
Potential for success

An Agency approach to the Lame Duck period

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Abstract

This thesis aims to disentangle the phenomenon of lame duck success. The original lame duck model, falls short in explaining why such empirical policy successes occur. Given the overtly structural nature of the original theory, despite the importance of agency in the literature, this thesis aims to disentangle the complexity of lame duck success by equally exploring agency as well as structure variables and their relation to domestic as well as foreign policy outcomes. Adding agency variables might thereby explain how lame duck success is possible and why the original structuralist model was not able to explain it. This would not only increase our knowledge of the lame duck president and the potential they hold for policy successes, it would also give insight in the role of agency level analysis to the study of politics in general.

Key Words: *Lame Duck, Agency, Structure, Eisenhower, Clinton, Scandals, Personality Traits, Ugly Duckling.*

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Chapter I: Introduction

“You can tell that I’m a lame duck, because nobody is following instructions”, it was said jokingly by President Obama at the beginning of his farewell speech (Blake, 2017 January 10), yet this offhanded joke has a lot more depth than it at first glance appears to have. Presidents at the end of their career, whether due to the term limit or their own choice, are often called “lame ducks”. Because they are on their way out and often do not control a majority of Congress, theory assumes that they are unable to successfully conduct (foreign) policy (Quandt, 1986). This idea that lame ducks are constrained in their ability to conduct policy is not only prevalent for academic scholars, but has found its way into the minds of the public, the media (Sopel, 2015, June 25) and even that of presidents themselves. The joke made by Obama is one example of this, but his predecessor, George W. Bush once also stated that he better act fast because: “after the midterms he would quack like a duck” (Suskind, 2004, October 17). Despite its relevance and increased media attention during President Obama’s last years in office, this topic has still been overlooked by academics. This while Obama’s presidency has shown to be a good reason to doubt the assumed relationship between the institutional constraints put on a president and the outcome of lame duck policy initiatives (de Cock, 2016). This raises the question what determines when presidents are successful at conducting policy in the so called “lame duck period”. This question then, will be the starting point of this thesis.

1.1 Context: a lame duck

The context of this thesis and the concept of a lame duck today is almost exceptionally American, but it did not start out this way. The term “lame duck” originates from the London stock exchange, referring to someone defaulting on his debt (Stringham, 2002, p. 5). In the 19th century however it transferred to the United States where it eventually was used to refer to politicians who were unable to return to office with the re-installment of their respective political institution. For Congress this meant that a lame duck is a Congressman who lost his or her seat, but has to sit out Congress’ current session regardless (Rothenberg & Sanders, 2000, p. 523). The term however also applies to the president, who was often called a lame duck under three scenarios. Scenario one: the president has lost his re-election bid and has to wait out the transition period for his replacement. Scenario two: the president has indicated he will not to run for re-election, greatly decreasing his political relevance. Scenario three: the president has reached his limit of two terms in office, which means that both public and politics will shift their attention towards his possible replacements (Quandt, 1986). In those last two cases the period in which the president can be considered a lame duck is somewhat longer than in the first, because his colleagues and opponents will anticipate his replacement way before the transition actually happens (Quandt, 1986). Today, the president is labelled a lame duck when his influence has become constrained or diminished by a change in the political landscape (i.e., his imminent replacement and/or a shift in the congressional balance of power) to the extent that other actors believe him to be incapable of still pushing his policy agenda or irrelevant for pushing their own. This is why the last

two years of a president's second term are often called the lame duck period. This thesis will, due to its interest in presidential policy, only look at the *presidential* lame duck period, extending from his last midterms until his replacement. It therefore, due to the almost exclusive American nature of this subject, situates itself in the overlap between American politics as well as presidential politics.

1.2 *The puzzle*

This lame duck concept thus has an effect on presidents' perception of their own capabilities, as seen from for instance the quote by Bush. Such perceptions become problematic when one realizes that there is evidence to be found that structural conditions like term limits and Congressional majorities, which are said to influence the president's capabilities to conduct policy, are valued too deterministically (de Cock, 2016). Considering that how presidents act is indeed influenced by such structural factors, it would be foolish to deny the influence the electoral cycle has on the president's agenda and behaviour via term limits and Congressional majorities (Quandt, 1986). However, what should be refuted is the original notion of the lame duck model that at the end of the two terms and with a minority in Congress, the president suddenly would be incapable of successfully conducting policy at all (de Cock, 2016). This notion is somewhat outdated; while there have been many cases where lame duck periods have been fruitless and uneventful, the theory does not acknowledge the empirically founded possibility of lame duck successes. President Barack Obama for instance has had a relatively successful last two years, with for instance the Paris climate accord and deals with nemeses like Iran and Cuba, which has not escaped media attention (Sopel, 2015, June 25). According to the traditional concept of a lame duck, successes like these should have been impossible, yet history thus shows that the contrary is true. It is therefore as I have argued before, that our notion of a lame duck should be transformed and we should start calling them *ugly ducklings* instead of lame ducks, for presidents (just like in Andersen's tale) at the outset always have the *potential* to turn their last two years into a success, despite the apparent constraints (de Cock, 2016).

This finding however has still left questions unanswered. Most importantly, if presidents can be successful in their lame duck period despite the structural constraints, what then accounts for this success? Many factors that influence the president's capability for conducting and influencing policy are at play here. The factors used in the original model are highly deterministic, causally limited and overly structural. Firstly, it only makes claims based on structural factors like the term limit and Congressional power, while there are however many more structural factors which could be relevant yet are ignored, like for instance the level of polarization in a political system. Second and most importantly, the theory totally ignores agency factors which have been acknowledged before as relevant explanatory factors by foreign policy scholars (Post & Walker, 2003, p. 402) and could very well be important in explaining lame duck success.

In any case, one cannot judge the effect of the traditional lame duck factors on policy both foreign and domestic fairly, if one does not take into account structuralist as well as agency factors. Firstly because agency as a forgotten aspect could have a larger effect than expected and two, the way a president views this lame duck issue can determine how self-fulfilling the problem becomes. Presidents that resign themselves to the fact that they are a lame duck are not likely to take any risks or take the necessary steps to get the successes that are still within their reach, while presidents that do not resign themselves might still achieve something. How the president approaches his job, and this issue in particular, as a political agent can thus matter to what extent this problem overshadows his last term, which is why one should look at the role of individual agency. In the end, it is this the failure of the original theory to explain lame duck successes and use a complete theoretical perspective, which this thesis will aim to rectify.

