Psychology of Political Leaders
- and their effect on international relations,
a case study of George W Bush

BACHELOR THESIS
Author: JOHAN HOLMGREN
Tutor: MIKAEL SANDBERG
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Author: Johan Holmgren

Tutor: Mikael Sandberg

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to examine whether the individual political leader is important for the analysis of international relations. Traditionally the focus of investigation in international relations has been on the nation-state, or the systems level, and as a result the individual level has been somewhat neglected. Using the theory of political psychology there is a possibility of finding nuances that might not be found if the focus of the investigation is on the nation-state. With the help of key concepts such as personality, emotion, cognition, and social identity decision making that has affected world politics have been examined. An empirical examination of the political psychology has been made by applying the theory to a case study, George W. Bush. By applying the theory of political psychology to the decision making process used by George W. Bush and his Administration it will be shown that the individual can impact world politics, especially in the case of the invasion of Iraq. Furthermore, one of the flaws of the theory of political psychology, its problem in handling the concept of global terrorism, is briefly discussed. The conclusion that has been drawn in this thesis is that the individual level of analysis is just as important as the systems level or the domestic level of analysis.
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1 Introduction

1.1 Problem

Classic international theory has divided the field into three separate levels of analysis; the systems level, the domestic level, and the individual level. Most research in the field of international relations has been on the first of these three levels, the systems level. Focus is put on the nation-state and its capabilities; economic and military strength. Very little effort has been put into research of the leaders of the nation or how the domestic political climate is organized. The most prominent theory that deals with the systems level is Realism, a theory that has dominated international relations since the end of the Second World War, and during the Cold War. Even with the fall of the Soviet Union, and as a result an end to the Cold War, Realism held its position as the most influential international theory. As a result the other two levels of analysis have been somewhat neglected. Too much emphasis has been put on the state and the individuals that run the state have been, to a certain extent disregarded. Or to put it more simply; it does not matter who is in charge, the state will act the same regardless of who the leader is. This is a notion that I believe is misleading.

1.2 Purpose and limitations

The purpose of this essay is to examine if individual political leaders matter in international politics. Will it matter who is in charge of a nation? Was American foreign policy under President Nixon different than American foreign policy under President Kennedy, not just because of outside circumstances but also as a result of the difference between them as individuals? There are several distinctions and limitations that need to be addressed in order to examine the find a fair answer to questions of this magnitude.

Firstly, it is important to mention that the power of the state is still vastly important. A political leader needs a strong state in order to affect international politics. The leader of a powerful country such as America will have a greater opportunity to influence international politics then the leader of a small country such as Sweden. As a result this thesis will examine individual political leaders in The United States. State capacity is just as important at the individual level as it is on the state level. This fact will be taken into consideration when dealing with individual political leaders but it will not be dealt with in any great detail in this thesis.
Secondly, discussions and argument presented in this thesis all apply to countries with democratic rule. It goes without saying that a dictator will affect international politics, since the dictator is the one making all decisions without having any restrictions from domestic bureaucracies or opposing political parties. The argument that will be put forward in this paper is that democratically elected leaders can affect world politics, even with all the domestic restrictions that are in place. A nation’s foreign policy will differ depending on who is in charge, regardless if they are members of the same political party or not.

In order to examine the purpose stated above several limitations need to be made. Firstly I have decided to limit the thesis to deal with one nation only, the United States of America. Secondly, only one of the many important individuals of international politics will be examined, the president. Thirdly, in order to get a more comprehensive investigation of the individual’s importance in politics only one president will be examined, President George W Bush.

Certain aspects of international relations have been left out of the discussion of this thesis. This is done in order to examine individual aspects in greater detail. The argument that I am making regarding the importance of the individual in international politics should not be seen as coming at the expense of the other two levels of international relations. The systems level and domestic level should be considered as being part of the discussion that is being held throughout the thesis; they are taken for granted in the discussion. The focus will, however, be on the individual and as a result the other two levels have been excluded.

1.3 Thesis questions

- Can individual political leaders affect world politics?
- Are individual political leaders important for the analyzing international relations?

1.4 Structure

The thesis is structured in the following way. Firstly a description of the theory chosen for the examination of the problem discussed above. Political psychology defines several aspects that are useful in a discussion of the individual in politics. Concepts such as personality, cognition, social identity and emotions will be presented, defined, and discussed. Following this chapter will be a brief presentation of the case study, George W Bush and his administration. The case study will be followed by an analysis where the concepts discussed in chapter 2 will be ap-
plied to some of the foreign policy decisions that were made by the Bush Administration during its first five years. Furthermore, the President's personality in relation to these decisions will be examined and discussed. Following the analysis a brief discussion regarding the shortcomings of the theory of Political Psychology will be presented. In the final chapter a conclusion will be presented where the importance of the individual leader will be discussed in general and George W Bush in particular.

1.5 Case study

President George W Bush: American president between 2000 to present. Republican President who just as his predecessors has made decisions that has had a huge impact on world politics. The reason for using President Bush is that he made the decision to invade Iraq, something that has been on the agenda for several American presidents since the late eighties. Why did President George W Bush decide to invade when President Clinton and President George H W Bush decided not to? The reasons for choosing President Bush for the case study were several. Firstly the President has allowed reporter Bob Woodward to follow him and several members of the administration during their time in office. As a result there is quite a lot of good and reliably information to be found concerning the President’s life in office, especially on a more personal level than any other President. Secondly, the current American President has made two decisions that have had a tremendous impact on world politics; the War on Terror and the invasion of Iraq.

1.6 Method

The theory that has been chosen in order to examine the individuals influence on international relations is the theory of political psychology. The reason for using this theory is two-fold; firstly psychology will provide an understanding of how the human mind reacts in certain situations and secondly it gives us a different angle for researching international relations. If we would simply examine the actions of an individual without taking the psychological aspect into account we would be researching the actions of the nation-state and simply accrediting these actions to the leader. The theory of political psychology provides the framework needed to pursue the purpose of this thesis.

Through a literary study, the theory of Political Psychology has been defined and discussed in detail. The key concepts have then been applied to an empirical case. The goal has
been to examine if the dependent variables can be identified in the decisions that have been taken by the person who is the subject of the case study.

The case study chosen for this thesis is American President George W Bush. Bush was chosen for several reasons; firstly, I believe that examining a current leader would make the thesis more interesting, but also more difficult since I could not use the advantage of historical hindsight. The use of a current international political leader also provided more information, especially from newspaper and periodical articles. Secondly, there was a need of finding a case study that could be argued to have affected the international community on a large scale, so that the issue of actual world wide effect would not be questioned. The information needed to perform an empirical test on the chosen case has been gathered from literature; books, articles, and internet resources. There is a certain element of danger with applying a pre-determined theory to a particular case study by only using secondary sources. However, the empirical test that I wished to perform could not have been done in a different way. There was of course the option of interviewing the subject of the case study directly, but since the subject was the current President of the United States this option can not be seen as a realistic one.
2 Political psychology

In this chapter the theory of political psychology will be presented and briefly discussed. The chapter is constructed in the following. A brief background of the theory is presented followed by a presentation of the four key concepts of the theory. The four key concepts (personality, cognition, social identity, and emotions) are defined so that they can be applied to the chosen case study. In addition, these four concepts are then used extensively in the analysis and discussion.

2.1 Background

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the notion that individual political leaders can have an effect on the decisions taken in international politics. This notion adheres from liberalism where the individual is seen as the most important actor in both economics and politics. It is, however, not liberalism that will be used in order to examine if political leaders differ from each other and, as a result, make different decisions when faced by similar types of crisis. Instead the theory of political psychology will be used.

International relations can be divided into three different levels of analysis; systems level, domestic level, and individual level. At the systems level we focus on the nation state, the domestic level deals with the inner workings of domestic bureaucracies, and finally the individual level examines the leaders of the bureaucracies. Political Psychology deals with all three levels of analysis but this thesis will focus on the third level, namely the individual level. One of the more common means of analyzing the first level of international relations has been to use Graham T. Allison’s Rational Policy Model. This model is built upon the assumption that the government of a nation state will act rationally.

To achieve rationality the nation state will set up a goal and with several different options to their disposal choose the option that is most rational. The most rational option will be the option that satisfies the goal with the least amount of negative consequences. This way of analyzing has also been used at the individual level, especially by economic theorists who argue that individuals will make the most rational choice available since they have both complete information

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1 Allison 1969
2 Ibid. Page 691
3 Ibid.
and knowledge. In order to make a complete rational decision we need perfect information as well as being able to examine all the possible consequences of the decision.

Unfortunately having complete information is seldom the case in international relations. Since complete information cannot be achieved, it is impossible to consider every possible consequence of a decision. As a result individuals cannot achieve complete rationality and will instead be limited to what political scientist Herbert Simon refers to as bounded rationality. An individual political actor tries to process all the information available in order to make the most rational decision possible. The problem is that humans are imperfect information gatherers, we decide what information is most important to us and hence might disregard information that would have made us take a completely different decision. Several factors such as; personality, emotions, bounded rationality, cognition, social identity will have an effect on what information a political leader will decide to use, making him/her an imperfect information gatherer.

We can illustrate this with a simple example. Politician A and Politician B are both members of parliament and are trying to decide how to vote regarding a new law on foreign labor. Politician A is against the new law since he believes that it will take away job opportunities from the domestic market. Furthermore he is a long time member of one of the labor unions. Politician B sees this as a great opportunity for the country, expanding its market to the rest of the world and in turn making the domestic market a part of a global market. As a result Politician A decides to vote against the new law and Politician B decides to vote for the new law.

This example might be a little too simplified, but it illustrates quite well how the human mind works in politics. Even though both politicians have the same information they choose to view it in different ways. One sees the negative in joining the global market while the other views it at something positive. The reason for mentioning that Politician A is a long time member of a labor union is to show how social identity can affect a decision; he clearly identifies with the domestic workers and therefore views foreign labor as a threat to the domestic. Politician B on the other hand has no clear affiliation with that group and therefore focuses on other parts of the same information.

Political actors are imperfect information gatherers, choosing what information to use when making a decision. As a result, some decisions might seem highly illogical and irrational. These decisions are based on personal identity, values, believes, emotion, cognition, and social

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4 Simon 1997. Page 87
5 Ibid.
identity. Political psychology is one way of trying to explain why politicians make the decisions they do.

Most of the discussion regarding Political Psychology in this thesis will be based on the writing by Cottam et al. The same references will be the main source of information for defining several key concepts in the field. Much of the discussion presented in this chapter is part of other theories on the same subject. One very important scholar that needs to be mentioned in a thesis dealing with the psychology of decision making is Herbert Simon. The Nobel Laureate in Economic Science in 1978 developed a theory discussing the rationality of decision making. Even though the theory was designed within the field of economics it has been used in several other academic fields of study, one of them being political science. The theory itself will not be used extensively in this thesis but I feel that it is important to make a very brief presentation of it.

The theory of bounded rationality was designed to show that the decisions that individuals and organizations take are not perfectly rational. Simon wanted to show that humans are not perfectly rational when making a decision. We are, however, not perfectly irrational either. Our rationality is constricted (bounded) by lack of information and lack of capacity to incorporate all the necessary information. “The point was not that people are consciously and deliberately irrational, although they sometimes are, but that neither knowledge nor the powers of calculation allow them to achieve the high level of optimal adaption of means to ends that is posited in economics”. A perfect rational decision demand that all information is available to us and that we have the capacity to handle all this valuable information. Simon argues, and rightly so, that this is impossible and therefore we should understand that we are subject to a bounded rationality in decision making. This is just as true for a president of a company as it is for a president of a nation. One of the reasons put forward by Simon that will influence our rationality is cognition. Simon’s views on cognition are in many aspects the same as has been presented in chapter 2.2 of this thesis. “…any information that we gather about the world, whether through a telescope or a microscope or by interviewing or observing business executives, is filtered through our eyes and ears, hence influenced by our representations of reality”. Herbert Simon’s theory of bounded rationality has been, and continues to be, a major source of influence for political psychologists.

