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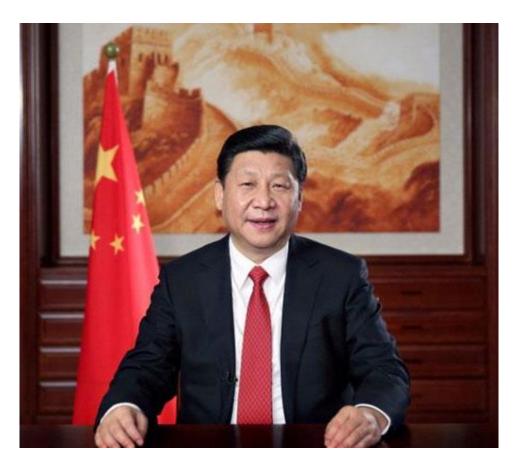
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THE PERSONALITY PROFILE AND LEADERSHIP STYLE OF CHINA'S PRESIDENT XI JINPING

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Abstract

The Personality Profile and Leadership Style of China's President Xi Jinping

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This paper presents the results of an indirect assessment of the personality and leadership style of China's president, Xi Jinping, from the conceptual perspective of personologist Theodore Millon.

Psychodiagnostically relevant data about Xi were collected from biographical sources and media reports and synthesized into a personality profile using the Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria (MIDC), which yields 34 normal and maladaptive personality classifications congruent with *DSM-III-R*, *DSM-IV*, and *DSM-5*.

The personality profile yielded by the MIDC was analyzed on the basis of interpretive guidelines provided in the MIDC and Millon Index of Personality Styles manuals. Xi's primary personality pattern was found to be Dominant (in the controlling range of scale elevation), complemented by secondary Conscientious (respectful–dutiful range) and Ambitious (confident–self-serving range) patterns and subsidiary Accommodating/cooperative (conciliatory) and Dauntless/adventurous (risk-taking) tendencies. In addition, there is equivocal evidence for Reticent/circumspect features.

Dominant individuals enjoy the power to direct others and to evoke obedience and respect; they are tough and unsentimental and often make effective leaders. **Conscientious** leaders are dutiful and diligent, with a strong work ethic and careful attention to detail, excel in crafting public policy, and are more technocratic than visionary. **Ambitious** individuals are bold, competitive, and self-assured; they easily assume leadership roles, expect others to recognize their special qualities, and often act as though entitled.

The concurrently elevated Dominant and Conscientious pattern in Xi's overall personality configuration is indicative of an *aggressive enforcer* personality composite. Leaders with this personality prototype are tough, uncompromising, and believe they have a moral duty to punish and control those who deviate from socially sanctioned norms.

Leaders with Xi's personality profile are likely to exhibit a *deliberative* leadership style; they are well informed, exhibit depth of comprehension, are able to visualize alternatives and weigh long-term consequences, understand the implications of their decisions, and are cautious and emotionally controlled.

Based on his personality profile, Xi's foreign policy orientation is anticipated to be primarily that of a *high-dominance introvert* with an *expansionist* orientation, characterized by a tendency to dichotomize the world in terms of moral good vs. evil, tenacity in striving to reshape the international system in accordance with his personal vision, and preoccupation with establishing institutions or principles to keep potentially disruptive forces in check.

Introduction

Xi believes he is the personnel [sic] caretaker of the national mythos that Chinese society needs to survive and thrive in an era of intense international competition. This self-conception helps explain Xi's other great obsession: defeating the so-called hostile forces inside and outside of China that would weaken the people's faith in the political and ideological system that Xi helms. ...

Most readers will find [François] Bougon's portrait of Xi [in his 2018 book, *Inside the Mind of Xi Jinping*] and his era disturbing and dispiriting. It naturally leads to fundamental questions about the aim of U.S. policy toward China. How should the United States, Europe, and the democracies of the Pacific Rim deal with a regime whose leaders believe that Western ideals and culture pose an existential threat to their rule — even their lives? What enduring compromise is possible with a leader who treats cultural change the way most leaders treat insurrection or terrorism? How do we accommodate a superpower directed by men like Xi? Bougon does not provide answers to these questions. One can only hope that his sharply drawn picture of Xi inspires us to. (Tanner, 2019)

The purpose of the present study is to explore answers to these questions from a psychological perspective.

The U.S.—China trade war was one of the defining issues of the Trump presidency (2017–2021), with significant implications for the world's two largest economies, and U.S.—China relations likely will continue to loom large in the Biden administration. Moreover, China has been North Korea's closest ally, which underscores the pivotal role of China in former U.S. president Donald Trump's unsuccessful diplomatic efforts to denuclearize the Korean peninsula.

Against the background of these critical foreign policy issues, the current paper reports the results of a psychodiagnostic case study of the personality patterns and associated leadership traits of Xi Jinping, president of the People's Republic of China (PRC) since 2013.

Personality assessment offers a window into the personal motives that undergird a leader's political behavior and provides a basis for anticipating a leader's policy preferences, decision making, and executive actions under various contingencies. The construct *personality*, as narrowly construed in political psychology, is 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 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). The predictive utility of personality assessment is rooted in the temporal stability and cross-situational consistency of a leader's ingrained, deeply etched, pervasive patterns of thinking, acting, feeling, and relating to others.

Conceptually, the study is informed by Theodore Millon's (1969, 1986a, 1986b, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1996, 2003, 2011; Millon & Davis, 2000; Millon & Everly, 1985) model of personality as adapted (Immelman, 1993, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2005) for the study of personality in politics.

That perspective provides the context for the current paper, which presents an analysis of the personality of Xi Jinping and examines the political implications of his personality profile with respect to leadership style 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, 2003, 2005, 2014).

A comprehensive review of Millon's personological model and its applicability to political personality has been provided elsewhere (e.g., Immelman, 1993, 2003, 2005; Immelman & Millon, 2003). 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).

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 Xi Jinping.

Sources of Data

Diagnostic information pertaining to Xi was collected from a broad array of approximately 350 media reports that offered useful, diagnostically relevant psychobiographical information. Xi's tight control over his public image creates a significant barrier to inferring the substance behind the mask of his persona. Especially problematic is China's severe restrictions on the freedom of the press, which hampers a data collection methodology relying in information in the public domain. Chinese media images of Xi Jinping are skewed to presenting Xi in a positive light. Furthermore, international media have limited access to knowledgeable sources able to provide first-hand insights into the personal psychology of Xi Jinping. Thus, it is vital to strike a balance between the Chinese national sources and international perspectives to develop a comprehensive understanding of Xi Jinping's personality.

Personality Inventory

The assessment instrument, the Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria (MIDC; Immelman, 2015), was compiled and adapted from Millon's (1969, 1986b; 1990, 1996; Millon & Everly, 1985) prototypal 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, 2014). The 12-scale (see Table 2) instrument taps the first five "noninferential" (Millon, 1990, p. 157) attribute domains previously listed in 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 serve 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.