Despite the new focus on agency in this thesis, one should be wary as to not fall into the same trap the original theory did. To keep the analysis balanced between structure and agency therefore, the agency factors will be supported with structuralist factors. The question then is, which precise factors does one use to test agency and structuralist factors. For this, one usually resorts back to the literature, and to skip ahead a little to the theory chapter, one can distinguish three different aspects in the literature on presidential politics. Firstly, there are structural factors, where on the one hand one has the more traditional *institutional-structural factors*. Examples of which are the term limit and whether there is a split or unified government (minority or majority in Congress), the unity within the two political parties and the ideological compatibility the president has with Congress (Hastings Dunn, 2006; Barret & Eshbaugh-Soha, 2007; Gibbs, 2009; Siewert, 2014). There are also less traditional forms of such institutional-structural factors variables question the way the presidential administration works, questioning how often has the administration's staff been refreshed and whether decisions are made "cleverly" (Hastings Dunn, 2006; Pfiffner, 2011; Janis, 1972). On the other hand, there are the less obvious *societal-structural factors* with which one has to think of variables like the state of the economy and the polarization of the political system (Gibbs, 2009; Cohen et al., 2013). Lastly then there is a set of factors which is related to the president himself, better called *agency factors*. They raise questions like: does the president act cooperative towards Congress or not? Have there been scandals? How popular is he? Is he prone to take risks in decision making or is he rather deliberative? Does he believe he can control events and how keen is he on power? (Hastings Dunn, 2006; Steger, 1997; Gallagher & Blackstone, 2015; Reeves & Rogowski, 2015; Lovett et al., 2015; Hermann, 1980).

Such a true categorization is rather new for the field itself, which has remained scattered with individual observations and researches and when put in perspective, never went beyond a differentiation between the larger institutionalist and rational choice factors (Moe, 2009), thus lacking more specified theory and conceptualizations. Ignoring most of these factors, most importantly agency factors, is the great deficit of the current lame duck model. It could be that this is what explains the

gap between theory and the empirical reality. Given this puzzle, the academic goal of this thesis will thus be to test what impacts the president's chance of success, whether that is the theoretical effect of individual agency, and check to what extent the other two structuralist factors are justifiably as dominant as they are in the literature and the original theory by adding them to the analysis.

The main question of this thesis will therefore be the following:

To what extent does individual agency matter vis-à-vis structuralist factors, in determining the president's success in conducting policy in the lame duck period?

In order to answer this question, the thesis will pose eight hypotheses split up into four hypotheses with regard to agency and four variables based on the structuralist literature, split up in line with the categorization introduced above.

1.3 Relevance

By investigating the effects of both agency and structuralist factors, thereby taking into account the different factors that have not been included in the original model, one can greatly expand the current perception of the possibilities of a lame duck president. The idea to look at the possibility of success in this period is relatively new in general and can thus greatly expand our knowledge on the topic. Such an investigation challenges the current narrow and deterministic view that is held with regard to a lame duck president, bringing it closer towards the more unpredictable nature of the real world. Moreover, by testing for both agency and structure, an addition will be made to our knowledge on the field of presidential politics at large. This is a field which at this point is rather divided and unstructured, and hardly brings the different topics together. By drawing the comparison between agency and structure, this thesis can assess the extent to which this current pro-structuralist divide is justified. One might even extend one's assessment of the role of agency outside of lame duck or presidential politics. The topic of this thesis namely directly engages with the core of the larger agency-structure debate within the study of politics. Its results therefore can inform and contribute to this larger debate. Finally, the topic of investigation also has a certain social relevance. For one, given the power of the presidency, the political potential of a president has a big impact on American society. Most importantly though, presidents themselves seem to believe in this flawed notion of the lame duck president. This belief in the inevitability of the lame duck constraints shapes their own behaviour during this period and can create some sort of self-fulfilling prophecy, which makes this former notion not only problematic for scholars but in a political and societal sense as well. Addressing the failure of the original notion and studying potential success might thereby not only add to our academic knowledge, but might also have a societal relevance insofar that it influences political perceptions and behaviour and thereby alters political outcomes, changing the public discourse on what a lame duck president can be.

1.4 Structure

In order to answer the research question posed above, the following thesis will be split up into multiple sections, which logically follow one another and build towards the thesis's answers and ultimate conclusion. The first step one taken herein is to take a look at the theoretical field, so one can construct hypotheses on which to base the answer to the research question. The field which will be looked at, that of presidential politics, will thereby be split up in relevant agency variables and relevant structuralist variables. The chapter that follows the theory chapter should then be aimed at introducing and explaining the methodology via which one aims to find the answer to the hypotheses. This means it aims to clarify which cases will be investigated, how they will be analysed and why. After having familiarized the reader with the methodology, the fourth chapter will be dedicated to the execution of these methods: a Qualitative Comparative analysis, which partially consists of a content analysis, and two case studies investigating the relation between the relevant structure or agency factors and lame duck success. The fifth and final chapter then will summarize the results that can be taken from the analysis in the chapter before it and, based on this information, give a definitive answer to the research question and make suggestions for future research.

Chapter II: Theory

2.1 Field of Theory

In the following chapter the underlying theory used in this thesis will be discussed. Ranging from the original lame duck theory to the literature on presidential and American politics back to the debate between structure and agency. From this discussion on the theory in the literature theoretical expatiations on the relation between policy success and different potential factor will be extracted.

The theory on lame duck presidents originally focused on how institutional constraints affect the presidents capability to conduct foreign policy, consequently making success therein impossible. This has been addressed in the literature by William Quandt (1986), on which more later. Research on this subject in the footsteps of Quandt has therefore often been related to the field of foreign policy analysis (FPA), which focusses on explaining and analysing the occurrence of foreign policy outcomes. As examples one can think of Putnam's (1988) famous two-level games or Janis' (1972) Groupthink analyses. It is however unrealistic to act like the constraints put on a lame duck president would only account for limitations in foreign policy. The term limit and especially the presence of a divided government seriously limit the political options for a president domestically, where he is much more reliant on the support of Congress. One therefore ought to look at both the domestic and foreign agendas of the president, moving the topic away from pure FPA. Such a focus on policy making by the president of the US, namely puts the topic of lame ducks specifically within the fields of both American as well as presidential politics. The former is generally broader than the Washingtonian focus this thesis will have, concerning itself with not just Capitol Hill and the White House, but also

with local and state legislatures, legislation and elections. Good examples of this are Dye's (1961) investigation of constituency influences on different state legislature chambers or Kenski et al. (2010) their analysis of Obama's 2008 victory. Presidential politics on the other hand also is not limited to the Kennedy's and Nixon's of this world but concerns presidential systems around the globe. See for instance Melo & Pereira's (2013) analysis on the role of the Brazilian president in their multiparty system or Chaisty's (2003) enquiry with regard to Russia's president's relation with the Duma. The lame duck theory, due to its highly American nature, brings these worlds neatly together in an overlapping analysis of the role of the president in the American system.