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6 Cottam et al. 2004
In this chapter four important factors that are useful when examining individual political leaders will be presented and defined; personality, social identity, emotions, and cognition. It is important to mention that it is not a question of if individuals are affected by these four factors or not, it is rather to what extent they are affected and which one is more influential and why. In order to perform the case study and analysis mentioned in the introduction it is important to clearly define these four factors.

2.2 Personality

Personality is at the core of our political being, it is the factor that probably has the largest psychological effect on a politician’s behavior. This takes its form through personality traits such as quest for power, complexity in thinking, or process of information. Even though the same personality traits can be found in more than one person the way in which they are combined is highly individual, there are no persons with the exact same composition of personality traits.

Next we need to look deeper into what shapes our personal traits and decides what traits will mean more to us than others. One influential aspect is life experience. How we were raised by our family, was it a single parent home or a two parent home. Was it a happy childhood or a childhood filled with struggle and pain etc? One good example that illustrates this way of thinking was made by Alexander L George and Juliette L. George in their book about former American president Woodrow Wilson (Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House). They related Wilson’s highly moral and uncompromising political style with his childhood. Wilson’s father ran a household that emphasized high morals and made a clear distinction between good and evil and every time Wilson would overstep the boundaries he would be punished by his father. George and George argue that this made Wilson despise authoritarian figures but also was one of the main reasons why he began to create the League of Nations. The goal was to create a meeting place where the countries of the world could agree to get along and create a moral framework that would be a guarantor for world peace. Unfortunately for both Wilson and the international community his plans would not be realized and the League of Nations was dismantled as the Second World War broke out. The aspect of family and upbringing becomes even more interesting when we view American politics in the last thirty years. American politics have become a

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9 Cottam et al. 2004
10 From Ibid.
11 Ibid. Page. 17
little bit of a family affair, where sons will take over from their fathers in politics. There has almost become an American political class with families such as Bush, Kennedy, and Gore being in positions of power from generation to generation. It is not a large political class of elites that has been created but there is an existing political class in the United States. Will the fact that you have been brought up with a parent in political office influence your time in political office, trying to get rid of the shadow of your father or perhaps trying to create your own legacy and be more productive than your parent. It is important to mention that this is pure speculation but it still interesting to think in these terms when viewing life experience. Further, education will play an important role, choice of college and grad school will affect you as a person, and in turn your personality. Another factor of life experience that might affect your personality is traumatic events. Death in the family or illness can alter a political leader’s personality.

A further interesting aspect of the human personality is that it is considered to be quite fixed; it will not be easily affected by outside pressure. Our personality is constant, or at least close to being constant\textsuperscript{12}. If it changes it will only be minor changes. Furthermore our personality will have an affect on us unconsciously, it is seldom that we realize how our personality will affect the decisions we make but it still does. As mentioned previously, it is not something that is easily changed to fit the problem face before us. This is true not only for political decisions but for most of the decisions we make in life.

Personality will have an affect on a person’s decision making process but it will further affect their leadership style. Personality traits will affect the type of leadership style that political leaders will choose to adhere. A leader’s characteristics, affected by his/hers personality, could have a great influence on both domestic politics and foreign policy. The following are a few descriptions of individual characteristics from Cottam et al. (2004):

- **Need for power:** Concern with establishing, maintaining, or restoring one’s power, i.e. one’s impact, control, or influence over others.

- **Locus of control:** View of the world in which an individual does or does not perceive some degree of control over situations they are involved in: whether government can influence what happens in or to a nation.

- **Ethnocentrism:** View of the world in which one’s own nation holds center stage: strong emotional ties to one’s own nation: emphasis on national honor and identity.

\textsuperscript{12} Cottam et al. 2004.
- **Need for affiliation**: Concern with establishing, maintaining, or restoring warm and friendly relationships with other persons or groups.

- **Cognitive complexity**: Ability to differentiate the environment: Degree of differentiation person shows describing or discussing other people, places, policies, ideas, or things.

- **Distrust of others**: General feeling of doubt, uneasiness, and misgiving about others: inclination to suspect and doubt other’s motives and actions.

- **Self-confidence**: Person’s sense of self-importance or image of their ability to cope with the environment.

- **Task-interpersonal emphasis**: Relative emphasis, in interaction with others, on getting the task done vs. focusing on feelings and need of others.\(^\text{13}\)

These eight characteristics will be used in the analysis. There is a danger with trying to pin political leaders into one specific group or personal characteristic. It might be that there is a need to relate the leader chosen in the case study to more than one characteristic but the model could still prove useful in understanding differences in their respective personalities.

We all have different personalities, most commonly seen in our different personality traits. In the analysis the goal is to examine which different personality traits that are most prominent in George W Bush’s personality. The personality traits that will be most closely examined have been retrieved from authors that have written about the Presidents life, as well as interviews with Bush made by Bob Woodward for his three piece series on the workings of the Bush Administration.

### 2.3 Cognitive process

One way to describe the cognitive process is that it acts as a filtering system for the human brain\(^\text{14}\). Another definition was made by political psychologist Leon Festinger where he defines cognition as “the things a person knows about himself, about his behavior, and about his surrounding”\(^\text{15}\). We as humans are imperfect information gatherers, meaning that we cannot take in all the information that surrounds us. There is simply too much information available for our brain to take it all in. The cognitive process will then filter the information down to a level were

\(^{13}\) Entire table taken from Cottam et al. 2004. Page 29

\(^{14}\) Ibid. Page 9

\(^{15}\) Festinger 1957. Page 9
we can process it. With the help of this process we can receive and interpret information from the outside. It will also help us to brake down information concerning our environment into smaller pieces so that we are able to handle it. It is more or less impossible to handle all the information available to us in society today, especially with the technology that has evolved over the last decade. The human brain needs a tool to deal with all the information, the cognitive process is this tool. The cognitive process can be divided into two categories; information processing and categorization.

### 2.3.1 Information processing

The ways in which we process information differ from individual to individual. Since we cannot take in all the information available to us we chose what information that we want to use. There are several different psychological theories that try to explain why we choose to take in certain information and disregard other. One of these theories was developed by a psychologist by the name of Leon Festinger who developed a theory that is known as dissonance theory\(^\text{16}\). This theory deals with our attitudes and how they sometimes are not in line with our behavior. When our attitudes are not in agreement with our behavior we will create psychological tension, and we will experience pain. Festinger’s argument is that humans will strive for consistency but certain information or events might be contradictory to our beliefs and create inconsistency. Festinger refers to inconsistency as dissonance and consistency as consonance\(^\text{17}\). Since humans always strive for consonance we will try to reduce dissonance as much as possible and further try to avoid events and information that could create dissonance. According to Festinger there are two ways in which dissonance will occur. When new information is introduced to us we can experience temporary dissonance but will later adapt to this new information. “A person who is quite certain in his knowledge that automatic transmissions on automobiles are inefficient may accidently come across an article praising automatic transmissions”\(^\text{18}\). New information might cause temporary dissonance. We may also experience dissonance when we make a decision. Festinger argues that few situations are clear enough for us to make a decision without creating dissonance\(^\text{19}\). Since information and events can potentially create psychological pain we have a tendency to try to minimize it as much as possible. We will do this by either changing our behavior

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16 Cottam et al. 2004. Page 40  
17 Festinger 1957. Page 3  
18 Ibid. Page 5  
19 Ibid. Page 6
to fit the information or we will interpret the information so that it will fit our values and beliefs\textsuperscript{20}.

In politics this means that we will only gather information that fit into our mind-set and as a result valuable information can be left out of the decision making process. Information that is not consistent with our mind-set will be ignored or in some cases molded or changed so that it will be more easily accepted. One of the consequences of molding information is that it can get distorted or even take on a completely different meaning; in turn leading to that a decision is made with bad information.

Another way of dealing with information that does not fit into our pre-determined mind-set is to simply ignoring it, contradictory information will be ignored. This way of handling with information is called bolstering\textsuperscript{21}. It is commonly used in decision making when you are trying to convince yourself and/or others that one option is better then the other. The information supporting the option will be presented and the information that critic the same option will simply be left out of the discussion. Bolstering can further be used when we justify the decision that was taken. We highlight the positive consequences of our decision and ignore the negative. One example of bolstering, highlighted by Cottam et.al in the book Introduction to Political Psychology, is how President Lyndon B Johnson acted when he made the decision concerning air strikes in Vietnam. “President Johnson’s decision in 1965 to use air power in Vietnam gave evidence of bolstering, as well, in his belief that the air campaign would not have to last long and the war would end quickly (George, 1980)”\textsuperscript{22}.

Since humans are imperfect information gatherers we are prone to not only disregard information but also to interpret information in a wrong way. Bolstering and dissonance theory are two ways of explaining why such situations occur.

The impact of information processing will be examined in the analysis. There is little question that the Bush Administration was subject to information processing since we all are at any given time of day. What needs to be examined in the analysis is rather to what extent did information processing affected the President, and his Administration, during their decision making process. Did Political Psychological theories such as dissonance and bolstering create information processing affecting the President, and his Administration, during their decision making process. Did Political Psychological theories such as dissonance and bolstering create information processing affecting the President, and his Administration, during their decision making process.

\textsuperscript{20} Festinger 1957. Page 6

\textsuperscript{21} Cottam et al. 2004. Page 41

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid. Page 41
mation processing that made the President and his closest advisers disregard important information?

2.3.2 **Categorization**

Information processing will filter out information that is not consistent with our belief structure. The next step in cognitive theory is then to systemize the information that has been gathered, this process is called categorization\(^{23}\). The human brain will categorize information in order for us to process the information that is available to us more efficiently. There are two important concepts connected to categorization; stereotypes and images.

Stereotypes are used in order to categorize information more efficiently and with the least amount of effort. Cottam et al defines a stereotype as “beliefs about the attributes of people in particular groups or social categories”\(^{24}\). We will organize an individual that we know little about into a predetermined social group or category and then act accordingly. One example of this way of thinking is the classical Swedish stereotype towards Americans. An American on holiday in Sweden will most likely be regarded as very talkative or simply loud person. A person that will speak with everyone but have no interest in getting to know the person they are having a conversation with. Stereotypes of this nature are used all the time in any society the world over. Often a stereotype that we hold against another person will be either changed or completely removed when we get to know the person in question but since stereotyping requires less work we tend to use it in order to save both time and effort.

The concept of image is very similar to the concept of stereotypes. The goal of both actions is to categorize information so that it can be processed both faster and with less effort. There are, however, some differences between the two. While a stereotype focuses more on the individual leader of a country an image is more concentrated with the nation state. An image will be a factor when an individual leader decides how to act against another country and their government. Cottam et al argues that an image is created by assessing a foreign country; capability, culture, intentions, decision makers, and the level of threat. Furthermore, how the country or its leaders have acted previously will be taken into account. By using these factors a leader can determine if another country should be perceived as a threat and act accordingly. Depending on the political leaders perception of these factors the country in question will be fitted in to one of the preexisting images, here shown in Table 1.

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\(^{23}\) Cottam et al. 2004.
Certain images will generate certain actions by a political actor in foreign policy. An enemy will be perceived as more hostile than an ally and therefore be dealt with in a different way. The analysis and discussion will incorporate an attempt to identify which of these images that were actively used by President George W Bush. The Images and their pre-requisites will be applied to the literature used to conduct the analysis. The following part of this chapter will provide a more detailed discussion about the different images presented in Table 1.