The 12 MIDC scales correspond to major personality patterns posited by Millon (1994, 1996, 2011), which are congruent with the syndromes described in the revised third edition, fourth

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¹ Inventory and manual available to eligible professionals upon request contingent upon MIDC-specific training.

edition, and fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III-R, DSM-IV*, and *DSM-5*) of the American Psychiatric Association (APA; 1987, 1994, 2013) 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.

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, 2003, 2005, 2014 for a more detailed 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 Xi Jinping, diagnostic classification of the subject, and the clinical interpretation of significant MIDC scale elevations derived from the diagnostic procedure.

Xi received 40 affirmative (and 15 equivocal/affirmative) endorsements on the 170-item MIDC (see Appendix). Judging from endorsement-rate deviations from the mean (see Table 3), data on Xi's expressive behavior (12 endorsements) were most easily obtained and may be overrepresented in the data set, whereas data on his mood/temperament (6 endorsements) were most difficult to obtain and may be underrepresented in the data set.

Table 2
Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria: Scales and Gradations

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

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

Table 3
MIDC Item Endorsement Rate by Attribute Domain for Xi Jinping

	Diagnostic c	riteria (Items)
Attribute domain	Present	Possible
Expressive behavior	12	16
Interpersonal conduct	7	9
Cognitive style	8	12
Mood/temperament	6	7
Self-image	7	11
Sum	40	55
Mean	8.0	11.0
Standard deviation	2.1	3.0

Xi's MIDC scale scores are reported in Table 4.

Table 4
MIDC Scale Scores for Xi Jinping

Scale	Personality pattern	Lower	Upper
1A	Dominant: Asserting–Controlling–Aggressive (Sadistic)	14	22
1B	Dauntless: Adventurous–Dissenting–Aggrandizing (Antisocial)	4	4
2	Ambitious: Confident–Self-serving–Exploitative (Narcissistic)	9	17
3	Outgoing: Congenial–Gregarious–Impulsive (Histrionic)	3	4
4	Accommodating: Cooperative–Agreeable–Submissive (Dependent)	4	5
5A	Aggrieved: Unpresuming–Self-denying–Self-defeating (Masochistic)	0	0
5B	Contentious: Resolute–Oppositional–Negativistic (Passive-aggressive)	2	2
6	Conscientious: Respectful–Dutiful–Compulsive (Obsessive-compulsive)	9	19
7	Reticent: Circumspect–Inhibited–Withdrawn (Avoidant)	2	5
8	Retiring: Reserved–Aloof–Solitary (Schizoid)	0	0
	Subtotal for basic personality scales	47	78
9	Distrusting: Suspicious–Paranoid (Paranoid)	8	12
0	Erratic: Unstable–Borderline (Borderline)	0	0
	Full-scale total	55	90

Note. Table 4 depicts the 12 personality patterns along with their normal, exaggerated, and pathological scale gradations and equivalent *DSM* terminology (in parentheses). Interpretation of the data is based on scale scores derived from affirmative MIDC item endorsements only, specified in the column labeled *Lower*. (The column labeled *Upper* displays scale scores based on the sum of affirmative and equivocal/affirmative endorsements.)

Xi's most elevated scale is Scale 1A (Dominant), with a score of 14. In addition, Xi obtained secondary elevations on Scale 6 (Conscientious) and Scale 2 (Ambitious), both with scores of 9, and subsidiary elevations on Scale 4 (Accommodating) and Scale 1B (Dauntless), both with scores of 4. The primary Scale 1A elevation is within the *prominent* (10–26) range, while the secondary elevations on Scales 6 and 2 are at the upper limit of the *present* (5–9) range. The subsidiary Scale 4 and Scale 1B elevations just failed to reach the lower threshold of the *present* (5–9) range. No other scale elevation is psychodiagnostically significant; however, there is equivocal evidence for Reticent/circumspect personality features, given Xi's Scale 7 score of 2, but equivocally as high as 5. The Scale 9 (Distrusting) score of 8 (but equivocally as high as 12) is of note, though it fails to reach the threshold of 20 for this scale's lower limit for diagnostic significance.

Based on the cut-off score guidelines in the MIDC manual, all of Xi's scale elevations (see Figure 1) are within normal limits, though the spike on Scale 1A (Dominant) is noteworthy by virtue of its moderate elevation and prominence in Xi's overall personality configuration. In terms of MIDC scale gradation (see Table 2 and Figure 1) criteria, supplemented by clinical judgment, Xi was classified as primarily a Dominant/controlling personality, complemented by secondary Conscientious/respectful and Ambitious/confident patterns.²

The MIDC profile yielded by Xi's raw scores is displayed in Figure 1.3

Discussion

The discussion of the results examines Xi Jinping's MIDC scale elevations from the perspective of Millon's (1994, 1996, 2011; 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 political implications of Xi's personality profile.

Few people exhibit personality patterns in "pure" or prototypal form; more often, individual personalities represent a blend of two or more primary and secondary orientations. With his moderately elevated Scale 1A, Xi emerged from the assessment as primarily a *controlling* type, an adaptive, slightly exaggerated variant of the Dominant pattern. The interpretation of Xi's profile must also account for secondary elevations on Scale 6 (Conscientious) and Scale 2 (Ambitious), reflecting adaptive levels of, respectively, conscientiousness in the *respectful* (equivocally *dutiful*) range and adaptive narcissism in the *confident* (equivocally *self-serving*) range. Finally, there is equivocal evidence of Scale 4 (Accommodating), Scale 1B (Dauntless), and Scale 7 (Reticent) personality features and a possible *distrusting* (Scale 9) tendency, all of which await empirical confirmation in a follow-up study currently in progress).

² 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.

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.

Markedly disturbed Mildly $disturbed \ 24$ Moderately disturbed Prominent Present 0 0 Scale: 5A 5B 1A 1B 2 Upper: Lower: 14 4

Figure 1. Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria: Profile for Xi Jinping

The Millon Index of Personality Styles manual (Millon, 1994), employing the label *Controlling*, describes Dominant personalities as tough, unsentimental, intimidating individuals talented in the powers of persuasion (p. 34). Conscientious personalities — which Millon (1994) labels *Conforming* — are well organized and reliable, prudent and restrained, overly self-controlled, formal and inflexible in their relationships, dislike having their work pile up, and come across to others as highly dependable and industrious. Ambitious personalities — labeled *Asserting* — are bold, competitive, self-assured individuals who easily assume leadership roles, expect others to recognize their special qualities, and often act as though entitled (p. 32).

Primary Pattern — Scale 1A: The Dominant Pattern

The Dominant pattern, as do all personality patterns, occurs on a continuum ranging from normal to maladaptive. At the well-adjusted pole⁴ are strong-willed, commanding, assertive personalities. Slightly exaggerated Dominant features⁵ occur in forceful, intimidating, controlling personalities. In its most deeply ingrained, inflexible form,⁶ the Dominant pattern displays itself in domineering, belligerent, aggressive behavior patterns that may be consistent with a clinical diagnosis of sadistic personality disorder.

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. According to Millon (1994), Controlling (i.e., Dominant) individuals

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

⁴ Relevant to Xi.

⁵ Relevant to Xi.

⁶ Not applicable to Xi.

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.