Besides being situated in these two fields, this thesis also places itself in the tradition of comparative politics and the larger debate on the role of both structure and agency in social science. The study of presidential power has since the introduction of Neustadt's *Presidential Power: the politics of leadership* (1960) been dealing with the role of individual behaviour and action vis-à-vis the role institutional rules and regimes. On the one hand, authors correctly emphasize the growing institutionalization of the presidency and the major effect these institutions have on the outcome of policy (Jacobs & Shapiro, 2000, pp. 491-492). The original lame duck theory, like many, was born from this mould. This is precisely where its problem also lies. It is entirely structuralist and therefore lacks some tools to explain the real-world possibility of successful policy by a lame duck president. The lack of agency variables in this theory creates an incomplete view of how success might be influenced. For, as long as one doesn't believe that actors are entirely predetermined by their environment, individual agents have the space to influence political outcomes. This is why one has to look at people like Neustadt on the other hand. They emphasize the role of the president as an individual in making or breaking deals and creating policy, so to them success is reliant on how a specific individual fills in his role as president (Ragsdale, 2000). Which is thus important to include if one wants to find out the reason behind the successes of lame ducks. This structure-agency debate has been important to the empirical field of study on presidential success and will play a key role in the story of this paper. Below, this thesis aims to sketch the general agency versus structure debate, after which this specific debate will be drawn out with regard to presidential politics. Mapping out this field is of particular importance to this research, for the different camps will be used to determine which elements are best to be put to the test. A comparative thesis set-up also places this thesis within the broader tradition of comparative politics.

2.2 *Lame Duck Theory*

As addressed in the introduction, the term "lame duck" does not traditionally nor exclusively refer to the president. A Congressman can just as well be a lame duck, the term however is most commonly applied to the Commander in Chief. Not in the least because the phenomenon has the biggest impact on American politics when it comes to the president. The theory addressing the lame duck president

has best been described by William Quandt, in his article *The Electoral Cycle and the Conduct of Foreign Policy* (1986), where he describes how the cycle of regularly held elections in the US influences the president's agenda. In the second year of the president's first term for instance, midterms are right around the corner, which means his (foreign) policy will be made non-controversial as to not lose votes (Quandt, 1986, pp. 831-832). In the same sense the term limit creates a similar negative effect for president's agenda in the last two years of a presidency and this is where the lame duck problem kicks in. Due to the fact that the president cannot be re-elected, both his opponents at home and abroad, as well as his allies, will be working towards the point where he will be replaced, limiting the base for support (Quandt, 1986, pp. 828). Moreover, it is often the case that in these last two years the president's party has lost the majority in Congress. This, given that one is not faced with a national crisis which could mitigate this effect, makes it even harder for the president to conduct policy and successfully pass a bill. If so, then the lame duck issue has truly set in. In earlier research it has been mentioned that this traditional conception of what it means to be a lame duck, being unable to conduct policy due to the term limit and division in government, has been interpreted too deterministically (de Cock, 2016). There are internal contradictions in the work by Quandt, mainly between the way he conceptualizes and measures the causes of the lame duck period, that make it too shaky to hold on to this deterministic interpretation. Moreover, as referenced earlier there is empirical evidence to be found of cases where the president checked out on all the necessary conditions to be called a lame duck, but did actually succeeded in conducting successful (foreign) policy (de Cock, 2016). This is the state of the literature thus far and leads us to this point where the question is why some lame duck presidents are more successful than others. One answer might lie in the limited structural focus of the original model, which is why this thesis will look for a more diverse set of variables. In the section below then, the debate on agency and structure from which these variables will be extracted, will be explored more broadly.

2.3 Structure versus Agency

The structure-agency debate is one of the most important debates within the social sciences. Researching the ungraspable whims of human society, social scientists are in constant debate over the most prevailing factor for determining outcomes. On the one hand, there is the structuralist-side of this debate, which looks at social structures such as institutions and bureaucracies (Carlsnaes, 1992, p. 246). On the other hand there is the agency-side of the debate, which looks at behaviour of individuals (or groups of individuals) (Carlsnaes, 1992, p. 246). Both sides of the debate thus differ fundamentally from each other based on their ontological beliefs. Structuralists believe that outcomes are determined by the way actors are embedded within such social structures and the way these structures guide these actors (Lichbach, 2003, p. 13). Within political science some of the most famous theories are structuralist by nature, take for instance Waltz' neorealism (1979) or the democratic peace theory (Owen, 1994). Both assume that the system is responsible for determining outcomes. Agency scholars

look to the actors themselves. Such actions lead to certain outcomes and what unites the agency-focussed scholars, is that they believe that these outcomes are the (in)direct results of (un)intended human agency (Lichbach, 2003, p. 12). While less prominent than structuralist theories they have a place in political science as well. Weber's (1968) research on politicians' ability to control the bureaucracy is a classic example of this. Mind that the term agency should not be equated with the study of rational choice. While they overlap in their recognition of the value of (studying) individual actions and motivations, agency is much broader. For in its analysis of an actors attempt to influence its environment, agency goes beyond rational individual decisions and includes non-rational or non-intentional personal aspects like individual values, characteristics and reputations as well. To summarise the agency-structure debate: they question whether observable results in social science are constituted by the agent himself or the structure in which the actor resides. The two sides of the debate are therefore in fundamental opposition towards each other; each has their place though within social science. It would be naïve to ignore the impact structure has on human behaviour, yet one would similarly be remiss if one were to ignore the individual's capability to impact its surrounding. So while both theories oppose one another on an epistemological level, they are capable of, and should be used alongside each other. No field of study in political science is therefore truly complete without seeing and using both sides of the argument.

As part of social science, the field on presidential politics and presidential power also concerns itself with this question of structure versus agency, in the sense that there have been authors who have implicitly employed both structuralist or agency approaches in their research. As stated above, Neustadt's 1960 book revitalized this debate adding a role for agency in a predominantly structuralist field of study (Edwards, 2000, p. 11). This greater attention for structuralism has to do with both the general trend in social science towards structuralism as well as with the increased institutionalization of the presidency in the form of the expansion of the executive branch and the Executive Office of the President (Jacobs & Shapiro, 2000, pp. 491-492). The greater focus on this side of the argument and the ignorance with regard to agency and unilateral action (Moe & Howell, 1999) however is often misleading people from seeing the importance of agency within this field. Ignoring agency this way would mean ignoring the reality of the effect individual behaviour or personality can have in altering the course of American politics by either misreading or purposefully defying institutional context (Jacobs & Shapiro, 2000, pp. 500-502). The lame duck theory is a prime example of ignorance in this regard. The search for the relevant factors to test for both agency as well as for structure requires one to order different variables and theoretical expectations used in the literature with regard to the creation of successful policy by the president, which is done below. This has resulted in the creation of three general categories explored below: institutional-structural factors, societal-structural factors & agency factors.

2.4 Agency Factors

Our first order of business is then to discuss the way in which to measure agency. When talking about the president as a political agent one should almost always start by talking about Neustadt's work *Presidential Power* (1960) as referenced earlier. Neustadt introduced the idea to the field of presidential and American politics, that the president also had the personal power to influence political outcomes and not just constitutional ones (Ragsdale, 2000, pp. 32-33). He thereby stood at the cradle of presidential agency approach and should therefore be at the forefront of this agency analysis. To Neustadt, the president's power is reliant on his bargaining position, which can be strengthened with the right personality, behaviour and reputation (image). The Neustadtian idea of presidential power is thus highly personalized, it rests solely on the shoulders of the president himself, with no guarantee that the next president can wield the same amount of power (Ragsdale, 2000, p. 33). The influence the president has over political outcomes therefore relies on human qualities. Most positively the president has "*a sense of purpose, a feel for power, and a source of confidence*" (Neustadt, 1960, p. 203). These will aid him in persuading other actors to act in the interest of the president and do his bidding.