### 2.3.2.1 Enemy

A political leader that classifies a country as an enemy believes that they have roughly the same economic and military capabilities as their own country. They are, furthermore, estimated to be at the same level culturally. The difference lies instead in the way in which the country is led. An enemy is perceived to be led by a small but highly intelligent and effective elite. Since the country is classified as equal in terms of culture and capability as well as being led by a small elite the country will be seen as a threat which in turn might lead to military action that can have a global effect.

### 2.3.2.2 Barbarian

A country that has been classified as barbarian will be viewed as a threat since it is perceived to have superior capabilities. They are seen as highly violent and will try to use their superiority to get the highest possible gain. Since their capabilities are superior the way in which to

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24 Cottam et al. 2004. Page 43
25 Table from Ibid. Page 45
deal with them differs from the previous image. Here, instead of taking an aggressive defensive approach, a country is more inclined to either negotiate or simply stay out of their way.

2.3.2.3 Colonial

If a country is viewed as being colonial then it will not be dealt with as a threat since their capabilities and culture are inferior. It will, furthermore, be in the hands of a small elite, who contrary to the enemy image, is seen as corrupt and highly ineffective\textsuperscript{27}.

2.3.2.4 Rogue

A rogue nation is perceived to be inferior in capabilities but still have harmful intentions. Cottam et al. describes it as the “irresponsible child”\textsuperscript{28} that needs to be punished in order to get back in line. A rogue nation is led by a small group of elites (often a dictator) and is generally viewed as a threat. In recent years the image of a rogue state has been widely used by American politicians when describing Iraq and Afghanistan. In the case of Iraq the argument was that the country was led by an evil dictator who had weapons at his disposal that would be harmful to the ‘civilized’ world. In Afghanistan the concept has been used slightly different. Afghanistan was described as a country where not only the ruling elite were seen as threatening, they were also harboring terrorists.

2.3.2.5 Ally

An ally is perceived to have the same level of capabilities, both military and economically as well as having similar cultural values. The leadership is viewed as balanced and benign, as well as being divided between several groups. Their intentions are believed to be good and therefore they will most likely not be seen as a threat, even though they are on equal terms and could very well win an armed struggle. International politics during the last century has been in some way built around forming alliances (both World Wars and the Cold War) and it looks like it will be the case in the future as well. During the build up to the invasion of Iraq the US looked for support among their traditional allies and found that several of them would not support an invasion (e.g. France and Germany) while other allies such as Great Britain and Spain gave the US their support for an invasion. This shows that even though America could easily have invaded Iraq on their own (some might argue they did) they still chose to consult and seek support from their al-

\textsuperscript{27} Cottam et al. 2004.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid. Page 44
lies. The argument being that the image of an ally will be just as powerful in the future as it has been in the past.

In today’s world politics the concept of images still plays an important role. It is, however, important to mention that some images carry more ‘weight’ in modern politics than others. Images such as rogue or ally have during the last seven years become more prominent then the colonial image, just to name one example. One of the reasons for this is that the phenomenon of global terrorism has in many cases been linked with the image of a rogue nation. President George W Bush has on several occasions referred to countries like Iraq and Afghanistan as rogue and acted accordingly. The same argument can be made concerning the image of an ally.

By applying the concepts of images and the categorization process to interviews made with Bush and books and article written about the President I will give examples of how this theory affected the foreign policy making of the United States. Particularly towards Iraq and Afghanistan.

2.4 Social identity

One major part of political psychology is the concept of group psychology. Since this thesis strives after examining the psychology of individuals this concept will only briefly be studied, when defining the term social identity. As individuals we classify ourselves into groups, groups that we are members of are referred to as in-groups\(^{29}\). While a group that we do not belong to is referred to as an out-group. The conflict between in-group and out-group are an essential part of political psychology. This will create an ‘us against them’ situation which could lead to discrimination. Individuals have the same tendency to discriminate as groups do, and discrimination has throughout history had an impact on international relations. Discrimination could have an effect on a political leader and his/her decision making. Individuals tend to be apart of groups in order to create a social identity. Political psychologist Tajfel defines social identity as a “…part of an individuals self-concept which derives from his [her] membership in a social group (groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to the membership”\(^{30}\). Individuals will decide to be members of groups in order to create an identity, making the values of the group their own. In modern American politics the two political parties (Democratic Party and Republican Party) are good examples of members identifying with the values of the groups and in turn creating an identity from these same values. The example of political parties has little

\(^{29}\) Cottam et al. 2004

\(^{30}\) Ibid. Page 46
association with discrimination but there are other examples from history where it has played a major role. Two examples of this are the Apartheid regime in South Africa and the Nazi regime in Germany, where a ‘we and they’ situation was created over race and discrimination was part of everyday life.

Social identity is created through membership of a group. Individuals will try to achieve a sense of positive social identity with the help of this membership\textsuperscript{31}. We will, furthermore, compare ourselves to members of other groups, in an attempt to build up this positive social identity. If another group is viewed as more favorable to our social identity we will just change groups, switching to a group that can help build up our social identity even further.

It is not the group psychology that is interesting to us when making an analysis on individual political leaders, but rather what groups they have decided to become members of in order to build up a social identity. This identity could in turn help explain why certain decisions are taken in the realm of international relations.

In the analysis, I will define what groups President Bush can be regarded as a member of and how his membership of one or several groups has affected not only him as a person but also his foreign policy. By applying the theory of in-group and out-group when analyzing several of the authors that has written on the Bush Presidency it will be argued that Bush is an active member of two specific in-groups in American politics; the religious right of the Republican Party and the more ‘hawkish’ right of the same party.

2.5 Emotions

Emotions are an important part for explaining human behavior. Actions that appear to be completely irrational may have come as a direct result of emotional behavior, feeling anger or fear may have guided us in taking a certain decision that we would normally not take. The concept of emotions can also be used to explain political behavior in a society. The emotional reaction we have towards a particular political issue or event will guide us in our decision making process. The same can be said for political leaders. In the following section the concept of emotions will be discussed in relation to international politics. The focus of this section will be the emotional response that might influence a political leader when making a decision. The concept will mostly be dealt with out of a political standpoint, and not on a psychological level.

\textsuperscript{31} Cottam et al. 2004.
First we need to define what is meant by an emotion. I have chosen to use the definition made by Fiske and Taylor (1991) (provided by Cottam et al.); “complex assortment of affects, beyond merely good feelings or bad to include delight, serenity, anger, sadness, fear and more”\(^{32}\). Emotions are not simply being happy or sad, it is more complex and depending on what emotions we feel we will act in a certain way. Furthermore, intensity of the emotions that we are subject to will differ depending on the situation that we find ourselves in, a high level of intensity will lead to a high level of emotional response. There are several factors that will increase the level of intensity of a situation. One is unexpected events. An event that takes us by surprise will generate stronger emotions than an event that we already knew was going to take place. The attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington DC on September 11 2001 will create stronger emotions than a pre-determined political rally. Another factor that will decide the intensity level of emotional response is how real the event seems to the beholder. A tragic event seen on a television screen will not generate the same emotions as if it was seen live. An additional factor is time, the closer in time we are to the event the stronger the emotions\(^{33}\).

The concept of emotions can be divided into two categories; negative emotions and positive emotions. Negative emotions such as anger, frustration, guilt shame, contempt, envy, and disgust will all have an effect on political decision making. There are several reasons why a political leader would be subject to negative emotions and they vary from person to person but there are two conditions that will always be prominent in politics. The first one is the concept of in-groups and out groups discussed in the section dealing Social Identity. We will tend to have negative emotions towards groups that we do not belong to while we have a tendency to be more positive regarding our own group\(^{34}\). The second condition where negative emotions will be an issue for a political leader is when his/her political goals are not achieved. The agenda will, of course, change over time but the negative emotions associated with failing to achieve the predetermined goals will still be there. When we fail to achieve a goal we will be subject to emotions such as frustration or even anger. As mentioned previously, a particular emotion is associated with a certain line of action. Anger could lead to actions towards a person or group seen as being the decisive reason for the goal not being achieved. Contempt could lead to a situation where we feel superior which in turn could result in domination or in some extreme cases seeing the other

\(^{32}\) Cottam et al. 2004. Page 48

\(^{33}\) Ibid.

\(^{34}\) Ibid.
group or person as being inferior to us. Both anger and contempt can lead to actions that would normally be seen as immoral, such as murder or in some extreme cases genocide. Other examples of negative emotions that could influence political behavior are fear and anxiety, which can be derived from the notion of danger. If there is a clear threat to the country we might be exposed to fear while anxiety is a result of incomplete information about the intentions of the actor perceived as a threat.

Positive emotions will also have an effect on political leaders. Just as failing to reach political goals will render in negative emotions, achieving the pre-determined goals will create positive emotions. Examples of emotions that can be classified as positive are; pride, joy, and happiness. The impact of positive emotions in politics can be great. If we experience positive emotions we tend to see more nuances in other people and countries. Furthermore, we will be more flexible and open to other ideas when we are exposed to positive emotions rather than negative. With a more open look towards international issues and conflict more options will be weighed before a decision is made.

There is a possibility to connect the discussion made concerning negative and positive emotions and the theory of images presented in the discussion concerning categorization (section 2.3.2). “Cottam and Cottam (2001) argued that certain emotions are closely associated with particular images”. The image of an enemy is associated with negative emotions like anger, envy, fear etc. These negative emotions, together with the images we have of the enemy, will lead us to take a certain stance towards them. An ally is perceived differently then an enemy and as a result emotions associated with the ally are different. Cottam et al presents a detailed table of the association between image, strategic preference and emotions. Depending on the images that are associated with a country it will be perceived as a threat or an opportunity and the action will be taken accordingly. These actions does not necessarily have to be military, they could just as well be political or economical. What is most interesting with the table is the perception and strategic preference of the rogue images. This image seems to be closely related to military action, Afghanistan and Iraq, and the preference of crushing a rogue nation seems to be more difficult than might had been predicted.

35 Cottam et al 2004. Page 49
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid. Page 51
38 Ibid. Page 51
Table 2: Images and strategic preference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Images of other actor</th>
<th>Threat/Opportunity</th>
<th>Strategic Preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enemy Image</td>
<td>Threat High</td>
<td>Containment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbarian Image</td>
<td>Threat High</td>
<td>Search for Allies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonial Image</td>
<td>Opportunity High</td>
<td>Control, Exploit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogue Image</td>
<td>Threat Moderate/Low</td>
<td>Crush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ally Image</td>
<td>Threat/Opportunity</td>
<td>Negotiate agreement, Common Strategy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the analysis and discussion I will try to be determined if the President used the concept of images in relations to the strategic responses that were taken by Bush and the Administration, especially in regard to the war on terror and the invasion of Iraq.

The concept of emotions will play a large role in any individual’s life. The emotions that we feel when subject to different events can have a major effect on our course of action. International relations are just as prone to the emotional aspect of politics as any other field. Negative or positive emotions will influence the decisions taken concerning foreign policy.

Emotions in general, and negative emotions in particular, will be applied to the interviews, books, and articles that are part of the analysis. The negative emotions that Bush and his Administration was subject to as a result of the terrorist attacks on America in September of 2001 will be related to the image that they held of Iraq and Afghanistan and give one of several explanations to why the United States decided to take military action against these countries.

3 Case study

The aim of this case study is to present the individuals that will be analyzed in the next chapter with the help of the theories presented in Chapter 2. The purpose of this thesis is to examine if the individual has any effect on foreign policy decisions or if it is other circumstances such as September 11th that forms the foreign policy of a nation. In order to do so there is a need for a brief presentation of the individual that is the main focus of the analysis, George W Bush. In addition, some of the more prominent members of the administration are presented. These

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39 Cottam et al. 2004. Page 52
members have had a large influence on the President, and for an analysis regarding individual influence over foreign policy they have to be taken into consideration.