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 variants⁷ 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 that 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 conceding 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

⁷ Irrelevant (or marginally relevant) to Xi.

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)

Sample illustrative observation: "Some political analysts note that Mr. Xi's attempts to impose total control over the media say as much about his personal insecurities as they do about any Marxist-Leninist ideological vision that he holds." (Wong, 2016)

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 variants⁸ 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)

Sample illustrative observation: "In Beijing, he [Trump] will meet his match in President Xi Jinping, another bold and pugnacious nationalist who emerged last month from a Communist Party Congress with more power than any Chinese leader since Mao Zedong." (Schell, 2017)

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 variants⁹ of this pattern are narrow-mindedly *bigoted*; they are socially intolerant and inherently prejudiced, especially toward envied or disparaged 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)

⁸ Irrelevant (or marginally relevant) to Xi.

⁹ Irrelevant (or marginally relevant) to Xi.

Sample illustrative observation: "And despite Mr. Xi's wide reading habits, that apparent lack of openness to alternative political ideas may be why some intellectuals are calling him an overbearing, insistent macho man." (Tatlow, 2014)

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 readily flares into contentious argument and physical belligerence. The most extreme variants ¹⁰ 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)

Sample illustrative observation: "Yet Hong Kong poses an intolerable affront for a leader as stern and unyielding as Xi Jinping, who has steadily sought to increase China's control over the troublesome enclave and bristles at any Western criticism." (Hong Kong's challenge, 2019)

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. The most extreme variants ¹¹ of this 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)

Sample illustrative observation: "Xi considers himself the antithesis of the 'weak man' who turned out the light on the Soviet empire." (Denyer, 2015)

¹⁰ Irrelevant (or marginally relevant) to Xi.

¹¹ Irrelevant (or marginally relevant) to Xi.

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 variations¹² 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 variations¹³ 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 is 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. In more extreme,

¹² Irrelevant (or marginally relevant) to Xi.

¹³ Irrelevant (or marginally relevant) to Xi.

malignant variations¹⁴ of this pattern, 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)

Secondary Pattern — Scale 6: The Conscientious Pattern

The Conscientious pattern, as do all personality patterns, occurs on a continuum ranging from normal to maladaptive. At the well-adjusted pole are earnest, polite, *respectful* personalities. ¹⁵ Exaggerated Conscientious features occur in *dutiful*, dependable, and principled but rigid personalities. ¹⁶ In its most deeply ingrained, inflexible form, the Conscientious pattern displays itself in a moralistic, self-righteous, uncompromising, cognitively constricted, *compulsive* behavior pattern that may be consistent with a clinical diagnosis of obsessive-compulsive personality disorder. ¹⁷

Normal, adaptive variants of the Conscientious pattern (i.e., respectful and dutiful types) correspond to Oldham and Morris's (1995) *Conscientious* style, Millon's (1994) *Conforming* pattern, Strack's (1997) *respectful* style, and the *responsible* segment of Leary's (1957) *responsible–hypernormal* interpersonal continuum. Millon's Conforming pattern is correlated with the five-factor model's *Conscientiousness* factor, has a modest positive correlation with its *Extraversion* factor, a modest negative correlation with its *Neuroticism* factor (signifying emotional stability), and is uncorrelated with its *Agreeableness* and *Openness to Experience* factors (see Millon, 1994, p. 82). Adaptive variants of the Conscientious pattern have "a well-disciplined and organized lifestyle that enables individuals to function efficiently and successfully in most of their endeavors," in contrast to "the driven, tense, and rigid adherence to external demands and to a perfectionism that typifies the disordered ¹⁸ [compulsive] state." They "demonstrate an unusual degree of integrity, adhering as firmly as they can to society's ethics and morals" (Millon, 1996, pp. 518–519).

As stated by Oldham and Morris (1995):

Conscientious-style people ... [have] strong moral principle[s] and absolute certainty, and they won't rest until the job is done and done right. They are loyal to their families, their causes, and their superiors. Hard work is a hallmark of this personality style; Conscientious types *achieve*. ... Conscientious traits ... [include] hard work, prudence, [and] conventionality. (p. 62)

Millon (1994) summarizes the Conscientious pattern (which he labels *Conforming*) as follows:

[Conscientious individuals possess] traits not unlike Leary's [1957] responsible—hypernormal personality, with its ideal of proper, conventional, orderly, and perfectionistic behavior, as well as

¹⁴ Irrelevant (or marginally relevant) to Xi.

¹⁵ Relevant to Xi.

¹⁶ Marginally relevant to Xi.

¹⁷ Not applicable to Xi.

¹⁸ Not applicable to Xi.

bearing a similarity to Factor III of the Big-Five, termed Conscientiousness. Conformers are notably respectful of tradition and authority, and act in a reasonable, proper, and conscientious way. They do their best to uphold conventional rules and standards, following given regulations closely, and tend to be judgmental of those who do not. Well-organized and reliable, prudent and restrained, they may appear to be overly self-controlled, formal and inflexible in their relationships, intolerant of deviance, and unbending in their adherence to social proprieties. Diligent about their responsibilities, they dislike having their work pile up, worry about finishing things, and come across to others as highly dependable and industrious. (p. 33)

Strack (1997) provides the following portrait of the normal (*respectful*) prototype of the Conscientious 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:

Responsible, industrious, and respectful of authority, these individuals tend to be conforming and work hard to uphold rules and regulations. They have a need for order and are typically conventional in their interests. These individuals can be rule abiding to a fault, however, and may be perfectionistic, inflexible, and judgmental. A formal interpersonal style and notable constriction of affect can make some respectful [Conscientious] persons seem cold, aloof, and withholding. Underneath their social propriety there is often a fear of disapproval and rejection, or a sense of guilt over perceived shortcomings. Indecisiveness and an inability to take charge may be evident in some of these persons due to a fear of being wrong. However, among co-workers and friends, respectful [Conscientious] personalities are best known for being well organized, reliable, and diligent. They have a strong sense of duty and loyalty, are cooperative in group efforts, show persistence even in difficult circumstances, and work well under supervision. (From Strack, 1997, p. 490, with minor modifications)

Being principled, scrupulous, and meticulous, conscientious individuals "tend to follow standards from which they hesitate to deviate, attempt to act in an objective and rational manner, and decide matters in terms of what they believe is right." They are often religious (or ideologically principled) and maintaining their integrity "ranks high among their goals" while "voicing moral values gives them a deep sense of satisfaction." The major limitations of this personality style are (a) its "superrationality," leading to a "devaluation of emotion [which] tends to preclude relativistic judgments and subjective preferences"; and (b) a predilection for "seeing complex matters in black and white, good and bad, or right or wrong terms" (Millon, 1996, p. 519).

As noted earlier, 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). As noted previously, Millon's (1996) attribute domains accentuate the maladaptive range of the personality patterns in his taxonomy — in the case of the Conscientious pattern, the compulsive pole of the respectful—dutiful—compulsive continuum. The diagnostic features of the Conscientious 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. 174–176) descriptions of the more adaptive variants of this pattern. Nonetheless, some of the specified traits may be less pronounced and more adaptive in the case of individuals for whom this pattern is less elevated (as in the case of Xi, for whom the Conscientious pattern represents a secondary elevation in his overall personality configuration).