What more can then be taken away from Neustadt's *Presidential Power* (1960) approach to agency? It is not just that he introduced and remains the most notable scholar on personal agency in presidential and American politics, but also the way in which he perceived the source of the president's power. Generally agency is just seen as a force that constitutes outcomes via the (un)intended consequences of human *behaviour* (Lichbach, 2003, p. 12) or *motivations*, see for instance the famous principal agent theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). Neustadt, however primarily classifies the success of a human agent as dependent on the person himself, his *personality*. Which is not to say that one should ignore the consequences of behaviour as a relevant way of measuring agency, neither does Neustadt, who adds it to his model. His core idea on the manifestation of presidential power works through the bargaining position of the president in contrast to that of other political actors. This is said to be determined by four things: his constitutional privileges (structuralism), his personality, personal decision making (behaviour) (Ragsdale, 2000, p. 33) and what I call the president's reputation or image (in the eyes of other actors). So behaviour is incorporated in his theory as well, which learns us that if one then wants to measure the effect of an agent on a political outcome, one has to look at both his or her behaviour, but also not overlook the importance of an individual's personality. In Neustadt's tradition, one thus has to see agency as a combination of at least an individual's behaviour and personality. This thesis will follow Neustadt's theoretical approach and test its different aspects highlighted in his book. This is most importantly because Neustadt explicitly employs personality as one of the aspects of agency.

The first and foremost of Neustadt's aspects is the way that personality can influence the likelihood of success in the lame duck period. Secondly it will also acknowledge the value of more traditional agency model's focus on behaviour and look at the way the president's behaviour might affect their

success. However, there is a third aspect of Neustadt's approach which is relevant to agency, the president's "image", which is very much reliant on the prestige (public approval) and reputation of the president (Neustadt, 1960, pp. 59-107). The thought goes that if he has a positive image (good reputation and high approval rating), other political actors benefit from cooperation with the president while the reverse is true for when he has a negative image. High prestige and reputation can thus improve a president's bargaining position and therefore increase the likelihood of success independent of his behaviour or personality. Image is thus the third aspect that constitutes agency in the Neustadtian tradition and would serve well as a variable besides personality and behaviour. An assumption that follows from the underlying belief that the way a political actor perceives one's own capabilities is that it shapes the length to which one is able to act in accordance to those capabilities. If a president believes he is constrained to the lame duck phenomenon, he probably also will not aim for new success. The lame duck concept itself shapes perceptions and possibilities, which makes it problematic. Personality herein matters, for it is more likely that a president who for instance has as Neustadt (1960, p. 203) said: "*a sense of purpose, a feel for power, and a source of confidence*", will perceive himself to be more capable of success than someone without these personal traits.

2.4.1 Personality

This section above aimed to explain the way agency is approached in this thesis. Based on the work of Neustadt then, agency is seen as the way individual actor(s) personality, behaviour and image can influence political outcomes. In the next paragraphs of this section, a further look will be cast at these three aspects of agency and how they translate to workable variables and hypotheses.

The first of those aspects taken from Neustadt's work is personality. A factor which works in line with the constructivist narrative that (individual) ideas, norms and values - a personality - can determine how the president engages with the outside world and how he reacts to certain situations. A famous example of this is the way the Americans approached Soviet intentions during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Was it not for the perception and audacity of individual US diplomats to suggest that the Russians wanted to strengthen their domestic support instead of wage a war, the situation might have ended differently (McNamara, 2003). It is in such a manner that the choices and characters of individual actors, in this case that of President Kennedy and the lone diplomat, that personality shapes the way in which the president will react to the lame duck issue.

When it comes to the literature studying leadership personality, one can find analyses which employ very different ways of measuring aspects of this concept and relationship, ranging from charisma to Machiavellianism (Silvester et al., 2014; House et al., 1991) or to traits like excitement-seeking or achievement-striving (Gallagher & Blackstone, 2015). Despite the large variety of methods and conceptualizations, there have been a few noteworthy traditions and contributions that stand out. There are a lot of articles for instance which work with the Five Factor Theory (FFT) personality system.

This system measures the five elements of: neuroticism, extraversion, openness and conscientiousness to explain outcome. While this method is popular and generally useful, it works on assumptions of certain behaviour, rational and proactive for instance (Costa & McCrae, 1996) which limits its applicability to passive or irrational personalities might be relevant. Moreover, despite these assumptions, it also fails in the sense that these traits are hard to link theoretically to why a president would deal differently with the lame duck issue.

What traits then are useful to the analysis and are relevant to predicting the reaction to the lame duck period? Bandura (1989) gives a hint as to how personality can be linked to lame duck success. He explains that agency is exercised through belief in one's own efficacy and the anticipation of a good outcome. Belief in one's ability to act and to for see success, motivate the agent in the direction of action. The analysis below should thus aim itself at using traits that reinforce or prove such beliefs, for these can inspire him to defy the structural constraints of the lame duck model. The model that stands out most in the literature, is that of Hermann (1980), who has created the so-called *leadership trait analysis*. This method is capable of measuring important characteristics of a president's personality and links this to the way a president interacts with, and has influence on, his environment. Hermann has created a model applicable to different kinds of leaders based on multiple character traits (such as trust of others and conceptual complexity). The reason Hermann is explicitly mentioned though, is that for this research two of her characteristics are of particular good use and elude to the agency vision of Bandura and Neustadt, making it possible to link the traits to the defiance of the theory.

The first of these traits, is the president's belief that he and the government apparatus can *control events*, bring change and therefore influence outcomes. Such a belief determines how a political actor defines the rules of the political game (Hermann, 1980, p. 9). The more he believes in a personally constructible reality, the less inclined he will sit back, but will take it upon himself to challenge structural constraints and make change happen. The second trait is the *need for power* which in essence is the desire to have control over or impact on what others do (Hermann, 2003, p. 190). Hermann's analysis method is thus very applicable to the aims of this paper, given that it is interested in the way personality might have constituted different behaviour with regard to structural constraints. If a president thus scores high on these traits it is more likely he will challenge (the lame duck) constraints and be successful.

There is one caveat though: both traits need to be present in a case for him to be considered as directly challenging constraints (Hermann, 2003, pp. 200-201). Ergo, for that case to be theoretically more likely to have success. Also, because Neustadt is the source of this agency approach this analysis will also borrow his notion of *a sense of purpose* as one of the measurable traits. The thought here goes that the more the president believes in the purpose and duty he has as a president, the more likely he is to tap into the power of his office, enabling him to defy structural constraints and use the personal

power his office bestows upon him. It should be noted here that the other Neustadtian traits: self-confidence and a feel for power, were left out because they were deemed comparable to the Hermann traits. All these traits are expected to be very relevant to the outcome of the paper in general, not in the least because they relates to the personal perceptions based on which presidents act despite political constraints. The specific expectation however is that, the higher the president scores on them, the more likely he is to defy the lame duck constraints and achieve a measurable success. How these traits are measured will be discussed in the next chapter.