3.1 George W Bush

During his time in office President George W Bush has overseen two of the largest military interventions in the past fifteen years. His administration has sent troops, American and foreign, into combat in Afghanistan and Iraq. The more conservative foreign policy of President Clinton had been abandoned for the more aggressive line promoted by the Bush Administration.

3.1.1 Early life; academic and military career.

George Walker Bush was born on July 6th, 1946, and is the first child of former US President George Herbert Walker Bush (41st president of the United States of America) and Barbara Bush. Preston Bush, his grandfather, was a United States Senator from the state of Connecticut between 1952 and 1962. It is safe to say that George W Bush was born into one of the more influential American political families of the 20th and 21st century.

Bush attended the same university as his father and grandfather, Yale University and graduated with a bachelor's degree in history in 1968. Just as his father had been during his years as a student, George W Bush was a member of the secretive society named Skull and Bones, a society that has been one of the main recruiting bases for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). On an interesting note, both presidential candidates in the 2004 election, George W Bush and John Kerry, were members of this secret society at the same time (Bush graduated in 68 and Kerry in 66). Directly after graduation Bush reported for duty at the National Guards in Texas, where he trained to become a pilot. It has been said that being a member of the National Guard during the Vietnam War was an easy way of not becoming drafted for overseas duty. In 1970 Bush became a certified fighter pilot but was suspended from flying in 1972 after he missed an obligatory physical exam. The reason for missing the exam was that Bush was working for Senator William Blount, Republican from Alabama. During his time working for Senator Blount he missed approximately eight months of duty between May 1972 and May 1973. In 1973 Bush was allowed to leave the Texas National Guard so that he could start Harvard Business School in

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41 Weiner 2007.
43 Ibid.
the fall of 1973. After graduating with an MBA from Harvard in 1975 Bush then focused his attention on commercial interests. Bush was never more than an average student and his military career can also be seen as average, at best. Furthermore, the job Bush had with Senator Blount in Alabama was set up by his Father.

### 3.1.2 Business life

After Harvard Bush went to work for a friend of his Father, a lawyer who specialized in oil and gas companies. Bush decided to start his own company and got help finding investors from his Father. The company was not very successful but was, after the oil crisis of 1986, bought by the Harken Energy Company. Bush received stocks and a seat in the board of the company. Shortly after selling his company Bush went to work for his Father where he became the ‘go to guy’ between his Father’s presidential campaign and the Christian right of the Republican Party. George H.W. Bush needed his son to talk this influential political group into supporting him in the upcoming election and his son, who had just a couple of years earlier ‘discovered’ religion, became an important player. After spending time in Washington, Bush moved back to Texas where he became one of the investors who bought the Texas Rangers, a professional baseball team. His time as part owner of the team gave him exposure in the media, mainly local but also national media and that is exactly what is needed if you have your eyes set on a future in politics. Even though Bush never really succeeded in business his time as part owner of the Texas Rangers was seen as successful on a personal level. People got the impression that he was a skilled business man.

### 3.1.3 Political life

After a failed attempt of running for Congress for the State of Texas in 1978, Bush focused on business for several years but in 1994 he challenged the sitting Governor of Texas, Democrat Ann Richards. Bush won a close election and became the new Governor, winning with 53% of the votes. As Governor, Bush increased spending on the school system, primarily elementary and secondary education, which was one of his campaign promises. He also set out to toughen the juvenile system in Texas, lowering the age where children could be sentenced as

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44 Laurent 2004.


46 Ibid.
adults to fourteen\textsuperscript{47}. Bush got both national and international publicity for his policy towards the death penalty. During his time in office George W Bush increased the amount of executions of convicted criminals in the state of Texas. The pace of executions of convicts on death row was substantially larger than any other state in America\textsuperscript{48}. He was reelected for a second term in 1998.

In 1999 Bush publically declared that he was running to become the Republican nominee for the presidency of the United States. After a tough primary, where his main competition came from Arizona Senator John McCain (former Vietnam War hero and US Congressman), Bush became the Republican Party’s nominee for President of the United States of America. Going into the national campaign against outgoing Vice President Al Gore (Democratic nominee), Ralph Nader (Green Party nominee), and Patrick Buchanan (Reform Party nominee) Bush held the lead in most of the polls, a lead that would decrease the closer the election came. The American presidential election of 2000 will forever be remembered as one of the closest elections in history (only election that can compete with the election of 2000 is the election of 1960 where John F. Kennedy beat Richard Nixon by a very small margin). Even though Democratic candidate Al Gore won the popular vote\textsuperscript{49}, Bush won the election by winning the electoral vote\textsuperscript{50}. The state that won the election for George W Bush was Florida, a state where his brother was the Governor. There was, and still is, an ongoing debate about the election of 2000. This paper will not, however, go into further detail considering the debate that exists in regard to the 2000 presidential election. In 2004 Bush defeated Democratic candidate John Kerry and is currently serving his second term as President if the United States of America.

3.1.4 In office

President George W Bush became the 43\textsuperscript{rd} American President in January of 2001. Just nine months later he would experience the worst attack on American soil since Pearls Harbor in 1941. On the 11\textsuperscript{th} of September 2001 two hijacked American commercial planes crashed in to the two Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York. An additional plane crashed into the Pentagon in Washington DC and a fourth plane that was allegedly heading for the White House or the Capitol building in Washington but crashed in Pennsylvania. It soon became


\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{49} Total number of votes, nationally.

\textsuperscript{50} Each state given a certain number of electoral votes determined by size of population living in the state.
known that this was a terrorist attack performed by Muslim fundamentalist, Al Qaeda, operating out of Afghanistan. This international terrorist organization under the leadership of Osama Bin Laden took responsibility for the attack. Less then a month after the attacks American bomber aircraft started attacking Al Qaeda targets in Afghanistan. The ruling regime (the Taliban) was also attacked on the grounds of harboring these terrorist in the country. Later American and international troops were operating in the country and the Taliban regime was ousted and a new government was constructed. There are today still American and international troops (e.g. Swedish) in Afghanistan, fighting what Bush has named ‘the War on Terrorism’.

In the year of 2002 the Bush government announced a new strategy that was based on pre-emptive action. The argument was that America could not wait for an attack against their interest world wide to occur. They moved from responsive action to pre-emptive action, taking care of the problem before it arises. What the Administration was most afraid of was a Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) attack on American soil. It was during this time that Bush made the now famous speech declaring that the ‘axis of evil’ was one of the greatest threats to man kind in general and America in particular. Attention now turned towards Saddam Hussein and his alleged WMD’s. Bush made public speeches where he argued that Iraq had the capabilities for making these weapons and that they were actively trying to do so. The Administration tried to get a UN Security Council resolution through that would allow an American led coalition to enter Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. The argument for an invasion was two-fold; 1) Iraq either possessed or were actively trying to get WMD’s and 2) Liberating the people of Iraq from the tyranny rule of Saddam Hussein. A resolution would never pass since France, Russia, and China all threatened to veto any resolution that involved sending troops to invade the country. The resulting being that an American-led coalition entered Iraq without UN and very weak international support. On March 20th 2003 Bush ordered “Operation Iraqi Freedom” to commence.

Within his first term as President George W Bush had ordered troops into combat both in Afghanistan and Iraq. Much of the foreign policy of the United States over the following years would be in relation to these two operations.


52 Axis of evil= Iraq, Iran, and North Korea.


3.2 Administration

In order to make the analysis more comprehensive there is a need for including the top officials that make up the highest level of the Bush Administration during the two previously mentioned international events. The top officials that will be part of this case study are; National Security Adviser (and later Secretary of State) Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, Vice President Dick Cheney, and Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld (resigned in 2006, replaced by Robert M. Gates).

3.2.1 Condoleezza Rice

In 1986 Rice worked as an assistant to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, specializing in nuclear strategies. When George H. W. Bush became president in 1991 she was moved to the National Security Council where she was in charge of Soviet affairs. In addition, she also served as special assistant to President Bush. She did, however not stay for President Bush’s full term in office, returning to Stanford University. At Stanford she became provost\(^{55}\). She joined with Governor George W Bush’s campaign as a foreign policy adviser and when Bush was elected President he made her head of the National Security Council. During 9/11 and the Iraq War Rice has been one of President Bush’s closest advisers. After Bush was re-elected Secretary of State Colin Powell decided to step down and Bush named Rice as Powell’s successor. During the later part of Bush’s second term she has been trying reopen negotiations between Israel and Palestine. Rice, who was the first woman to ever hold the position of head of the National Security Council, has been one of the people Bush listened most closely to regarding foreign policy\(^{56}\).

3.2.2 Colin Powell

Powell started his career in the military, serving in Vietnam twice during the war. In 1983 he became senior military assistant to Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberg. In 1987 he was made part of President Ronald Reagan’s National Security Council. He became a public figure during George H. W. Bush presidency when he was appointed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a position he held between 1989 and 1993, ending his term during the Clinton administration. After his term had ended he retired from the military and joined the Republican Party\(^{57}\). He never ran for office during his political career, and in 2000 he became a part of George W Bush’s


\(^{56}\) Woodward 2002.

campaign. Bush said early on that he would name Colin Powell Secretary of State if he was elected president; it has been argued that this was a political move by Bush. In 2001 Powell was appointed Secretary of State, becoming the first African American to hold the position. He retired from politics after Bush was re-elected in 2004. During his time in office Powell became an important part of the administration. During the build up to the invasion in Iraq he was the one who presented the evidence (evidence that we today see as quite suspect) at the UN and also tried to rally international support for the invasion.

3.2.3 Dick Cheney

Dick Cheney is a veteran in Washington, getting his political career started as early as 1969 when he became a part of the Nixon administration. He later worked as Chief of Staff to President Ford before running for Congress as a representative of Wisconsin. From 1978 until 1989 he was a member of the United States Congress. He left congress in 1989 to become President George H W Bush’s Secretary of Defense, a position he held until Bush lost his re-election campaign to Clinton. After the election he moved to the private sector where he worked for several companies, most noticeable Halliburton, a company that has since the start of the US-led invasion of Iraq secured major contracts with the US military worth millions of dollars. After George W Bush won the Republican nomination Cheney headed a small group that was in charge of finding the Governor a suitable running mate, a position he ended up receiving himself. Cheney has become one of the most influential Vice Presidents in history, being very involved in the planning of military action in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

3.2.4 Donald Rumsfeld

Rumsfeld became the youngest Secretary of Defense when he was appointed by Gerald Ford in 1975. He had previously served as Ford’s Chief of Staff, a position taken over by Dick Cheney when Rumsfeld moved to the Pentagon. In 1962 he was elected to Congress and served for three terms before joining the Nixon administration. After leaving the White House in 1977, due to Ford’s loss of the election to Carter, Rumsfeld moved to the private sector which he stayed part of until President George W Bush asked him to join the administration, becoming Secretary of Defense for a second time. During Bush’s first term as president he was in charge.

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58 Laurent 2003.
60 Ibid.
of organizing the military actions of both Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as serving as a close adviser to the president on military matters. Rumsfeld offered his resignation to the President after the Abu Ghraib scandal, but the President refused to accept it. After the catastrophically midterm election, out of a Republican perspective, of 2006 Rumsfeld’s resignation was accepted and he left the Pentagon.

When examining the four principals chosen for the case study it becomes evident that they all have one common denominator, they have all been part of previous Republican administrations. Three of them were even part of Bush’s Father’s administration during the first part of the nineteen nineties. When he took Office in 2001, Bush wanted people who were more experienced in government than he was. The question then is if they already had political agendas that they wanted to implement, and if these agendas conflicted with President Bush’s agenda?

4 Analysis

In this chapter the four key concepts presented in Chapter 2 will be applied to the case study presented in Chapter 3. Even though certain elements of these concepts intertwine with each other the aim of this chapter has been to present them separately.

