Millon, T. (1990). *Toward a new personology: An evolutionary model*. New York: Wiley.
- Millon, T. (1991). Normality: What may we learn from evolutionary theory? In D. Offer & M. Sabshin (Eds.), *The diversity of normal behavior: Further contributions to normatology* (pp. 356–404). New York: Basic Books.
- Millon, T. (with Weiss, L. G., Millon, C. M., & Davis, R. D.). (1994). *Millon Index of Personality Styles manual*. San Antonio, TX: Psychological Corporation.
- Millon, T. (with Davis, R. D.). (1996). *Disorders of personality: DSM-IV and beyond* (2nd ed.). New York: Wiley.
- Millon, T. (2003). Evolution: A generative source for conceptualizing the attributes of personality. In I. B. Weiner (Series Ed.), T. Millon & M. J. Lerner (Vol. Eds.), *Handbook of psychology: Vol. 5. Personality and social psychology* (pp. 3–30). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Millon, T., & Davis, R. D. (1998). Ten subtypes of psychopathy. In T. Millon, E. Simonsen, M. Birket-Smith, & R. D. Davis (Eds.), *Psychopathy: Antisocial, criminal, and violent behavior* (pp. 161–170). New York: Guilford.
- Millon, T., & Davis, R. D. (2000). *Personality disorders in modern life*. New York: Wiley.
- Millon, T., & Everly, G. S., Jr. (1985). *Personality and its disorders: A biosocial learning approach*. New York: Wiley.
- Oldham, J. M., & Morris, L. B. (1995). *The new personality self-portrait* (Rev. ed.). New York: Bantam Books.
- Renshon, S. A. (1996). *The psychological assessment of presidential candidates*. New York: New York University Press.
- Renshon, S. A. (2001). The comparative psychoanalytic study of political leaders: John McCain and the limits of trait psychology. In O. Feldman & L. O. Valenty (Eds.), *Profiling political leaders: Cross-cultural studies of personality and behavior* (pp. 233–253). Westport, CT: Praeger.

Simonton, D. K. (1988). Presidential style: Personality, biography, and performance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 55, 928–936.

Strack, S. (1991). *Personality Adjective Check List manual* (rev.). South Pasadena, CA: 21st Century Assessment.

Strack, S. (1997). The PACL: Gauging normal personality styles. In T. Millon (Ed.), *The Millon inventories: Clinical and personality assessment* (pp. 477–497). New York: Guilford.

Timberg, Robert (1999). *John McCain: An American odyssey*. New York: Simon & Schuster/Touchstone.