2.4.2 Behaviour

The second aspect of agency is behaviour. The political agent has to apply a certain type of behaviour, make certain decisions that, in this case, help him with his lame duck policies. What is meant by behaviour in this sense is the way actions, decisions, of the president influence political outcomes. The most valuable behaviour therein seems to be the way the president behaves with regard to Congress. This means that he can either behave cooperatively or confrontationally. Research has shown that such basic differences matter, despite a divided government. Even in such cases, a president is relatively more successful using cooperation instead of confrontation which thus has to be taken into account (Steger, 1997). It is in practice thus the president's behaviour towards Congress which is important for the chances of his policy initiatives. A good effective and cooperative relationship can breathe success, while a bad ineffective combative relationship can hurt ones chances.

2.4.3 Image

Finally, there is the question of a president's image which is prominently discussed in Neustadt's work. It influences whether other actors are inclined to work with him, which either in-or-decreases his potential for success. Image is a lot like reputation, it is how the president is perceived. It is about whether voters and political actors approve of him, which in general can be depended on his personal likability, but especially so in relation to other political actors. Of those image variables, firstly there is the president's popularity, approval rating or otherwise known as "prestige". The latter of these terms was coined by Neustadt (1960) and refers to the president's standing in the eyes of the public, which impacts his power in Washington. Prestige can influence the president's bargaining position in the sense that, the absence of prestige breathes resistance among other political players, while the acquirement of prestige can help you sway these actors your way. The central idea being that they themselves need popularity, prestige and approval, and cooperating with a popular president benefits their own popularity (Neustadt, 1960, pp. 90-91). Other research has empirically confirmed the relative influence of this factor. Lovett & Baumgartner (2015) for instance find that unpopular presidents are unable to steer Congressional attention. More specifically the works of people like Barret & Eshbaugh-Soha (2007), Villalobos et al. (2012) and Gibbs (2009) saw significantly positive effects of the president's approval on his (legislative) success. The president's approval rating or "prestige" will

thus be used for two reasons. Firstly, as Neustadt notes, the approval of a president influences his relation with other actors. How the president is viewed by his colleagues is so relevant that it can counter a lack of support in Congress (Neustadt, 1960, p. 90). Here Neustadt thus *explicitly* points towards a possibility which could explain success despite lame duck constraints. Secondly, the notion of prestige is a cornerstone in the work of how Neustadt sees presidential power, more importantly despite a theoretically unfavourable behaviour and personality a president can still improve his chances of success based on his prestige, which makes it a valuable variable.

A second factor with regard to image which has to be taken into account as a variable is aimed at the effect of scandals. According to Hastings Dunn, a president that has a bad reputation either via a scandal (see for instance Bush's reputation after Hurricane Katrina), can harm his capabilities with regard to influencing and conducting policy. This issue is closely related to the idea of prestige coined by Neustadt (1960) and the general idea of non-cooperation with the president in the lame duck theory, which is why scandals are relevant for the purpose of this paper. Moreover, scandals and their reputational effect are examples of the unintended outcomes of individual actions. If one wants to incorporate an agency effect in one's research, then one cannot ignore the mitigating effect of a scandal. One might however argue that scandals are misplaced as agency factors. However, this thesis maintains the view that scandals are *self-induced* issues, results of personal choices, which *stick to* the image of the president and his name. In that sense scandals are the result of the acts by an agent, which influences future acts by that same agent. Moreover scandals are part of a president's "image", it is therefore that it has been decided to place it within the agency category. This then brings us to the hypotheses based on the agency factors as mentioned above. These hypotheses go as follows:

H1a: The more a president has a personality that emphasizes the need for power and the belief in the ability to control events or a sense of purpose, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.

H1b: If the president is in the last two years of his second term and has a relationship with Congress that is based on cooperative behaviour, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.

H1c: If the president is in the last two years of his second term and enjoys high prestige, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.

H1d: If the president is in the last two years of his second term and has had no notable scandals, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.

2.5 Structural Factors

Besides agency, another side of the field is reserved for structuralist interpretations of presidential power and policy making. What variables to choose here is a lot more complicated, for the structuralist side of the debate is on its own so broad that it can be split up into two parts.

2.5.1 Societal-Structural Factors

The first of those are the Societal-Structuralist factors. These are structuralist in the sense that they set the conditions in which the president is embedded, determining the outcome of his actions. Yet as opposed to institutionalist-structuralist factors these variables are not (related to) institutional rules and procedures, but come from societal trends in which political actors (i.e. the president) are embedded. This matters because as opposed to institutional factors like staff positions, such societal factors change over time. The president thus has to react to these conditions and their changes, yet is largely dependent on society for this change. One could think of a large range of issues falling in this category, including things like: consumer trust, unemployment and inflation rate, trust in government institutions and so forth. These all set the stage for political action and behaviour, determining its outcome.

Based on the literature that has been written on such topics, two of the most relevant factors have been selected to be used in this analysis. The first factor in this category needed to do something with the economic context in which a presidency takes place. The state of the economy shapes the relationship the president has with his colleagues. This factor thereby serves as a social structure which can determine the outcome for a presidency. The general idea therein being that presidents are more prone to be successful in influencing and implementing legislation in times of declining economic conditions (Gibbs, 2009, pp. 79-80). Congress, in such times of relative crisis, will be more open to suggestions of the White House (Prins & Shull, 2006, p. 28). There are of course many indicators for the state of the economy, but due to the high interconnectedness of the political playing field and the state of the economy it is important to at least include one of those. From now on the *misery rate* will be used as this indicator. The misery rate is a combined index of the unemployment and inflation rate and it has been chosen over other economic indicators because of its good fit with the theoretical expectations. As stated, an economic crisis increases the likelihood of bipartisan support and thus easier legislative victory. One thus needs to properly measure how “bad” the economy is doing which the misery rate is perfect for. The idea is then that the higher this misery rate get, the more likely it is that the president has legislative success. It will enable him to transcend partisan divides and make policy. A note should be made though, a bad economy is often related with bad approval ratings which could lead to a worse bargaining position as explained above, this however does not need to be the case empirically. The article of Gibbs (2009) does show empirical evidence for the first proposition, meaning that the misery rate has a positive influence on legislation as long as it does not concern foreign policy. Therefore, this

thesis will follow the same assumed relationship and use the misery rate as indicator for the state of the economy.