4.1 Personality

George W Bush was born into a political family; his grandfather a Senator, his father the 41st president of the United States, and his younger brother a Florida Governor. The Bush Family is becoming a political power factor in the Republican Party, as the Kennedy Family has been for the Democratic Party. The name Bush is today associated with American politics. There is little doubt that this has influenced George W Bush in his choice of career. Family tradition has throughout history been an important factor when we decided what to do ‘for a living’.

One of the more prominent parts of Bush’s personality is his strong religious views. America is in general a country with much stronger ties to religion than the rest of the western world and this reflect in all parts of society, even politics. “Every president invokes God and asks his blessing. Every president promises, though not always in so many words, to lead according to

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61 Woodward 2006
moral principles rooted in Biblical tradition.” Bush, however, takes this notion to an entirely different level. He includes morality in his way of dealing with political situations and also in describing situations that are occurring in the world. The President has a tendency of seeing the world as being good or evil. He, furthermore, does not refer to people or deeds as being evil, it is rather that evil is a force that needs to be stopped.

Bush’s religious beliefs and its connection with his sense of morality and good vs. evil can be related to an incident that took place long before he even ran for Governor of Texas. In 1985 Bush was going through a rough time and one way that the future President dealt with his problems was by drinking, eventually becoming an alcoholic (it is important to mention that Bush never considered himself to be an alcoholic). A year later Bush stopped drinking, crediting religion as being the main instrument for his recovery. After becoming president, Bush has argued that it was religion that helped him to the presidency of the United States. In a meeting with pastoral social workers he declared that “I would not be president today if I hadn’t stopped drinking 17 years ago. And I could only do that with the grace of God”.

During his Father’s presidential campaign George W Bush was responsible for the relations with the religious right of the Republican Party. He became close with one of the most influential leaders of this movement, television evangelist Pat Robertson. Robertson, as leader of the Christian Coalition, is one of the people you need in order to get the backing of the Christian right. The contacts Bush made during these years were crucial for his own political career. When he decided to run for governor in 1993 he turned to this movement for support. Later in presidential campaigns he again got the backing of the Christian right, who is said to have roughly 18 million votes at their disposal (a number that might seem unimportant considering that the total population of America is roughly around 300 million, but it is one of the best organized political lobby groups in the United States). Bush has throughout his political career been able to attract these voters, mainly because they feel that he is one of them. He shares their religious beliefs, although Bush’s beliefs are not as extreme as certain part of this movement.

One example of these fundamentalist views held by the Christian right is a quote made by Pat Robertson after the attacks on World Trade Center in 2001 where he argued that the trag-

63 Singer 2004
64 Laurent 2003.
65 Fineman 2003. Page 3
edy was the price America had to pay for the killing of 40 million American human lives\textsuperscript{66}. Robertson was referring to the abortions made in America since it became a legal action. For the Christian right Bush was a perfect presidential candidate, he had both economic resources (he was not completely dependent on them for money) and he was ‘one of them’. This is, however, not entirely true. It is well known that Bush is against abortion but to say that he is a Christian fundamentalist is to take it too far.

One piece of evidence that shows how Bush’s faith has had an impact on American politics is that he, on several occasions, has threatened to take away state funding from organizations that support the right to abortion. Bush has also spoken warmly about some of the social help programs that are run by the Christian right, arguing that they should receive public funding\textsuperscript{67}. The influence of religion can further be seen in some of the nominations that Bush made when he came to office. Senator John Ashcroft was another favorite of Pat Robertson, but was not seen as having the same potential as Bush when it came to run for the presidency. Bush appointed Ashcroft his Attorney General in 2001.

Bush has on several occasions mentioned the importance of faith publicly. When running for president he said that he had been “called to seek higher office”\textsuperscript{68}. In the days that followed after 9/11 Bush refused to leave the White House, even though the secret service wanted him to move to a secure location that was not an imminent target for further terrorist attacks on the capital. He argued that he was not going to hide from the terrorists, simply saying that “I’m in the Lords hands”\textsuperscript{69}.

There is little doubt that religion has been an instrumental part in shaping President George W Bush’s personality. He starts every morning with prayer. He has said that his favorite author is Jesus\textsuperscript{70}. Religion guides him through life, private as well as public. He has claimed that he believes in “…a divine plan that supersedes all human plans”\textsuperscript{71} and, furthermore that he believes that “liberty is the plan of Heaven for humanity”\textsuperscript{72}. What has separated George W. Bush from

\textsuperscript{66} Fineman 2003.
\textsuperscript{67} Laurent 2003.
\textsuperscript{68} Fineman 2003. Page 1
\textsuperscript{69} Woodward 2002. Page 46
\textsuperscript{70} Laurent 2003.
\textsuperscript{71} Singer 2004. Page 91
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid. Page 91
previous American presidents is that he allows his personal religious faith to guide his decisions in politics.

Bush has high views of the country that has elected him leader. In an interview with Bob Woodward Bush explains his view of America in more detail. “I believe the United States is the beacon for freedom in the world. And I believe we have a responsibility to promote freedom that is as solemn as the responsibility is to protecting the American people, because they go hand-in-hand. No, it’s very important for you to understand that about my presidency.”73. Bush argues that America should lead the world towards international peace. Furthermore, he makes an argument that protecting American interests will lead to international peace.

The beliefs that George W Bush holds concerning the role of his country fit well into one of the characteristics presented in Chapter 2.1; namely Ethnocentrism. Religion plays a major role in the President’s way of thinking even here. In the same interview he tells Woodward that; “I say that freedom is not America’s gift to the world. Freedom is God’s gift to everybody in the world. I believe that. As a matter of fact, I was the one that wrote it, or said it. I didn’t write it, I just said it in a speech. And it became part of the jargon. And I believe that. And I believe we have a duty to free people.”74. When asked if he wasn’t afraid that it would seem that he was on a religious mission Bush simply answers that it might seems so to some elites, but the people who will be freed will instead only show gratitude.

Bush argues that they will “…appreciate the passion.”75. Bush feels that he is on a mission, because of the situation of the world with America as the only superpower; America should lead the charge for international freedom. The view that the President holds of American, as the beacon of freedom, can be linked to the invasion of Iraq. Bush has, as some American presidents before him, wanted to export democracy to countries that have a different type of government. He has a strong belief in that freedom requires democracy. This belief alone does not explain the connection between action and personality but if you combine it with the strong negative emotions that not only Bush but the entire Administration held towards Saddam Hussein there is a connection. Bush wanted to free the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein. The name that the Administration chose for this mission was Operation Iraqi Freedom. The President believed that it was his duty to free the people of Iraq from their ruling tyrant and after this was done the Iraqi people would go towards a bright future, a future that would be based on democracy. Bush’s

73 Woodward 2004. Page 88
74 Ibid. Page 89
75 Ibid. Page 89
personal beliefs of freedom and evil combined serve as a good explanation of why this Administration decided to go to war on Iraq. It is, however, not the only factors that were involved in the decision making process. Other factors such as fear of WMD's may have played an equally large role in this process.

The attacks on New York and Washington changed the way in which George W Bush viewed his mission as President. “…September 11th made the security of the American people the priority…a sacred duty for the president. It is the most necessary duty for the president, because if the president doesn’t take on that duty, who else is going to?”

It, furthermore, changed his view of Saddam Hussein. Bush believed that Saddam was capable of harming the American people, and perhaps saw it as his duty to make sure that did not happen. “Saddam Hussein’s capacity to create harm, he said adding that, all his terrible features became much more threatening. Keeping Saddam in a box looked less and less feasible to me.” Bush had a strong sense that he could not sit there and wait while there were potential attacks on the United States being planned in the world. There seems to have been a strong sense of urgency in this matter throughout the entire Administration. The Administration’s new approach was more or less cemented when Bush gave the now famous State of the Union address in January of 2002. In his speech Bush declared Iraq, Iran, and North Korea to be an “axis of evil” in the world. “States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, Bush said, aiming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger.” The answer that Bush proposed to this growing threat was to act before they armed themselves and could hurt the American people and their allies. “I will not wait while these dangers gather”.

The foreign policy would now change, becoming more proactive and aggressive.

We all have our own distinct personality which will guide us in life, when making decisions but also how we interpret our surrounding. The personality of a political leader is interesting since it will affect more people then most other personalities. President George W Bush allows for certain personality characteristics to guide much of his political life. The way in which the President quickly puts a label on an issue or person as being either good or evil, his high views on morality, and his religious beliefs has created the personality of George W Bush. This personality will in turn create and mold his presidency, including the foreign policy.

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76 Woodward 2004. Page 27
77 Ibid. Page 27
78 Ibid. Page 92
79 Ibid. Page 92
The two most prominent personality traits of President George W Bush are his strong sense of morality and his dedication to his faith. These two traits have created a mind set in where the President quite quickly denotes people, countries etc. as either being good or evil, creating a very simplistic categorization process. The categorization process itself will be discussed in the next chapter, but it is formed by the President’s personality. Of the eight different leadership characteristics presented in Chapter 2.1 of this thesis it is the ethnocentric character that best describes the leadership of President Bush. He regards America as a beacon of freedom in the world. America and the American way of life all have been promoted by this as well as former administrations. If you combine the ethnocentric character with the President quite clear cut views on good and evil it becomes evident that any attack on America, a country that represents good, will naturally be labeled as evil. This also relates to the categorization process since the very ethnocentric views held by Bush creates an ‘us against them’ type situation that we can find traces of throughout the Presidents action on the international scene, with Iraq and Afghanistan as the most prominent examples. George W Bush’s personality has affected international relations, but even more importantly it has influenced his emotions and cognition.

4.2 Cognition

We are as humans always subject to the concept of cognition. The following part of this analysis will not be discussing whether president George W Bush was affected by cognition or not. It will rather discuss to what extent cognitive concepts, such as information processing and categorizations, affected the United States foreign policy. Furthermore, the creation of images that are associated to foreign regimes will be discussed, especially in relation to the invasion of Iraq. The argument made in the following section will be based on the actions taken by the Bush Administration, and these actions show several signs of how cognition can affect the decision making process.

The image the Bush administration had of Iraq can be related to one of the images presented by Cottam et al; the image of a rogue state. When it comes to military and economic capability Iraq was inferior to the United States. The country was ruled by a very small elite, the Hussein family together with a small group of advisers. Saddam Hussein’s intentions were perceived as harmful to American interest, as well as the interest of one of America’s closet allies Israel. Iraq was perceived as a threat to the United States and was believed to be arming itself with weapons that potentially could be used against America.
This is a good example of the concept of categorization. In order to process information we categorize it. The categorization of Iraq as rogue state made it clear that the country posed a threat to America. If you combine this with the statement made during the State of the Union speech where Bush declared that he would not wait while dangers gather you get a little better understanding of why the invasion occurred. The administration saw the threat as so strong that it could no longer be contained; the threat posed from states such as Iraq could no longer be ignored.

The image of a rogue state is also closely related to certain emotions. According to Table 2 the image of a rogue state has a moderate to low threat level. In this aspect this image does not fit into the example of Iraq. Bush saw Iraq as a major threat to the security of the American people; it had a high threat level. The strategic preference associated with the image of a rogue state does, however, fit in well when examining the events that led up to the invasion of Iraq. The strategic preference associated with this image is to crush the rogue state. It can easily be argued that when the Bush Administration set out to remove Saddam Hussein from power they wanted to crush his government. The removal of an unfriendly government such as Saddam Hussein’s would decrease the level of threat towards the United States. The negative emotions associated with the image of a rogue state were also predominant in the Bush administration at the time of invasion. Negative emotions such as fear and anger were directed towards Iraq in several public remarks, most noticeable the State of the Union in 2002.