Expressive Behavior

The core diagnostic feature of the expressive acts of Conscientious individuals is a sense of *duty*; they do their best to uphold conventional rules and standards, follow regulations closely, and are typically responsible, reliable, proper, prudent, punctual, self-disciplined, well organized, and restrained. They are meticulous in fulfilling obligations, their conduct is generally beyond reproach, and they typically demonstrate an uncommon degree of integrity. More exaggerated variants¹⁹ of the Conscientious pattern tend to be *rigid*; they are typically overcontrolled, orderly, and perfectionistic. Though highly dependable and industrious, they have an air of austerity and serious-mindedness and may be stubborn, stingy, and possessive. They are typically scrupulous in matters of morality and ethics, but may strike others as prudish, moralistic, and condescending. They exhibit a certain postural tightness; their movements may be deliberate and dignified and they display a tendency to speak precisely, with clear diction and well-phrased sentences. Emotions are constrained by a regulated, highly structured, and carefully organized lifestyle. Clothing is characteristically formal or proper, and restrained in color and style. (Millon, 1996, pp. 513–515)

Sample illustrative observation: "One of Mr. Xi's teachers, Chen Qiuying, recalled him as a studious, elaborately polite boy who was fond of Du Fu, an ancient Chinese poet." (Buckley & Tatlow, 2015)

Interpersonal Conduct

The core diagnostic feature of the interpersonal conduct of Conscientious individuals is *politeness*; they are courteous, proper, and dignified. They strongly adhere to social conventions and proprieties and show a preference for polite, formal, and "correct" personal relationships. With their strong sense of duty, they feel that they must not let others down or engage in behaviors that might provoke their displeasure. They are loyal to their families, their causes, and their superiors. More exaggerated variants²⁰ of the Conscientious pattern are *exacting*; they are scrupulous in matters of morality and ethics and unbending in their relations with subordinates, insisting that they adhere to personally established rules and methods. In marked contrast, they treat superiors with deference, are obsequious, and may ingratiate themselves, striving to impress authorities with their loyalty, efficiency, and serious-mindedness. (Millon, 1996, pp. 514–515, 516; Millon & Everly, 1985, p. 33)

Sample illustrative observation: "Eleanor Dvorchak, the housewife who hosted Mr Xi [in Iowa], said that the future president of China was a very unassuming guest, despite the cultural divide. ... He was a courteous, hospitable and very serious man who was obviously dedicated to his job." (Foster, 2012)

¹⁹ Marginally relevant to Xi.

²⁰ Marginally relevant to Xi.

Cognitive Style

The core diagnostic feature of the cognitive style of Conscientious individuals is *circumspection*; they are cautious, prudent, deliberate, systematic, and attentive to detail. Wary of new or untested ideas, they are risk avoidant. More exaggerated variants²¹ of the Conscientious pattern are *unimaginative*; they are methodical, structured, pedestrian, uninspired, or routinized. Perfectionism may interfere with decision making and task completion, and they may have difficulty dealing with new ideas. All variants of this pattern are concerned with matters of propriety and efficiency and tend to be rigid about regulations and procedures — though, ironically, all too often getting mired in minor or irrelevant details. They judge others by "objective" standards and time-proven rules of an orderly society and are inclined to disdain frivolity and public displays of emotion, which they view as irresponsible or immature. Though industrious, tidy, meticulous, practical, realistic, and diligent, their thinking may be deficient in flexibility, creativity, and imagination, and lacking in vision. (Millon, 1996, pp. 515–516; Millon & Everly, 1985, p. 33)

Sample illustrative observation: "Xi Jinping ... has spent 40 years climbing the political ladder. ... Every statement is carefully calculated, and the fact that he has beaten his rivals to reach the pinnacle of the Chinese communist party is testimony of his ability to work the system." (McRae, 2017)

Mood/Temperament

The core diagnostic feature of the characteristic mood and temperament of Conscientious individuals is *restraint*; they are serious, reasonable, and rarely display strong emotions. More exaggerated variants ²² of the Conscientious pattern are characteristically *solemn*; they are emotionally controlled, tense, or unrelaxed. Because of their dignified, serious-minded, solemn demeanor, all variants of the Conscientious pattern may at times be viewed as grim and cheerless. This, however, is due to disdain for frivolity rather than humorlessness per se; thus, although these individuals often come across as reserved, even stiff, "wooden," or "heavy," they may exhibit a dry, self-effacing sense of humor. Few, however, have a lively or ebullient manner; most are rigidly controlled and tight, and their failure to release pent-up energies may predispose them to psychophysiological disorders. (Millon, 1996, p. 518; Millon & Everly, 1985, p. 33)

Sample illustrative observation: "In private Mr Xi intimidates his peers with long silences and this face that doesn't move, never smiling,' as one person who has observed him in meetings puts it. His public image is also stern, a man popular with the masses because of an anti-corruption campaign that has devastated the party's upper ranks." (Mitchell, 2017)

Self-Image

The core diagnostic feature of the self-perception of Conscientious individuals is *reliability*; they view themselves as dependable, disciplined, responsible, industrious, efficient, and

²¹ Marginally relevant to Xi.

²² Marginally relevant to Xi.

trustworthy. More exaggerated variants ²³ of the Conscientious pattern accurately perceive themselves as highly *conscientious*, even to a fault; they view themselves as scrupulous, meticulous in fulfilling obligations, and loyal, despite often being viewed by others as high minded, overperfectionistic, and fastidious. All variants of the Conscientious pattern value aspects of themselves that exhibit virtue, moral rectitude, self-discipline, prudence, and loyalty, and are wary of error or misjudgment. Given their strong sense of duty and their view of themselves as reliable, conscientious, or righteous, these individuals are particularly sensitive to charges of impropriety, which may be devastating to their sense of self. (Millon, 1996, p. 516)

Sample illustrative observation: "I am willing to be selfless and devote myself to China's development,' Xi said. 'I will not let the people down." (Xi focus, 2019)

Regulatory Mechanisms

The core diagnostic feature of the unconscious regulatory (i.e., ego-defense) mechanisms of highly Conscientious individuals²⁴ is *reaction formation*; they display reasonableness when faced with circumstances that would typically be expected to evoke irritation, anger, or dismay and may engage in public displays of socially commendable actions that may be diametrically opposed to their deeper impulses. (Millon, 1996, pp. 516–517)

Object Representations

The core diagnostic feature of the internalized object representations of highly Conscientious individuals²⁵ is *concealment*; there is a tendency for only those internalized representations that are socially acceptable, with their corresponding inner affects, memories, and attitudes, to be permitted into conscious awareness or to be expressed. Thus, personal difficulties and social conflicts anchored to past experiences are defensively denied, kept from conscious awareness, and maintained under the most stringent of controls. These individuals devalue self-exploration, claiming that it is antithetical to efficient behavior and that introspection only intrudes on rational thinking and self-control. Consequently, highly Conscientious persons often have limited insight into their deeper motives and feelings. (Millon, 1996, p. 516)

Morphologic Organization

The core diagnostic feature of the morphological organization of highly Conscientious individuals²⁶ is *compartmentalization*; to keep contrary feelings and impulses from affecting one another, and to hold ambivalent images and contradictory attitudes from spilling forth into conscious awareness, the organization of their inner world tends to be compartmentalized in a tightly consolidated system that is clearly partitioned into numerous, distinct, and segregated constellations of drive, memory, and cognition, with few open channels to permit interplay among these components. Thus, a deliberate and well-poised surface quality may belie an inner turmoil. To prevent upsetting the balance they have so carefully wrought throughout their lives, highly

²³ Marginally relevant to Xi.