Secondly there is the issue of polarization, which is a larger societal trend in which the mean political positions of both citizens and politicians linked to different parties start to move away from one another. It is an important societal factor for it shapes the political climate the president has to work in. In this way, it is another example of a societal-structuralist factor in which the president is embedded. However, this factor has been chosen over others because of its high impact, but also its specific effect on the constraints of divided government. The logic here being that high polarization makes the institutional condition of a divided government much more constraining, due to the bigger ideological gap between members of Congress, consensus becomes harder to achieve. Moreover, polarization can also affect the unity in the president's party and the ideological compatibility of the president with Congress, making this problem even worse. Added to that polarization can alter (the effect of) the president's behaviour towards Congress and whether this is cooperative or not. Due to these effects of polarization the issue of a divided government, which is a requirement for the lame duck presidency, can get even more problematic. This is why it is so relevant to take this factor into our calculations. To summarize this point of the effect of polarization Cohen, Bond & Fleisher state that: "*increasing party polarization magnifies the effects of party control, majority presidents win more, minority presidents win less*" (2013, p. 124). One can thus not fairly measure the effect of the division in government on policy success without taking into account the system's polarization, which is why it will be applied in this research.

The misery rate and manner of polarization of course have to be tested and in order to do so the following hypotheses will be employed based on the societal-structural factors:

H2a: If the president is in the last two years of his second term and has to deal with a high misery rate, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.

H2b: If the president is in the last two years of his second term and has to deal with low polarization, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.

2.5.2 Institutional-Structural Factors

The second set of factors are institutional-structural factors and have to do with the "institutional aspects" regarding the president. While still being structural in nature, setting the conditions in which the president's actions are embedded they are, as opposed to the previous category of factors, institutional. Their primary distinguishing feature is that they are a result of the rules, processes and procedures regarding the institutions of American governments and politics. These factors are

traditionally static institutional factors about the relation between the White House and Congress. Above all, one should think here of the term limit, which as the name suggests, sets a maximum to the number of terms which a president can govern, namely two. This has some serious consequences for his ability to implement policy, making some moments more ideal than others. The period of interest to this thesis, the last two years are made especially problematic by this limit. Because the president is “on his way out”, due to be replaced in the next election both Congress as well as other actors, on for instance the international stage, have an incentive to not negotiate with the current president and wait for his predecessor (Quandt, 1986). This issue is even more problematic for the sitting president when he faces a so called divided government, which is the second important institutional-structuralist factor. In such a situation the majority in Congress is in the hands of the opposition instead of his own party. Passing bills and successfully implementing legislation becomes increasingly difficult that way. Yet there are more structural factors to do with Congress or the Congress-White House relation which can nuance or worsen the president’s position. One of which is party unity, being closely related to polarization. It implies the level to which party members feel loyalty and obligation towards their party and thus vote among party lines. The more independent the members of a party are, the less likely they are to feel an obligation to support their president for their own success (Gibbs, 2009, p. 79; Pika, Thomas & Watson, 1994, p. 217). Yet at the same time, low party unity makes it easier to persuade members of opposition towards your position. This combined with the fourth institutional-structuralist factor of ideological compatibility, the manner to which the ideas of the president relate to those of members in Congress, can either help or hinder the president in his pursuit to success (Villalobos et al., 2012). If there is low compatibility and high party unity (within the opposition) it is increasingly difficult to pass a bill, for it Congress in general is less inclined towards the president’s position and the opposition is less likely to see dissidents towards the president’s party due to party discipline. As was the case with the societal-structuralist factors, party unity and ideological compatibility were chosen for their specific effect on the president’s capability in dealing with Congress and their influence on the effect of divided government, which might be less problematic if there is a high compatibility and high party unity. These factors also have to be tested and based on the logic extracted from the literature explained above, this leads to the following hypotheses:

H3a: If the president is in the last two years of his second term and has to deal with a divided government, but with a low party unity within the opposition, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.

H3b: If the president is in the last two years of his second term and has to deal with a divided government but, with a high ideological compatibility, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.

Concluding this theory chapter, it is important to once more reiterate the value of the theorization of the field of presidential politics as done above. Up to this point that field has remained a rather unstructured collection of theories. Besides the rather obvious literary benefits such a structuration has for this field, it also has specific benefits for the aim of this thesis. The structure-agency debate in which it has been situated serves as a roadmap for choosing relevant variables to analyse. In Table 2.1 below one can view the different variables that were extracted from that literature in the context of all the hypotheses in which they have been placed. The question as to how to test these hypotheses will be further explored in the next chapter where the specific methodology of this thesis will be discussed.

Table 2.1: Overview of Hypotheses.

H1a	The more a president has a personality that emphasizes the need for power and the belief in the ability to control events or a sense of purpose, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.
H1b	If the president is in the last two years of his second term and has a relationship with Congress that is based on cooperative behaviour, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.
H1c	If the president is in the last two years of his second term and enjoys high prestige, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.
H1d	If the president is in the last two years of his second term and has had no notable scandals, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.
H2a	If the president is in the last two years of his second term and has to deal with a high misery rate, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.
H2b	If the president is in the last two years of his second term and has to deal with low polarization, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.
H3a	If the president is in the last two years of his second term and has to deal with a divided government, but with a low party unity within the opposition, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.
H3b	If the president is in the last two years of his second term and has to deal with a divided government but, with a high ideological compatibility, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.

Chapter III: Method

3.1 Method Design

Having been familiarized with the issue and the corresponding theory at the heart of this thesis, it is time to delve into the way in which to test the presence and effect of the variables introduced in the previous chapter. The method in which this issue is approached is not very straightforward and will borrow elements from different research traditions. The agency factors that are under investigation here, especially personality, are very contextual, in depth and hard to generalize to larger populations, which is why this paper's analysis should employ a qualitative technique for inquiring the relationship between agency and success. However, the structuralist factors that also need to be incorporated are less contextual and more quantitative in nature. Therefore, it is seen as somewhat imperative that the method employed is somewhere more in between pure qualitative and pure quantitative. The general logic of the method design will therefore be based on that of so called Qualitative Comparative Analyses (QCA) approaches followed by an individual case study. This design has been chosen for a multitude of reasons. First off, it is specifically designed to untangle causal complexities, find the conditions (variables) that lead to certain outcomes and thus to see causal patterns (Rihoux, 2008, pp. 723-724). This fits nicely with the aim to distinguish the value of agency factors compared to structuralist ones. Secondly, a QCA approach allows for quantitative interpretation of relations at the same time as allowing for qualitative analyses of specific variables, which is what this thesis requires due to the different nature of different variables. Thirdly, while a QCA method is perfectly suited for distinguishing *causal patterns* between dependent and multiple independent variables, it is less well suited to distinguish *causal relationships* (De Meur, Rihoux & Yamasaki, 2012, p. 159). Which is why after distinguishing a pattern among the variables via a QCA-like method, the empirical presence of these factors with regard to the outcome will be tested via a case study.