Personality traits can also influence our cognitive process. Certain personality traits will dictate how information is processed and how we categorize both information and people. Loyalty is a personality trait that Bush values very highly. This has in turn created an ‘us against them’ attitude in the Administration, especially towards the more liberal media in the United States. The same attitude can be found in Bush’s foreign policy. When Bush declared war on terrorism he argued that you are either with us or against us, dividing the international community into two separate parts, those who agreed with the Bush Administration and those who disagreed. It can be argued that the President’s view of things as either being black or white has had an effect on international relations. An individual leader tends to categories foreign regimes, and the American president is no exception. If you categorize regimes based on a statement such as you are either with us or against us, the most likely outcome will be that foreign regimes will be seen as either allies or enemies. These two images are associated with different levels of threat that can simply be defined as; ally=low threat level, enemy=high threat level. With such a sim-

80 Laurent 2003.
The Bush Administration applied a strict categorization process whereby many regimes that did not want to join the United States in a full-scale war on terror would be seen as enemies and in turn as a threat to the country even though they in reality are not a threat. Furthermore, the Administration eliminated several important allies with this way of categorizing, especially in the build-up towards the invasion of Iraq. Traditional allies such as France and Germany spoke out against an invasion and in turn lost their place at the table. To say that the Bush Administration categorized France and Germany as enemies is to take it too far, but they were certainly not considered to be supportive allies any more. Furthermore, potential allies might have been eliminated since they could not publicly give the United States their unconditional support for more political reasons, e.g., several Middle Eastern states.

An example of a state that gave their support to the Bush Administration is Pakistan and their leader Pervez Musharraf who has seen his political situation in Pakistan deteriorate as a result of his and his administrations support of American military action in Afghanistan. Musharraf’s political situation domestically has become more problematic as a result of Pakistan becoming one of the United States most important allies in the war on terror. The argument being made here is not that the Pakistani government made a mistake by helping the Bush Administration fight terrorism; the argument is rather that since the domestic public opinion against Musharraf has become stronger it might serve as a deterrent for regimes in the same situations. The very clear cut way of categorizing used by George W Bush and certain other members of his administration might have decreased the number of regimes that are willing to work with them.

There can also be an argument made for that when you define an issue as being either black or white all that lies in between will be eliminated. The grey zone, containing regimes that would like to support the war on terrorism but do not want to be seen as an ally has to a certain extent disappeared. The hard line chosen by Bush has decreased the number of countries that are willing to openly cooperate with the United States in matters concerning foreign affairs. The categorization process applied by Bush has had an effect on international relations.

The other major concept in cognition theory, information processing, can also be found in the example of Iraq. Bush and his Administration based their arguments concerning Saddam’s possession of WMD’s on intelligence information provided by several intelligence organizations (CIA, Mossad etc). The intelligence suggested that Iraq was in possession of WMD’s or was actively seeking to attain these weapons. Based on this information a coalition led by the United

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States decided to invade the country of Iraq. To argue that the Bush Administration was subject to the more negative aspects of cognition, not relying on all available information or being subject to dissonance would be premature. Many Western governments agreed with the Bush administration when it came to the claims made regarding these weapons. Even if they did not agree with the decision to send troops to invade the country, they agreed with the statement that Saddam had or was seeking to attain these weapons.

The more negative aspects of cognition become more prominent as the invasion of Iraq progressed. Quite early on there is evidence that the Administration did not view all the available information, or at least not the President. “In a meeting with a group of veterans in the Roosevelt Room on Friday, March 28 (2003\textsuperscript{82}), the president said, “I’m not paying attention to the press. It looks like – I don’t know what it looks like. I get my information from Tommy Franks\textsuperscript{83,84}. To limit yourself to one source of information is a good example of how information processing can lead to a skewed picture of reality. The argument here is not that General Franks was misleading the President, it is simply that in order to get a balanced view you need more than one source. The General had, furthermore, been instructed by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld not to include numbers in his briefings of the president. In one of the briefings Franks had mentioned that there were approximately 30 000 Iraqi casualties. After this briefing Rumsfeld instructed the General not include numbers in his briefings. “I remember leaping in and suggesting that that person probably really doesn’t know that number and that my impression would be that it would not be helpful that people walked out of the room with that number in their heads”\textsuperscript{85}. The Secretary of Defense did not want members of the Administration, including the President, to know or even speculate about the number of Iraqi casualties.

The cognitive aspects of the Bush administration become even more prominent as the war progressed. Public statements were made saying that the war effort was proceeding as planned and that the Iraqi people welcomed the American troops with open arms. At the same time there was information from other sources, such as the media, who were showing a different image of the war every day on live television. Bush and his Administration were arguing that the war effort was a success, even though there was evidence of the contrary. This could have been a case of dissonance. Available information that was contradictory to the perception Bush had was

\textsuperscript{82} Authors note.
\textsuperscript{83} Commander of US forces in Iraq.
\textsuperscript{84} Woodward 2004, Page 405
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid. Page 407
ignored since it did not fit the pre-existing beliefs concerning the war effort. Festinger’s theory is based on that we want to be in a state of consonance. Information that will distort our existing beliefs, in this case the success of the invasion will create dissonance. Since we want to eliminate dissonance as much as possible we will tend to ignore information that creates it. It can be argued that this is what happened in the Bush Administration during a certain time of the invasion.

The two main concepts in cognitive theory (information processing and categorization) can be used to explain why the current President and his Administration dealt with certain situation in the way that they did. Firstly the President has a tendency for categorizing people or states as evil and by doing so they are treated as hostile. Since the United States of America is quite unchallenged as the only superpower in the world, at least militarily, there are very few states or people who will be categorized as enemies. Instead they will be viewed by the Administration as being rogue states. As presented in Chapter 2, the most common strategic preference towards a state that has been categorized as rogue is to crush them. Furthermore, the same state will be perceived as being a threat, even though their capabilities are inferior. It is fair to say that both Iraq and Afghanistan had inferior capabilities compared to the United States, but they were still seen as threats towards the security of the American people. Secondly, the information processing that the Administration used during the build up towards the invasion of Iraq may have been skewed. The President only wanted information from one source, the military officer in charge of the operation. There is also an argument to be made concerning the information that was gathered about Iraq’s WMD’s. Bush argued that Iraq was actively seeking these weapons, his vice-president took it one step further arguing that “…there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction [and] there is no doubt that he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies and against us”\(^{86}\). This statement was made without clear evidence that Saddam Hussein was in possession of these weapons, and there has never been any WMD’s found in Iraq. The argument that I am trying to put forward here is that the Bush administration may have been ‘locked’ on the fact that Saddam had these weapons and was going to use them. What may happen when the mind is locked on a certain issue is that we disregard information that is contrary to the beliefs we have imbedded in our mind. Furthermore, information that suspected that Iraq had WMD’s may have, through information processing, become distorted. So instead of being seen as speculation the information was viewed as facts. There are certain signs that this was what happened in the case of Iraq and its possession of WMD’s. It is, however, important to mention that it was not only President Bush and his Administration that

\(^{86}\) Woodward 2004. Page 164
believed that Saddam had the weapons at his disposal. This view was shared by other governments and people all over the world. What separates the Bush Administration from many of these people is that they acted; they choose to invade Iraq based on imperfect information concerning WMD’s. It was not the only reason for the invasion but it was most certainly one of them.

The way in which President Bush uses the categorization process has had a large impact on international relations. After the attacks of September 11 Bush claimed that you were either with or against America in the war on terror, dividing the international community into two groups. This in turn eliminated many of the potential supporters of American policy since an endorsement of the actions promoted by the American President would be disastrous for many political leaders, on the domestic arena. The group that supported American policies became even smaller after the Administration declared their intentions to go after Saddam Hussein and his regime. Even though Bush has downplayed the rhetoric in the last couple of years the effects of the ‘with us or against us’ stand taken by the Administration in 2001 still affects international relations. There are several signs that information processing not only occurred in the Administration, but also affected world politics. Firstly, there is the case of information on the WMD’s in Saddam Hussein’s possession, where the Administration made their decision based on information that we today regard as suspect. Secondly, the way in which Bush and several other members of his Administration claimed that the invasion was a success show signs of both dissonance and bolstering. The Administration simply disregarded information that was not fitting into there vision of a successful freeing of the people of Iraq, at least not publicly.

4.3 Social identity

With the help of concepts such is in-group and out-group individuals create their social identity. When it comes to President George W Bush there are two main groups that you can acknowledge as clear in-groups. The first one is the conservative Christian right wing of the Republican Party. Being a part of this influential group of American politics has been crucial for Bush’s political success. The economical and political muscles of this significant political lobby group help Bush secure a win in both the presidential election of 2000 and 2004. When Bush became a practicing Christian many of the values and ideas promoted by the Christian right were the same as the ones he wanted to promote, they had a similar political agenda. Bush has been an opponent of abortion, and has argued for cutting federal funding for groups that assist and help with abortion issues in America. Bush has been able to create and nourish his identity in this
group. The more powerful and successful Bush became in his political career, the more influence this group had on the political scene. Other members of the same group that has expanded their influence is the leader of the Christian Coalition Pat Roberson and former Attorney General John Ashcroft (resigned after Bush’s first term in office). Just as religion has shaped George W Bush’s personality it has affected his choice of in-group.

The other in-group that Bush adheres to is the more “hawkish” side of the Republican Party. The neo-conservative movement that saw its peak during Ronald Reagan’s presidency is very much a part of the Bush Administration. The hawks in the White House today have always been inclined to use the military as a means of promoting American values and democracy abroad. Both Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld are prominent members of this group. So was Deputy Secretary of State Paul Wolfowitz. Cheney, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz were all for an invasion of Iraq, and eventually got the President onboard. One of the key members of the administration that was not part of either of the in-groups was Secretary of State Colin Powell. The Secretary never became close with the President; he never became a member of either of the in-groups. Powell never got the same influence over the President as some of the other members of the Administration. One person who is not a member of either group is Condoleezza Rice. She has managed to become close and form a close personal bond with George W Bush without being part of either group.

Even before George W Bush had been inaugurated as the 43rd President of the United States of America key members of his administration had their eyes focused on Iraq. In January of 2001 Vice-President Cheney wanted the President-elect to have a briefing on Iraq. It is common for presidential candidates to get a briefing about American operations and interests before they take office. Cheney wanted Bush to get a special briefing concerning Iraq. “The president-elect should not be given the routine, canned, round-the –world tour normally given incoming presidents. Topic A should be Iraq.” Cheney, who was Secretary of Defense during the Gulf War of 1991, felt that they had some unfinished business in Iraq and wanted the President on board. Other members of the Administration had similar feelings towards Iraq. Richard Perle, member of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s Policy Board, had long been for military interventions in Iraq. In 1996 he co-wrote a secret report that was handed over to then Israeli Prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The report presented two sets of actions that the authors

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88 Ibid. Page 9
89 Ibid.
thought would be in the interests of Israel. The first one was to destroy Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power and the second was to neutralize Syria. Another of the co-writers of the report was Douglas Feith, Undersecretary of Defense in the Bush Administration. It is also well known that Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz held strong resentments towards Saddam Hussein and his regime. Wolfowitz argued that it would be relatively easy to get rid of Saddam, and that it was necessary. Several individuals in the administration wanted to remove Saddam Hussein from power and eventually they got their message through.

There are several other groups that can be argued to be in-groups for the US President. These in-groups have natural opposites that can be used in defining the President social identity. The Republican Party is one of these in-groups, with the Democratic Party as a natural counter-weight and adversary. Another group that can be seen as an in-group for Bush is Christianity. It might be argued that this is the case when it comes to the conflict in the Middle East, where the out-group would be Islam. An additional group can also be created with the notion of Bush as a member of an in-group made up by Americans, and the out group being the other nationalities of the world. I believe, however, that these groups are too big and make a definition of Bush’s social identity too vague. In order to draw any conclusions from the in-groups that Bush has determined to be a member of there is a need for a more close definition of the groups. I would argue that the in-groups discussed above give a better insight to the politics of the administration then larger group as Republican Party, American or Christian.