²⁴ Marginally relevant to Xi.

²⁵ Marginally relevant to Xi.

²⁶ Marginally relevant to Xi.

Conscientious individuals strive to avoid risk and to operate with complete certainty. Their toughest challenge, however, is to control their emotions, which they do by extensive use of intrapsychic defenses. Because they typically have a family history of exposure to demanding, perfectionistic parents, a potent force behind their tightly structured world is their fear of disapproval. By the same token, their public facade of conformity and propriety may mask an undercurrent of repressed urges toward self-assertion and defiance. (Millon, 1996, pp. 517–518)

Formulation: The Dominant–Conscientious Composite Pattern

Predominantly Dominant (aggressive) individuals who also possess prominent Conscientious (compulsive) features may be characterized as *hostile enforcers* (following Millon, 1996, pp. 490–491; Millon & Davis, 2000, p. 517, whose characterization of the "enforcing sadist" provides the basis for the following adaptation). Given that Xi's elevations on the two scales in question (1A and 6) are not in the dysfunctional range, he is neither sadistic nor compulsive. Rather, he may display a more adaptive, nonpathological variant of the syndrome. Millon (1996) does not offer a description of the benign variant of the sadistic—compulsive personality composite, but a "depathologized" (i.e., adaptive) manifestation may be inferred from his description of the maladaptive version of the syndrome:

Hostile enforcers are characterized by deep-seated hostility, permeated by a moralistic conscience. A stickler for rules and propriety, they are unrestrained in discharging their hostile impulses against the weak, the powerless, and the contemptible — ostensibly in the public interest. Not only do they act as though they have a monopoly on divining right and wrong; these personalities also believe they have a right and the obligation to control and punish violators, and that they are uniquely qualified to determine how punishment should be meted out.

Although hostile enforcers operate under the guise of socially endorsed roles to serve the public interest, the deeper motives that spur the aggressive enforcing actions of leaders with this personality style are of questionable legitimacy, given the extraordinary force with which they mete out their condemnation and punishment. In the realm of public service, the trademark characteristic of hostile enforcers is first to search out rule-breakers and perpetrators of incidental infractions that fall within the purview of their socially sanctioned role, and then to exercise their legitimate powers to the fullest extent.

The *modus operandi* of the hostile enforcer invariably provokes opposition and resistance, which in turn incites and perpetuates ever-stronger countermeasures against real and perceived enemies. Their resulting "bunker mentality" may mimic a paranoid orientation, but more likely is simply a manifestation of hardball politics in the service of an obdurate, relentless, uncompromising, no-holds-barred striving to preserve and consolidate personal power and control.

In public life the fatal flaw of this personality type is that, in carrying out their duties, they cannot restrain the emotions that drive their vindictively hostile behaviors. Ultimately, dominating everything and everyone becomes their goal, at the expense of exercising their responsibilities in a fair and balanced manner. The essence of this personality pattern in its most extreme form is vividly captured in the following sketch by Millon (1996), who employs the label *enforcing sadist* for the maladaptive, malignant variant of the Dominant–Conscientious personality composite:

Some of these personalities swagger about as prideful enforcers of the law; the more they dominate and discharge their venom, the more pridefully they swagger, and the more they feel righteously empowered. The more they discharge their hostility and exercise their wills, the more they display their dominance and feed their sadistic urges, the more they feel justified in venting their anger. Power has gone to their heads. Many begin to dehumanize their victims, further enlarging the sphere and intensity of their aggressive destructiveness. ... Beneath their ostensible good intentions may lie a growing deceptive viciousness, a malicious inclination that eventually produces the very destructiveness they have been authorized to control. (pp. 490–491)

Millon and Davis (2000) describe the enforcing sadist as follows:

Every society charges certain agents with the power to enforce its rules to protect the common good. At their best, such individuals recognize the weight of their mission and balance social and individual needs, consider extenuating circumstances, and dispassionately judge intentions and effects before rendering a final verdict. In contrast, the enforcing sadist is society's sadistic superego, vested in punishment for its own sake, unable to be appeased. Military sergeants, certain cops, university deans, and the harsh judge all feel that they have the right to control and punish others. Cloaked within socially sanctioned roles, they mete out condemnation in the name of justice with such extraordinary force that their deeper motives are clear. Ever seeking to make themselves seem important, these sticklers for rules search out those guilty of some minor trespass, make them cower before the power of their position, and then punish them with a righteous indignation that reeks of repressed anger and personal malice. Despite their responsibility to be fair and balanced, such individuals are unable to put limits on the emotions that drive their vicious behaviors. Though not as troublesome, many minor bureaucrats also possess such traits. The enforcing sadist represents a combination of the sadistic and compulsive personalities. (p. 517)

The label *enforcing sadist* — or even its nonpathological, more benign, *hostile enforcer* variant — should be used with circumspection. It may not be an apt characterization for leaders such as Xi, with moderately elevated Dominant and Conscientious MIDC scales. In less pronounced cases, consistent with the principle of syndromal continuity (see Immelman, 2005), the above description at best serves as an informative caricature for contextualizing the "true believer" ideological zeal typically found in the Dominant–Conscientious personality composite.

Secondary Pattern — Scale 2: The Ambitious Pattern

Xi Jinping's Scale 2 elevation (affirmatively 9; equivocally ranging as high as 17) is effectively identical to his elevation on Scale 6 (affirmatively 9; equivocally ranging as high as 19), which complicates the determination of whether his personality composite should be viewed as Dominant–Conscientious (1A–6) or Dominant–Ambitious (1A–2). The tentative judgment is that the former offers a more precise characterization. Nonetheless, a comprehensive understanding of Xi requires due consideration of his Ambitious (Scale 2) personality features, which serve to modulate or offset some of his Conscientious (Scale 6) qualities.

The Ambitious pattern, as do all personality patterns, occurs on a continuum ranging from normal to maladaptive. At the well-adjusted pole are confident, socially poised, assertive personalities.²⁷ Slightly exaggerated Ambitious features occur in personalities that are sometimes perceived as self-promoting, overconfident, or arrogant.²⁸ In its most deeply ingrained, inflexible form, the Ambitious pattern manifests itself in extreme self-absorption or exploitative behavior patterns that may be consistent with a clinical diagnosis of narcissistic personality disorder.²⁹

Normal, adaptive variants of the Ambitious pattern (i.e., confident and self-serving types) correspond to Oldham and Morris's (1995) *Self-Confident* style, Strack's (1997) *confident* style, and Millon's (1994) *Asserting* pattern. Millon's Asserting pattern is positively correlated with the five-factor model's *Extraversion* and *Conscientiousness* factors and negatively correlated with its *Neuroticism* factor (Millon, 1994, p. 82). It is associated with "social composure, or poise, self-possession, equanimity, and stability" — a constellation of adaptive traits that in amplified, inflated form shades into its dysfunctional variant, the narcissistic personality (Millon, 1994, p. 32).