These two parts can be split up into five smaller parts. The first thing to be done therein, is make it possible to score the agency factors as described in section 2.4. In order to do this a content analysis into the personality traits of each case relevant president is required. More on how this analysis will be done can be found below in section 3.3. Based on the knowledge gained in the first part one can then assess in the second part whether the primary relationship between personality and success holds as in accordance to the hypothesis. If so, then in accordance with H1a for instance, all successful presidents should also have one or more of the described personality traits. The third and fourth methodological steps that follow are to thirdly add the entire spectrum of agency factors and then fourthly add the structural variables to the equation, incorporating them into a QCA-model so one can see which (combination of) variables seem to contribute to the president's success. Each variable will be given either the score zero or one based whether these variables are present. 1 meaning present and 0 meaning absent. High polarization will for instance score 1, while low polarization scores 0. Once a

pattern has been extracted from this model, one can probably give some preliminary conclusions on some of the hypotheses. However, it should be noted that, as the founding father of the QCA method, Charles Ragin, acknowledges, it is not aimed at explaining the mechanisms behind its variables (De Meur, Rihoux & Yamasaki, 2012, p. 159). So while a pattern has been observed, it is still necessary to establish whether there is empirical evidence for the causal effects of the relevant variables with regard to the specific outcomes from the QCA-analysis. Using the QCA method is then aimed to narrow down the possible effects, while the fifth step is aimed at verifying the variables' empirical relation. This will be done via a case study into the most typical case out of the cases in the QCA model which are also relevant to the remaining conditions. This should be a typical case because the typical case is by its definition the most representative of the group of cases (Gerring, 2009, p. 91). When that examination has been completed one should be able to determine which variables were relevant for the successful outcomes and one could therefore finally support the hypotheses of the previous chapter, while the fourth step only concerns itself with refutation. Which case then will be picked for this analysis will be discussed in the next section, where the population, the case type and the generalizability of these cases will be discussed.

3.2 Case Selection

In order to determine which cases will be picked for investigation, it is important to first give an overview of the population which this thesis researches. This population itself is very straightforward, it concerns all Presidents of the United States who experienced a lame duck period, either because they were not (allowed to be) re-elected or they announced they would not run for another term. However, just a few cases of this larger population will truly be of interest. Before the introduction of the term limit under the Truman administration presidents technically had a lame duck period, however, these periods were a lot shorter the two years they take up now. Due to the unlimited amount of terms, presidents began their lame duck period either when they resigned or were not re-elected, especially in the last scenario the lame duck period only takes up a couple of months. After the introduction of the term limit the president became a lame duck when he lost his majority in Congress after the midterms in his second term, which extended the period to two full years. Because these periods were more extensive and frequent after the introduction of this amendment the actual cases will be picked from the seven full post-war lame duck presidents as shown in Table 3.1 below. Their lame duck periods are more extensive and therefore are more likely to have researchable occurrences of success.

Table 3.1: The lame duck periods of all post-amendment presidents.

Lame Ducks	In office	Lame Duck Period	Reason for Departure	Congressional Support
H. Truman	1945-1953	1952-1953	Decided not to run	<i>Majority</i> in both houses
D. Eisenhower	1953-1961	1958-1961	Term limit reached	Minority in both houses
L. Johnson	1963-1969	1968-1969	Decided not to run	<i>Majority</i> in both houses
R. Reagan	1981-1989	1986-1989	Term limit reached	Minority in both houses
B. Clinton	1993-2001	1998-2001	Term limit reached	Minority in both houses
G. W. Bush	2001-2009	2006-2009	Term limit reached	Minority in both houses
B. Obama	2009-2017	2014-2017	Term limit reached	Minority in both houses

The thing that stands out almost immediately is that two of these presidents, Truman and Johnson, differ quite strongly from the rest. They both left office early, not due to the term limit, but on their own accord. This meant their official lame duck period was very short in comparison to that of their colleagues, whose departure was known well before the election cycle started. Moreover, both Truman and Johnson stand out because they in contrast to the others enjoyed Congressional majorities (see Table 3.1 above). Because of these two factors, President Truman and Johnson are not ideal cases for the aim of this paper. They worked under circumstances which are significantly different and less constraining than that of their colleagues, taking them as cases therefore would not be very representative or informative. It namely has practical constraints as well, because their lame duck period was so short (one year instead of two), it will be less likely to find as much instances of success or failure. Moreover, the fact that both had a Congressional majority is problematic from a theoretical perspective, for the theoretical interest of this thesis lies with cases that saw success despite structural constraints, which both in this instance do not have in an equal manner to the rest.

What cases should then be picked from the population of seven? That firstly is entirely dependent on what the properties of ideal cases are. The aim of this thesis is to investigate whether characteristics of the president as agent matter in comparison to structuralist factors when it comes to determining lame duck success. This means that the cases that are picked should have at least three qualities. First, these presidents should be lame ducks, which is true for all the five possible cases. Second, the selected cases preferably differ strongly from each other based on the independent variables and the dependent variable, so one can see which ones actually make a difference with regard to the outcome. This means that one should include both presidents with and without a notable success. The aim here is to distinguish variables on their importance for success via a QCA-like model, the variables are therefore

preferably not similar, but different as much as possible. In the terms of Gerring, the applied case selection technique would be that of diverse cases (Gerring, 2009, pp. 97-99). Thirdly, given the number of applicable cases, seven, it is possible and therefore beneficial to include as many of those in the QCA-analysis as possible, so one can make more accurate generalizations about the entire population.

To return to the second case requirement, that of variability of all variables (especially that of a success), it is first and foremost important to find a definition of what “success” is. The most important article on the lame duck effect, William Quandt’s *The Electoral Cycle and the Conduct of Foreign Policy* (1986), primarily states that foreign policy will be unsuccessful due to the opposition’s unwillingness to help, third parties’ calculated patience until the new president arrives and the president’s own succession struggle. It is never formulated what success precisely entails. However, the article does make a unique exception, namely success due to crises, as this undermines the constraints of the lame duck period often giving the president bipartisan support. This means that some cases like George W. Bush had some researchable major policy victories, like the Economic Stimulus Act and the Emergency Economic Stabilization act of 2008, that are not valid as possible cases. These bills were crafted as a solution to a pressing crisis, which means it would not be possible to research how he would be successful *despite* a divided government based on those instances of success. What is then seen as a “success” in the lame duck period? That is when a president is able to pass a bill (domestic policy) or broker a deal (foreign policy), despite experiencing the constraints associated with the lame duck period. This, as stated before, does not apply to crisis-bills or deals. Previously we were left with five presidents, Obama, Bush (not including the stimulus bills), Clinton Reagan and Eisenhower as possible cases. How many of these can be included in the model is dependent on the extent to which they differ in their values on the different variables and the availability of clear cases of successful policy initiatives.