George W Bush is a prominent member of two influential in-groups; the religious right of the Republican Party as well as the ‘hawkish’ right of the same political party. Since the President value’s loyalty very highly it is very unlikely that he himself will ever change in-groups in order to strengthen his own social identity. Both these groups have been part of the President’s Administration, especially the second of the two. Prominent members such as Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz have all held other key positions in the US government. As members of the same in-groups as the President they have been able to influence the President to a much greater extent than other members of the Administration. An example of this is the lack of influence that Secretary of State Colin Powell had, at least compared to Cheney or Rumsfeld. The same in-group has been one of the most avid proponents of a full scale military invention in Iraq.

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90 Laurent 2003.
91 Woodward 2004.
4.4 Emotions

Early in the morning (GMT -6) on the eleventh of September 2001 the United States of America was attacked by a terrorist network that has since then become known all over the world as al-Qaeda. By hijacking four commercial airliners from airports on the east coast of America they attacked three different targets, two in New York and one in Washington DC. In New York the two towers of the World Trade Center were hit and eventually collapsed, killing 2,750 people. Just after a plane crashed into the second tower in New York a third plane hit the Pentagon over in Washington DC, setting the building on fire. 184 people died as a cause of the attack. A fourth plane, which was presumed to target the White House or the Capitol Building, went down in Pennsylvania never reaching its target.

During the attacks President Bush was in Florida where he was promoting his educational plan in a second grade classroom of Emma E. Booker Elementary School in Sarasota. His first reaction was the same as most other people, complete shock and fear. When a second plane hit the World Trade Center the President left the classroom and was given a briefing by his Chief of Staff, Andrew Card. The initial reactions of the President cannot have been much different from the reactions of most Americans. He would have been subject to several negative emotions such as fear, anger, or perhaps even hate. Bush did, however, react in a way that may not have been the most common at the time. At the same time as he got the news of a terrorist attack on American soil he had made up his mind. “They have declared war on us, and I made up my mind at that moment that we were going to war.” When he was subject to strong negative emotions like fear and anger the President of the United States made a decision to go to war, without knowing who the enemy was and if it was even possible to attack them. Bush wanted a powerful military response to these attacks, and he would be in charge of the planning.

This was not the first time al-Qaeda had attacked American interests. During Bill Clinton’s presidency the terrorist network attacked the American embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. It is fair to say that the Bush administration disapproved with the more cautioned approach to dealing with the threat of terrorism. When he was being interviewed for the job of Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld had told Bush that the approach preferred by the previous administration, an approach based on caution and safety-plays, would not be the one preferred by him. Rumsfeld

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92 Encyclopaedia Britannica, Encyclopaedia Britannica Online. (Använd den 17 December 2007)
93 Woodward 2002.
94 Ibid. Page 15
advocated for a more direct approach in the case of an attack, and Bush agreed with him\textsuperscript{95}. The weapon of choice for the Clinton administration was often the “standoff cruise missile”\textsuperscript{96}, a military method that may be considered to be a very safe option since it minimizes the chances for loss of American military personal. Bush saw this method of dealing with terrorism as useless. “The antiseptic notion of launching a cruise missile into some guy’s, you know, tent, really is a joke. I mean, people viewed that as the impotent America…a tough country that was willing to launch a cruise missile out of a submarine and that be it”\textsuperscript{97}. Bush felt that America needed to change that perception, and going after the terrorist on their home soil would be the way to do it.

Bush was aware of the threats posed by Osama Bin Laden and al-Qaeda well before the attacks of September 11. The administration even had a plan in the works of how to deal with the threat posed by terrorist organizations but it was not finished before the attacks. The administration wanted to go after Bin Laden and bring him to justice well before September 11\textsuperscript{th}. The focus of the administration did, however, change rapidly after the attacks. “There was a significant difference in my attitude after September 11”\textsuperscript{98}. Bush’s focus was now on getting Bin Laden and al-Qaeda, the sooner the better. Bush has in an interview with Bob Woodward said that he wanted to go after Bin Laden “…but I didn’t feel that sense of urgency, and my blood was not nearly as boiling”\textsuperscript{99}. Bush wanted to get Bin Laden, and he wanted it done sooner rather than later. During the next month the administration tried to work out a plan for attacking al-Qaeda’s camps in Afghanistan. When the Taliban regime did not cooperate with the American government, the Administration included them in the plan. The goal was now to remove the Taliban from power, in addition to destroying the terrorist network of al-Qaeda. Bush widened his view as to who was the enemy in the upcoming struggle. He included countries that harbored terrorist to the already existing enemy; the terrorists. It was during this period that he made the quite remarkable comment in one of his public speeches, declaring that you are either with America or you are against America. Bush argued that the enemy; “…hate Christianity. They hate Judaism. They hate everything that is not them”\textsuperscript{100}. The rest of the world needed to decide which side they were on.

\textsuperscript{95} Woodward 2002.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid. Page 20
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid. Page 38
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid. Page 39
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid. Page 39
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid. Page 45
The negative emotions that the President was subject to after September 11 can be seen in several of the remarks he has made. The fact that he did not see the attacks as merely an act of terrorism but an act of war is a good example. From the beginning Bush wanted revenge and was on several occasions unsatisfied with the progress of the war plans. “The president wanted to kill somebody”\textsuperscript{101} is a quite telling quote made by Colin Powell, and it well illustrates the impatience that Bush showed after the terrorist attacks. The president wanted to get back at al-Qaeda, and people who were in his way would be viewed as enemies. This is further emphasized by his actions on September the 17\textsuperscript{th} 2001. Bush wanted Powell to issue an ultimatum to the Taliban, saying that if they did not hand over Bin Laden and Al Qaida there would be consequences. “We will attack them with missiles, bombers and boots on the ground”\textsuperscript{102}. This was the message that the President wanted to give; not only the Taliban, but the rest of the world. If you do not support us in our war on terrorism there will be a price to pay. The President also wanted to get a message through to the enemy; “We want to signal that this is a change from the past. We want to cause other countries such as Syria and Iran to change their views. We want to hit as soon as possible”\textsuperscript{103}. The President wanted the world to know that there was a ‘new sheriff in town’, and this one would not be as forgiving as the last one. There is little doubt that the way in which Bush acted in the days and weeks following the attacks were heavily influenced by negative emotions. The entire country was subject to the same type of emotions. It is very difficult to say that if another set of individuals would have made up the administration of the American government the response of the attacked would have been different. To make a conclusion of that sort would involve so much speculation that it would not hold on a scientific basis. There are, however, several factors that would have affected the President on an individual level that can be related to the response of the US government.

First of all, when we are exposed to negative emotions we tend not to take all the different options into account. That Bush immediately after the first plane hit the tower felt that America was at war, limits the alternatives of a non military response to a minimum. If you are at war, non military interventions will not be very effective. Diplomacy or economic sanctions were never really discussed as a response to the attacks. An example of this is the fact that after an American ultimatum was set towards the Taliban, Bush never even discussed the Taliban regimes response\textsuperscript{104}. Secondly Bush had, together with Rumsfeld, decided to become more aggressive on

\textsuperscript{101} Singer 2004. Page 143
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid. Page 150
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid. Page 150
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
matters where the country was under threat. That this way of thinking already existed in the mind of the President may have limited his choices of options to the attack on New York and Washington. And finally, Bush’s view of America as a beacon of light in the world may have impacted his response. His inclination towards ethnocentrism may have caused Bush to view the attacks as not only attacks on American citizens, but also an attack on the American way of life. That the terrorist wanted to attack both the American people and the American way of life might be true, I am not arguing that Bush was wrong in interpreting the attacks in such a manner. I do, however, argue that his emotional response would have been exaggerated by his more ethnocentric view of his country.

In the aftermath of the September 11 tragedy the President felt that he had a mission, and that was to educate the American public about the nature of the war. The American people needed to understand why the war was being fought; they needed to understand why it was a war on terrorism. The reason Bush felt this way was that he did not want to end up in the same situation that other presidents had been in during the Vietnam War. Bush felt that he needed to act but at the same time inform the American people about his actions. The following quote from an interview with Woodward gives a good example of how the president defines his role as commander in chief. “One of the interesting things about being the president is you don’t see much mail, curiously enough. The only thing I can tell you is that I rely on my instincts. I just knew that at some point in time, the American people were going to say, Where is he? What are you doing? Where is your leadership? Where is the United States? You’re all-powerful, do something”

The president felt a personal responsibility to act, that was what the public expected from him. The president expressed this sense of urgency to King Abdullah of Jordan saying that “We’re steady, clear-eyed and patient but pretty soon we’ll have to start displaying scalps”.

As mentioned previously it is difficult to say that another president would have reacted differently than Bush in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. The argument that I am trying to make here is that Bush’s initial reactions are most likely the same as many other Americans had that day. He did, however, decide to attack with more force than President Clinton had done after the attacks on American embassies in 1998. These attacks were however of a completely different magnitude than September 11. It is safe to say that any American president would have used military force as retaliation for the attacks. It is, however, questionable if they would all have called it an act of war. The September 11 tragedy is a good example of how an individual

105 Woodward 2002. Page 168
106 Ibid. Page 168
leader’s personality, emotions, etc. can influence the foreign policy of a nation. It is, however, far from a perfect example. The terrorist attacks on New York and Washington DC were unprecedented. Never before had foreign terrorists attacked a country on such a large scale and as a result of this it is hard to draw any clear conclusions from the actions taken by the Bush Administration. There is simply nothing to compare it with. Should the response made by the US government be seen as a direct result of the attacks, or as a result of the individuals in power at the time? I would argue that it is a combination of both.

Negative emotions will most likely have a larger impact on international relations than positive emotions. Negative emotions can arise when we are subject to an event, such as the terrorist attacks of September 11th. There is little doubt that that George W Bush was subject to negative emotions as a result of the attack. When subject to negative emotions we tend to limit the amount of options that can be used as a response to the action. The Bush Administration locked on to a military response almost immediately after the terrorist attack and never looked at other options. The President even felt that America was at war as soon as he heard of the attacks on American soil. One reason for this might have been his ethnocentric character. When the United States was attacked President Bush would most likely have been subject to stronger negative emotions than a person who does not have the ethnocentric character. It is very likely that the President felt a stronger sense of negative emotions, such as anger and fear, as a result of this and acted accordingly. Negative emotions had a large role in the creation of certain images, both towards the Taliban regime and al-Qaeda, and against Saddam Hussein and Iraq. Several members of the Administration, including the President held negative emotions towards Iraq in general and Saddam Hussein in particular which could very well have influenced the decision to abandon several options that were discussed as a response to the argument that Saddam was in possession of WMD’s, eventually leading to an invasion of Iraq.

5 Discussion

Bush has a tendency for using the term evil in public speeches and it would be quite easy to simply connect this to the image of an enemy. The problem with this is that the image of the enemy, presented in Table 1, is not the optimal choice. Since the end of the Cold War the United States of America has emerged as the only superpower, no nation in the world has the capabilities to match the US. It can be argued that the European Union can match the economic capa-
bilities of the United States but this would require the member states to have the exact same goals for any economic endeavor of the Union, a case that would be unlikely to ever be achieved. Furthermore, the European Union does not have any military capabilities of their own; they are at the mercy of the member states. In addition it is very unlikely that the EU would ever be in a position where it would become an enemy to the United States. It might be possible that the Peoples Republic of China will find themselves in a position to match the capabilities of America but it will most certainly not be reach during George W Bush’s presidency. Since the capabilities of the United States cannot be matched the image of an enemy presented by Political Psychology does not work when there is one country that is as dominant as America is today. A similar argument can be made regarding the image of an ally. The images presented in Table 2 can still be used when analyzing international relations, but they do not work flawlessly in the case of George W Bush and the United States.