Millon (1994) summarizes the Asserting (i.e., Ambitious) pattern as follows:

An interpersonal boldness, stemming from a belief in themselves and their talents, characterize[s] those high on the ... Asserting [Ambitious] scale. Competitive, ambitious, and self-assured, they naturally assume positions of leadership, act in a decisive and unwavering manner, and expect others to recognize their special qualities and cater to them. Beyond being self-confident, those with an ... [Ambitious] profile often are audacious, clever, and persuasive, having sufficient charm to win others over to their own causes and purposes. Problematic in this regard may be their lack of social reciprocity and their sense of entitlement — their assumption that what they wish for is their due. On the other hand, their ambitions often succeed, and they typically prove to be effective leaders. (p. 32)

Oldham and Morris (1995) offer the following portrait of the normal (*Self-Confident*) prototype of the Ambitious pattern:

Self-Confident [Ambitious] individuals stand out. They're the leaders, the shining lights, the attention-getters in their public or private spheres. Theirs is a star quality born of self-regard, self-respect, self-certainty — all those *self* words that denote a faith in oneself and a commitment to one's self-styled purpose. Combined with the ambition that marks this style, that ... self-regard can transform idle dreams into real accomplishment. ... Self-Confident [Ambitious] men and women know what they want, and they get it. Many of them have the charisma to attract plenty of others to their goals. They are extroverted and intensely political. They know how to work the crowd, how to motivate it, and how to lead it. (p. 85)

Strack (1997) provides the following description of the normal (*confident*) prototype of the Ambitious 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:

²⁷ Relevant to Xi.

²⁸ Marginally relevant to Xi.

²⁹ Not applicable to Xi.

Aloof, calm, and confident, these personalities tend to be egocentric and self-reliant. They may have a keen sense of their own importance, uniqueness, or entitlement. Confident [Ambitious] individuals enjoy others' attention and may be quite bold socially, although they are seldom garish. They can be self-centered to a fault and may become so preoccupied with themselves that they lack concern and empathy for others. These persons have a tendency to believe that others share, or should share, their sense of worth. As a result, they may expect others to submit to their wishes and desires, and to cater to them. ... When feeling exposed or undermined, these individuals are frequently disdainful, obstructive, or vindictive. In the workplace, confident [Ambitious] persons like to take charge in an emphatic manner, often doing so in a way that instills confidence in others. Their self-assurance, wit, and charm often win them supervisory and leadership positions. (Adapted from Strack, 1997, pp. 489–490, with minor modifications)

As previously noted, 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. As noted before, Millon's (1996) attribute domains accentuate the maladaptive range of the personality patterns in his taxonomy — in the case of the Ambitious pattern, the exploitative pole of the confident–self-serving–exploitative continuum. The diagnostic features of the Ambitious 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. 273–277) descriptions of the more adaptive variants of this pattern. Nonetheless, some of the specified traits may be less pronounced and more adaptive in the case of individuals for whom this pattern is less elevated (as in the case of Xi, for whom the Ambitious pattern represents a secondary elevation in his overall personality configuration).

Expressive Behavior

The core diagnostic feature of the expressive acts of Ambitious individuals is their *confidence*; they are socially poised, self-assured, and self-confident, conveying an air of calm, untroubled self-assurance. More exaggerated variants³⁰ of the Ambitious pattern tend to act in a *conceited* manner, their natural self-assurance shading into supreme self-confidence, hubris, immodesty, or presumptuousness. They are self-promoting and may display an inflated sense of self-importance. They typically have a superior, supercilious, imperious, haughty, disdainful manner. Characteristically, though usually unwittingly, they exploit others, take them for granted, and frequently act as though entitled. All variants of this pattern are to some degree self-centered and lacking in generosity and social reciprocity. (Millon, 1996, p. 405; Millon & Everly, 1985, pp. 32, 39)

Sample illustrative observation: "[Harvard University professor Roderick] MacFarquhar says Xi shows a remarkably higher level of confidence than many of his peers, including the premier-to-be, Li Keqiang." (Shi, 2012)

Interpersonal Conduct

The core diagnostic feature of the interpersonal conduct of Ambitious individuals is their assertiveness; they stand their ground and are tough, competitive, persuasive, hardnosed, and

³⁰ Marginally relevant to Xi.

shrewd. More exaggerated variants³¹ of the Ambitious pattern are *entitled*; they lack genuine empathy and expect favors without assuming reciprocal responsibilities. All variants of this pattern exude confidence and authority, which tends to evoke admiration in others or submission to their will. Indeed, these personalities are skilled at sizing up those around them and conditioning those so disposed to adulate, glorify, and serve them. (Millon, 1996, pp. 405–406; Millon & Everly, 1985, pp. 32, 39)

Sample illustrative observation: "In a meeting with American business leaders in Beijing last week, Mr. Xi appeared self-assured, exuding confidence that, despite China's recent economic turbulence, his government holds the upper hand." (Buckley & Perlez, 2015)

Cognitive Style

The core diagnostic feature of the cognitive style of Ambitious individuals is their *imaginativeness*; they are inventive, innovative, and resourceful, ardently believing in their own efficacy. More exaggerated variants³² of the Ambitious pattern are cognitively *expansive*; they display extraordinary confidence in their own ideas and potential for success and redeem themselves by taking liberty with facts or distorting the truth. All variants of this pattern to some degree harbor narcissistic fantasies of success or glory or rationalize their failures; thus, they tend to exaggerate their achievements, transform failures into successes, construct lengthy and intricate justifications that inflate their self-worth, and quickly deprecate those who refuse to bend to or enhance their admirable sense of self-worth. (Millon, 1996, p. 406; Millon & Everly, 1985, pp. 32, 39)

Sample illustrative observation: "Many of Mr. Xi's accomplishments and his likely plans for the future are underpinned by an idealistic view that China's 200-year eclipse is ending now, and it is his mission to lead a rigidly controlled China back to the center of the world stage." (Johnson, 2017)

Mood/Temperament

The core diagnostic feature of the characteristic mood and temperament of Ambitious individuals is their social *poise*; they are self-composed, serene, and optimistic, and are typically imperturbable, unruffled, and cool and levelheaded under pressure. More exaggerated variants³³ of the Ambitious pattern are *insouciant*; they manifest a general air of nonchalance, imperturbability, or feigned tranquility. They characteristically appear coolly unimpressionable or buoyantly optimistic, except when their narcissistic confidence is shaken, at which time either rage, shame, or emptiness is briefly displayed. All variants of this pattern to some degree convey a self-satisfied smugness, yet are easily angered when criticized, obstructed, or crossed. (Millon, 1996, p. 408; Millon & Everly, 1985, pp. 32, 39)

³¹ Marginally relevant to Xi.

³² Marginally relevant to Xi.

³³ Marginally relevant to Xi.

Sample illustrative observation: "In his first public speech as China's new party head, Xi appeared relaxed and comfortable inside his own skin — I unlike with the carefully scripted public appearances by Hu, who often seemed robotic and ill at ease." (Liu, 2012)

Self-Image

The core diagnostic feature of the self-perception of Ambitious individuals is their *certitude*; they have strong self-efficacy beliefs and considerable courage of conviction. More exaggerated variants³⁴ of the Ambitious pattern have an *admirable* sense of self; they view themselves as extraordinarily meritorious and esteemed by others, and have a high degree of self-worth, though others may see them as egotistic, inconsiderate, cocksure, and arrogant. In high-level leadership positions, some of these individuals may exhibit a messianic self-perception. (Millon, 1996, p. 406)

Sample illustrative observation: Carl Minzer, professor of law at Fordham University, has said that Xi Jinping "sees himself ... as a fundamentally transformative historical figure." (Council on Foreign Relations, 2015)

Regulatory Mechanisms

The core diagnostic features of the unconscious regulatory (i.e., ego-defense) mechanisms of highly Ambitious individuals³⁵ are *rationalization* and *fantasy*; when their subjectively admirable self-image is challenged or their confidence shaken, they maintain equilibrium with facile self-deceptions, devising plausible reasons to justify their self-centered and socially inconsiderate behaviors. They rationalize their difficulties, offering alibis to put themselves in a positive light despite evident shortcomings and failures. When rationalization fails, they turn to fantasy to assuage their feelings of dejection, shame, or emptiness, redeem themselves, and reassert their pride and status. (Millon, 1996, p. 407)

Object Representations

The core diagnostic feature of the internalized object representations of highly Ambitious individuals³⁶ is their *contrived* nature; 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 consists of illusory and changing memories. Consequently, problematic experiences are refashioned to appear consonant with their high sense of self-worth, and unacceptable impulses and deprecatory evaluations are transmuted into more admirable images and percepts. (Millon, 1996, pp. 406–407)

³⁴ Marginally relevant to Xi.

³⁵ Marginally relevant to Xi.

³⁶ Marginally relevant to Xi.

Morphologic Organization

The core diagnostic feature of the morphological organization of highly Ambitious individuals³⁷ is its *spuriousness*; the interior design of the personality system, so to speak, is essentially counterfeit, or bogus. Owing to the misleading nature of their early experiences — characterized by the ease with which good things came to them — these individuals may lack the inner skills necessary for regulating their impulses, channeling their needs, and resolving conflicts. Accordingly, commonplace demands may be viewed as annoying incursions and routine responsibilities as pedestrian or demeaning. Excuses and justifications are easily mustered and serve to perpetuate selfish behaviors and exploitative, duplicitous social conduct. (Millon, 1996, pp. 407–408)

Leadership Implications

The present study offers an empirically based framework for anticipating Xi Jinping's executive performance as president. There is utility in coordinating the present findings with alternative models of political personality and complementary theories of political leadership.

Presidential Style

Dean Keith Simonton's (1988) empirically derived framework of five presidential styles (charismatic, interpersonal, deliberative, neurotic, and creative) offers a promising frame of reference. Given the fidelity with which Simonton's leadership styles mirror the currently popular five-factor model (FFM), whose correlates with Millon's personality patterns have been empirically established (Millon, 1994, p. 82), Simonton's stylistic dimensions may have considerable heuristic value for establishing links between personality and political leadership.

Though speculative, Xi's primary Dominant and secondary Conscientious personality pattern can be mapped onto to Simonton's stylistic dimensions. Given that Millon's (1994) Controlling (i.e., dominant) pattern is positively correlated with the "Big Five" Conscientiousness factor and negatively correlated with its Agreeableness and Neuroticism factors (see Millon, 1994, p. 82), and considering that Xi obtained a moderately elevated scores on the MIDC Dominant and Conscientious scales, it may be hypothesized that a leader with Xi's personality profile configuration would display leadership traits associated with Simonton's "deliberative" style and the low pole of his "interpersonal" style (which is correlated with the MIDC Outgoing and Accommodating scales, on which Xi obtained relatively low scores). According to Simonton (1988), the deliberative leader

commonly "understands [the] implications of his decisions; exhibits depth of comprehension" ..., is "able to visualize alternatives and weigh long term consequences" ..., "keeps himself thoroughly informed; reads briefings [and] background reports" ..., is "cautious, conservative in action" ..., and only infrequently "indulges in emotional outbursts." (p. 931)

³⁷ Marginally relevant to Xi.

Furthermore, a leader located on the low pole of Simonton's (1988) interpersonal style — as appears to be the case for Xi, with his modest scores on the Outgoing and Accommodating scales — typically

"accepts recommendations of others only under protest" ..., "believes he knows what is best for the people" ..., "is emphatic in asserting his judgments" ..., is "suspicious of reformers" ..., is "impatient, abrupt in conference" ..., "bases decisions on willfulness, nervousness, and egotism" ... [and] "tends to force decisions to be made prematurely." (p. 931)

Accordingly, the leader low on interpersonality typically will *not*

"[encourage] the exercise of independent judgment by aides" ..., "[give] credit to others for work done" ..., "[endear himself] to staff through his courtesy and consideration" ..., "[be] flexible" ..., "[emphasize] teamwork" ..., "[be frequently] in contact with his advisers" ..., "[maintain] close relationships with a wide circle of associates" ..., [be] "willing to make compromises" ..., "[rely] on working in a staff system, deciding among options formulated by advisers" ..., "[and keep] members of his staff informed on matters concerning other departments." (Simonton, 1988, pp. 929, 931)

Finally, regarding Xi's secondary elevation on the Ambitious scale, Simonton's "charismatic" leadership style conceptually corresponds to the "Big Five" Extraversion factor, which incorporates aspects of Millon's Outgoing and Ambitious patterns. Keeping in mind that Xi was found to be highly Ambitious, but not particularly Outgoing (or Reserved), Simonton's description of the charismatic style can be stripped of its more outgoing elements to read as follows:

Ambitious types are skilled and self-confident negotiators, use rhetoric effectively, are energetic and determined, exhibit artistry in manipulation, are not shy or awkward in public, rarely permit themselves to be outflanked, are innovative, and initiate new legislation and programs. (Adapted from Simonton, 1988, pp. 930, 931)

Presidential Temperament

James David Barber (1972/1992), focusing more narrowly on presidential temperament, developed a simple model of presidential character that has shown some utility in predicting successful (active–positive) and failed (active–negative) presidencies.

In terms of presidential temperament, Xi, with his elevated scores on the MIDC Dominant and Conscientious scales, seems most similar to Barber's (1972/1992) *active–negative* presidential character — leaders such as Woodrow Wilson and Richard Nixon, who were rigid and highly driven, compulsively expending great energy on task performance yet seemingly deriving little inherent joy from the office of president and using power primarily as a means to self-realization.