The force of evil that President Bush sees as a threat to the ‘civilized’ world is most closely related to the rogue image. The axis of evil (Iraq, North Korea, and Iran) all fit the prerequisites for this image. Compared to the United States these countries have inferior capabilities. There can also be an argument made that they are (or were in the case of Iraq) ruled by small elites that the Bush Administration believed to have harmful intentions. They were, furthermore, all perceived as threats to the United States. The rogue image might be argued to have been a good fit in the case of Iraq but not for the war on terror.

I would argue that the concept of images faces the same problems as many other theories used in international relations. The theory struggles to deal with the question of global terrorism, since it is designed to deal with nation-states (at least in the realm of international relations). Global terrorism differs from traditional terrorism in that it does not aim to remove a sitting government from power. Traditional terrorist organizations such as Euskadi Ta Askatasun (ETA) or the Irish Republican Army (IRA) are fighting against a national government which they see as an oppressor while global terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda fight more than one national government. Although this is not an entirely new phenomenon most international relations theories struggle to incorporate global terrorism.

The most likely image that Bush would have associated to terrorism is the rogue image. If we examine the pre-requisites for this image presented in Table 1 it seems to be a good match. The capabilities of a global terrorist organization such as al-Qaeda are inferior to the United States. Their intentions can most certainly be seen as harmful and they are run by a small elite. Furthermore, there are several arguments to be made considering their inferiority in the realm of
culture. Finally they are considered to be a threat to the United State of America. The problem with connecting the rogue image to terrorism does not appear until we examine Table 2. According to the table the image is perceived to have a low to moderate threat level and the strategic preference would be to crush the organization. I would argue that Bush and his Administration sees the threat from terrorism as being high, possibly even higher than the threat level of an enemy. The fact that the President has declared war on terror only gives further illustration to this claim. The argument made here is that in order for image theory (as presented by Cottam et al) to become more comprehensive terrorism needs its own image. The image could take the same shape as the rogue image in relation to its pre-requisites. In other words the image of terrorism should be shaped as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capability</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Intentions</th>
<th>Decision Makers</th>
<th>Threat or Opportunity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terrorist</td>
<td>Inferior</td>
<td>Inferior</td>
<td>Harmful</td>
<td>Small Elite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In relation to Table 1 the image of global terrorism and rogue are exactly the same. The real need for a separate image for terrorism should instead be in regard to Table 2. This table deals with threat level and strategic preference. If we were to apply terrorism to the rogue image in this regard the threat level would be low to moderate, while the Bush Administration treats global terrorism as the major threat to the United States and its interest’s worldwide. There is no image that incorporates global terrorism in an adequate way. An image of terrorism might be constructed in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image of Actor</th>
<th>Threat/Opportunity</th>
<th>Strategic Preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terrorist</td>
<td>→ Threat High</td>
<td>→ Actively contain/Crush</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This image works well with the perception that George W Bush has of evil, especially in the case of terrorism. It, furthermore, relates the high level of threat that the Administration has argued exist towards the United States since the attacks of September 11th. When it comes to the axis of evil, the rogue image will be the one that most accurately describes the way in which the President and his Administration has acted. The problem with the creation of an additional image is that it will most likely only be valid in the case of George W Bush and his perception of
threat. To apply this created image to other world leaders would probably not give a very accurate description of why they acted in a particular way.

6 Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis has been to examine if individual political leaders matter in international politics. Is a nation’s foreign policy is not only affected by the nation’s military and economic interests and capabilities but also of who is in charge of the nation? As discussed in the introduction this essay would not deal with dictators or other authoritarian regimes where it is quite obvious that the individual leader affect the foreign policy since they are in complete control, with no checks and balances controlling their actions. The thesis has instead focused on democratically elected leaders in general and George W Bush in particular.

There is a need to understand the individual political leaders in order to examine the actions of the nation state in international relations. The argument is not that the individual level of analysis is more important to international relations than the systems level or the domestic level. It is instead that the individual level is as important as the other two. In order to get a more comprehensive understanding of international relations we need to examine all three and if this is done the chance of getting a reasonably balanced view on an international issue is quite good. In order to understand the individual political leader we need to examine the psychology of the political leader. Four key factors are presented in this thesis; personality, cognition, social identity, and emotions. With the help of these factors current American President George W Bush has been analyzed in order to examine the claim that the individual matter in international relations; and several pieces of evidence were found.

Firstly, the personality of the President has shaped both his domestic and foreign policy, as well as affected the other three factors. Personality traits such as morality and loyalty have influenced world politics in several ways. The President moral values have created a sense of struggle between good and evil, a struggle that Bush feels that America should actively lead. The war on terror can be viewed as a result of this struggle, the argument I am presenting is not that it is wrong to actively try to fight the terrorist factions that inhabit the world but to use the terminology that the Bush Administration decided to use has affected the international community. It is true that this ‘war’ was started by the terrorist attacks of September 11th, but the decision to go to war was made by the President and his Administration. The war on terror and the ultimatum stated by the President during the State of the Union in 2002, where Bush said that you are either
with or against America in the war on terror, effectively divided the international community into two camps. This structure has now started to deteriorate, but for several years it had a quite large impact on world politics. Bush’s high regard of loyalty can be argued to have affected international relations in a similar way. The Presidents ethnocentric character has perhaps not had a direct affect on international relations, from a personality perspective, but is has most certainly affected the other three concepts that have been used throughout this thesis. Bush argues that America is the beacon of freedom in the world and that the country has an obligation to promote freedom to parts of the world where people do not have the same opportunities as the citizens of America have at their disposal. The ethnocentric character has also formed the Presidents categorization process and information process.

Secondly, the cognitive process applied by Bush and several other of the members of his Administration has had a quite direct impact on international relations in general, and the situation in Iraq in particular. The way in which the President tends to categorize both states and people as good or evil affected world politics for several years. Creation of the us against them situation divided the international community into two camps, and in turn limiting America’s supportive allies to a small number of nations. Two of these nations have since the invasion of Iraq started in 2003 been subject to terrorist attacks (Spain and Great Britain). I am not arguing that George W Bush’s cognitive process caused these attacks but the process did create a situation were these two countries became subject to a similar level of animosity that had previously been shown towards the United States. Bush and his Administration have further been subject to both dissonance and bolstering when it comes to the way in which they handle information regarding the progress of the invasion of Iraq. The first step of the invasion went according to plan, Saddam Hussein and his army was defeated and American lead forces took control of the country. The second part of the plan, creating a democratic and free Iraq has failed. Initially the Administration refused to agree with information that was coming out of Iraq, both from the military as well as the media. The information that contradicted the positive images that Bush and the Administration had concerning the democratization process in Iraq was initially disregarded since it did not fit the pre-existing image. Bush has now agreed that the democratization of Iraq has not gone the way the Administration wanted it too, they have not been able to rebuild the country after the invasion.

Thirdly, Bush’s molding of his own social identity may have had an effect on world politics. One of the groups that I have claimed that the President belongs to, the more hawkish right of the Republican Party, had several members that argued for a more direct approach in dealing
with foreign affairs. Furthermore, members of the group such as Cheney and Wolfowitz wanted the President to focus his attention towards Iraq and the removal of Saddam Hussein as soon as he was elected. The President’s social identity can hardly explain the actions of the Administration on its own but if it is combined with the other three concepts of political psychology it gives a quite compelling argument. There is, however, also the question whether the President chose the group or if the group chose him. If it was the latter it is more a question of group psychology than the psychology of an individual. The argument made in this thesis is that Bush chose what groups he wanted to belong to in order to mold his social identity.

Finally, it can be argued that the emotional factor has affected international politics, especially in the case of Iraq. In Chapter 2, two ways that negative emotions will arise were presented. They will arise from not reaching pre-determined goals or from unexpected events. The terrorist attack on the United States on September 11th of 2001 was an event that created a very high degree of negative emotions, both for the President and for the country as a whole. It can be argued that the American response to the attacks was a reaction increased by these negative emotions, but it was not the emotions of one man, it was the emotions of an entire nation. To say that the personal negative emotions that President Bush was subject to created the military response would simply be wrong. There might be an argument made that the actions were some what enhanced by the fact that the President saw it as a global war on terror, not just a response were the goal was to bring the people responsible to justice but even this argument is quite weak and vague. There is, however, an argument to be made in the case of Iraq. The categorization process applied by Bush, constructed by his personality, created the ‘good vs. evil’ situation that has been discussed throughout this thesis. The notion of evil creates negative emotions and depending on which image that is applied to the notion a response will be applied. In the case of Iraq the president saw Saddam Hussein as evil and the state of Iraq as a rogue state, and the response connected to the image of a rogue state is to crush them, which the American lead coalition eventually did. This has in turn created a global political issue that affects not only Iraq and America; it has influenced international politics on a far greater scale than that. Furthermore, it can be argued that the current President is influenced more by emotions than his predecessors. In an interview with Bob Woodward the President argues that he is a traditional politician, he is what he refers to as a “…gut player”107, relying on his instinct when it comes to politics. If you are subject to a high level of negative emotions you will not be as open to different options as if

you are subject to positive emotions. Your instinct, under the influence of negative emotions, might cloud your choices of options even further.

During the presidential debates between George W Bush and Al Gore in 2000 the Republican candidate got a question concerning sending American troops into harms way. Bush was asked if he believed that the Clinton administration had done the right thing not to intervene in Rwanda in 1994. The Republican nominee answered; “I think the administration did the right thing in that case. I do… I thought they made the right decision not to send US troops into Rwanda”\(^{108}\). Bush did not believe in sending American soldier into foreign countries, and agreed with Clinton’s way of dealing with international relations, at least in the case of Rwanda. Obviously something changed during his first term in office. If Afghanistan was retaliation for the terrorist attack on America on September 11, what was then the invasion of Iraq? It can hardly be argued that it was a retaliatory; Iraq had not attacked American interest since 1991. What made the Bush administration decide to invade Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power? Examining the Bush Administration through the scope of political psychology and the individual level of analysis can give us an answer to this question, but only a partial answer. To get the complete answer all three levels of analysis need to be used, current events need to be taken into account and we might still not get a complete answer. The argument that I have tried to make throughout this thesis has not been that the individual level of analysis is the one that needs to be used in order to understand international relations, the argument is rather that is should not be forgotten. If the action of a nation state is examined without looking at the person who is in charge of the country vital information might be missed. The individual level can further provide a different angel when examining an international political event. The importance of the individual should not be disregarded. It should, however, not be overestimated, at least not when examining individual leaders in democratic nations.

Like most other theories on international relations political psychology in general and the concept of images in particular, struggle to deal with the emergence of global terrorism. There is simply no image that incorporates all the pre-requisites, threat level, and strategic preference associated with global terrorism, especially in the case of the current American President George W Bush. Even though there is a lack of image regarding global terrorism Political Psychology provides several other tools that prove useful to fulfill the purpose of this thesis.

\(^{108}\) Singer 2004. Page 169
This thesis should not be seen as proclaiming that the individual political leader is the most important player on the international scene. Would the United States have invaded Iraq and removed Saddam Hussein from power under another President? I believe the answer would most likely be no. Is George W Bush personally responsible for the decision to invade Iraq? The answer is yet again no. Several factors were included in the decision to invade, but to try to explain the invasion without taking the President and the most powerful members of the Administration into account would result in an incomplete answer. There is a strong need to incorporate the individual level of analysis in any analysis regarding international relations.
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