Character-Based Leadership Skills

Stanley Renshon (1996) has proposed "three distinct aspects" (p. 226) of political leadership shaped by character: *mobilization* — the ability to arouse, engage, and direct the public; *orchestration* — the organizational skill and ability to craft specific policies; and *consolidation* — the skills and tasks required to preserve the supportive relationships necessary for an executive leader to implement and institutionalize his or her policy judgments (pp. 227, 411).

Xi's most pressing personality-based limitation as president may be the ability to arouse, engage, and direct the public (i.e., mobilization), which is more commonly the preserve of highly outgoing, less conscientious candidates like former U.S. presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Donald Trump.

As a chief executive, Xi's greatest strength, by dint of his high conscientiousness, is orchestration. Consequently, Xi can be expected to display superlative organizational skill in conjunction with the sustained focus and attention to detail necessary to excel in the minutiae of crafting specific policies.

Regarding the third element of personality-driven political leadership, consolidation, the picture is more complex. Although the ability to implement one's policy objectives is partially dependent on the same qualities that favor orchestration Xi may be hampered by his lack of outgoing personality traits, with its attendant deficits in the personal charisma necessary for consummating his policy objectives; however, this deficiency is less critical in an authoritarian (vs. democratic) political system, where a leader can rely on dominance to implement and institutionalize his political vision.

Foreign Policy Leadership Orientation

Lloyd Etheredge (1978) and Margaret Hermann (1987) developed personality-based models of foreign policy leadership orientation that can be employed rationally and intuitively to enhance and complement the predictive utility of Millon's model with respect to leadership performance in the arena of international relations.

In terms of Etheredge's (1978) fourfold typology of personality-based foreign policy role orientations, which locates policymakers on the dimensions of dominance–submission and introversion–extraversion, Xi Jinping's Scale 1A (Dominant) elevation suggests that he is highly dominant in orientation. His low elevations on both Scale 3 (Outgoing) and Scale 8 (Retiring) does not permit classification on the introversion–extraversion dimension pending further empirical investigation. Thus, it cannot be determined at the present time whether Xi should be classified as a high-dominance introvert or a high-dominance extravert.

According to Etheredge, high-dominance introverts tend

to divide the world, in their thought, between the moral values they think it ought to exhibit and the forces opposed to this vision. They tend to have a strong, almost Manichean, moral component to their views. They tend to be described as stubborn and tenacious. They seek to reshape the world in accordance with their personal vision, and their ... policies are often characterized by the tenaciousness with which they advance one central idea. ... [They] seem relatively preoccupied with themes of *exclusion*, the establishment of institutions or principles to keep potentially disruptive forces in check. (p. 449; italics in original)

In fact, Xi reportedly "has proclaimed that China has both the intent and the capability to reshape the international order," yet "much of what passes for Chinese global leadership to date is simply the pursuit of China's own narrow interests" (Economy, 2018), suggesting that Xi is focused on "one central idea" and "preoccupied with themes of exclusion."

High-dominance extraverts, on the other hand, share high-dominance introverts' tendency "to use military force," but in general

are more flexible and pragmatic, more varied in the wide range and scope of major foreign policy initiatives. ... [In contrast to high-dominance introverts, they] want to lead rather than contain. They advocate change, seek to stir up things globally. ... [and] are relatively more interested in *inclusion* [compared with high-dominance introverts, who favor exclusion], initiating programs and institutions for worldwide leadership and cooperative advance on a wide range of issues. (p. 449)

Given the prominence of the Conscientious pattern in Xi's profile, it is speculated (pending empirical confirmation), that Xi Jinping is more likely to exhibit the operating style and role orientation of Etheredge's *high-dominance introvert* in the international system.

Conceptually, Etheredge's high-dominance introvert appears to be most similar in character to Hermann's (1987) *expansionist* orientation to foreign affairs — leaders with a view of the world as being "divided into 'us' and 'them'," based on a belief system in which conflict is viewed as inherent in the international system. This world view prompts a personal political style characterized by a "wariness of others' motives" and a "directive," controlling interpersonal orientation. The net effect of this world view and personal political style is a foreign policy "focused on issues of security and status," favoring "low-commitment actions" and espousing "short-term, immediate change in the international arena," motivated by the ambition to gain "control over more territory, resources, or people" Expansionist leaders "are not averse to using the 'enemy' as a scapegoat" and their rhetoric often may be "hostile in tone" (pp. 168–169).

Conclusion

The present study offers an empirically based personological framework for inferring Xi Jinping's major personal strengths and limitations and anticipating his leadership style as president. Xi's major personality strength in a leadership role is a forceful, commanding personality style that permits him to take charge and inspire public confidence. His major personality-based limitation is an overcontrolling, expansionist tendency, which may foster conflict and counterhostility in the international arena.

In conclusion, Xi Jinping's *Ambitious* pattern — with his supreme self-confidence and narcissistic dreams of glory — captures the essence of his enduring quest in pursuit of power. His *Conscientious* pattern, in turn, exemplifies his remarkable skill in navigating the bureaucracy to orchestrate his tenacious path to power. Finally, his *Dominant* pattern accounts for his exceptional ability to consolidate power and emerge as the most powerful Chinese leader since Mao Zedong.

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Appendix

MIDC Score Sheet for Xi Jinping

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															20100		Scale													Attribute tally						
Attribute		1A			1B	2			3			4			5A			5B			6			7			8			9		10		Min	Max	
	а	b	c	а	b	С	a	b	c	a	b	С	а	b	c	а	b	С	a	b	c	а	b	С	а	b	c	а	b	С	d	e	d	e		IVIA
A	-		(3)	0	X	X	1	2	(3)	1	X	X	0	X	X	1	X	X	1	2	X	1	@	(3)	①	(2)	3	1	X	X	4	8	X	×	12	16
В	1	(2)	3	X	X	X	1	2	X	1	X	X	1	×	X	X	X	X	1	X	X	1	(2)	3	1	X	X	1	X	X	A	X	X	X	7	9
c	1	2	3	0	X	X	1	2	(3)	1	X	X	(1)	×	×	X	X	X	1	X	X	1	(2)	(3)	X	X	×	X	X	X	4	8	X	X	8	12
D	1	1	X	1	X	×	1	X	X	1	X	×	1	×	×	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	X	X	(1)	X	X	×	X	X	A	X	X	X	6	7
E	1	2	(3)	1	X	X	1	(2)	3	(1)	×	X	1	X	×	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	2	3	X	X	X	X	X	X	(4)	×	X	X	7	11
Scale	5	6	3	4	0	0	5	4	0	3	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	5	4	0	2	0	0	0		0	8	0	0	0		
score (lower)		14			4			9			3			4			0			2			9		2			0		8		3	0			
Scale	5	8	9	4		0	5	6	6	4	0	0	5	0	0	O.	0	0	2	0	0	5	8	6	3	2	0	0	0	0	12	-	0	0		
score (upper)	Г	22			4	-		17	r		4			5			0			2			19		3				0		12		()		7.
F		3			3			3			3			3			3			3			3			3			3		4	-	4			
G		3			3			3			3			3			3			3			3		74	3			3		4		4			
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