Based on the data then, it is easy to identify Eisenhower as one of the cases since he, based on a preliminary analysis of the variables clearly stands out as the one scoring best on most of them. Moreover, Eisenhower scored and spearheaded a major policy success by introducing and passing an amendment to the Civil Rights Act in 1960, which aimed to ensure protection of the right to register as voter on a federal level. Bush and Obama would be good cases to analyse as well, for their scores seem to be opposite to Eisenhower’s (low instead of high and vice versa) in almost all instances. Yet they have also had observable successes. President Obama was able to broker international deals with Cuba and Iran, while Bush was able to pass an appropriation bill for the Iraq war in 2008 with a Democrat-controlled Congress which was out to end and defund the war effort. Both examples defy the common logic of the lame duck theory and are therefore ideal with regard to the purpose of this paper. Moreover, the nature of their success differs. The accomplishments of George W. Bush were rooted in domestic policy while those of Obama were rooted in foreign policy. By taking Bush as well

as Obama, one can assess the different level of reliance on Congressional approval, which weighs more heavily when conducting domestic policy. This leaves us with three cases to compare: Eisenhower and the passage of the 1960 Civil Rights Act, Bush and the passage of the 2008 Iraq Appropriation Bill and Obama and the affirmation of the Iran and Cuba deals.

But what about Clinton and Reagan? Are they eligible for a place in the analysis? Clinton was firstly a lame duck, so that checks out, secondly on the independent variable he scores relatively different from the other actors, mostly his scores are worse than those of Eisenhower, but better than those of Obama and Bush. Thirdly and most importantly, Clinton is worth investigating, because it is hard to find a true lame duck success. Any existing major legislation was either passed by partisan Republican vote or Congressional unanimity, neither indicating a real win vis-à-vis lame duck constraints. Reagan can be added as well, because he also scores in between the extremes on the different variables and major domestic legislation in his period is subject to the same critique as Clinton with regard to a success, meaning that it was a unanimous and thus non-contested pass or that it was passed by the opposition. One could argue in favour of Reagan based on foreign policy successes, but these successes were reaped based on efforts sown many years earlier before the lame duck phenomenon was even an issue. Reagan will also score negatively on “success” and scores moderately on the other variables, yet not similar to Clinton. Including Eisenhower, Reagan, Clinton, Bush and Obama, gives a diverse view of the population. It now includes cases that have a measurable success and cases that do not and it has cases that, based on a preliminary view of the variables (for the detailed analysis see Table 3.2 below), score high, low and in between yet never similar on our variables, making this set of cases truly diverse.

An important last note should be made in this section with regard to generalizability. As is the aim of most scientific endeavours, this thesis also strives to generalize its results first and foremost towards the larger population (all American lame duck presidents). The cases chosen for investigation then should be generalizable to that population. First off, Eisenhower, Reagan, Clinton, Bush and Obama are all technically lame ducks so one can generalize their position to that of the other presidents in the entire population. Secondly, the policies that will be looked at are also generalizable in the sense that they both encompass foreign as well as domestic bills and that the cases encompass the entire variety of (in)dependent variables. It is important to emphasize the relevancy of the cases encompassing domestic policy as well as foreign policy. The original model only focused on the latter, which meant that it did not look at the full scope of policy. Therefore its claims were not entirely generalizable to presidential policy as a whole. Moreover, while important, foreign policy is not the hardest case for lame duck successes. The lame duck constraints are much tougher on the president on the domestic level than the foreign one, where he has considerably more privileges to operate single-handedly. Studying domestic success thereby makes any evidence one finds stronger than what one might find by only studying the foreign level, as kind of a least likely case scenario. It would be remiss not touch

upon the apparent limitations of the population though. The lame duck phenomenon as studied here concerns an exceptionally American concept, a result of the country's specific laws and systems. This means that it would be unrealistic to generalize this thesis its results on presidential power and success outside of the US, which is why we only generalize to American presidents. However, this does not mean that our results are entirely irrelevant outside of this context. This is because thirdly, the research question is specifically aimed at resolving this country specific phenomenon, the possibility of lame duck success despite lame duck constraints, as well as contributing to a larger scientific debate over the relevance of agency versus structure. The American lame duck case might due to its exceptionalism, not be that generalizable with regard to the question of presidential power, but it does serve as a great least likely case for the impact of agency. By looking at these lame duck cases and taking both agency and structure variables into account, this analysis aims to generalize its results to the larger agency-structure debate of the study of politics in general. The thought here being that, if agency can make a difference under a scenario of such structural constraints, it will be likely to be able to make a difference in other more agency-lenient scenarios as well.

3.3 Operationalization and Practice

In the following section the methodology of this thesis will be explained more in depth, following the same order as the methodology itself this explanation will with a discussion on how this thesis aims to find different personality traits used to measure agency. Second and thirdly it will then delve into the way the QCA and case study will be applied, therein it will discuss what sources will be analysed and when something will be seen as an indication of our variables. The last thing this section will do, after having run through the steps of the methodology is discuss how the different variables will be operationalized for the eventual analysis.

3.3.1 Personality trait analysis

Finding personality traits of the presidents selected above is no simple feat. Previous analyses on these subjects either differ greatly in codification of the relevant traits or they do not analyse all the presidents necessary to this analysis. This means that in order to find to what extent these traits are present for all of these cases and to ensure validity, a new analysis has to be made. How are belief in one's ability to *control events*, *need for power* and *sense of purpose* then measured? First off, the aim is to find the personality of a president, which means one has to be able to look past all the politics of what is generally proclaimed by the president and assess what the president implies as a person not as a politician. Most ideally, one would use an interview to directly ask questions that could give away notions of the personality or provokes spontaneous unfiltered responses. This is however practically unfeasible to set up, so one has to rely on secondary sources. Those secondary sources like speeches, statements and interviews with third parties have the issue, compared to a self-conducted interview, that the president's words often have been prepared beforehand or have been written by a ghost-writer.

If that is the case one only gets the image the president wants you to see instead of the personality one wants to see. The best secondary sources one can therefore use are the presidential news conferences. Here, the press gets a question and answer session with the president for which he can only be partially prepared, which results in the more spontaneous and more unmediated reactions one aims to find.

For the purpose of this paper, multiple transcripts of news conferences of all five presidents, taken from the Presidency Project's online database (Peters, 2017), will be subject to a content analysis. Keeping the scope of this article in mind, not the entire news conferences will be analysed. According to the inventor of the *leadership trait analysis*, from which this thesis borrows two personality traits, it is sufficient to analyse a leader based on fifty one hundred word responses, as long as they correspond with the full time span of the lame duck period (Hermann, 2003, p. 180). For each president, fifty 100 to 250 word responses over time will be selected from all news conferences in the lame duck period. Those will then be subject to a content analysis aimed to reveal the extent to which the president possesses certain personality traits. In the operationalization section, one will find the way *need for power*, *control of events* and *sense of purpose* were coded, for even more detail one can look in the appendix under numbers I and IV.

3.3.2 QCA-Method

In the section on method design it has already been mentioned that for the second, third and fourth part of the design which respectively link personality, agency and structure to success, a QCA approach will be used. The aim is to take both agency and structure variables and get an overview on which of those variables are relevant for the outcome. Because it is still unknown what the precise conditions for this success are, the QCA analysis serves to eliminate the variables that have no apparent effect, so the useful variables remain. One could have used a quantitative method to do this as well, but those do not allow for the contextual complexity of the cases, which are relevant to our research. Why then use a QCA approach instead and more specifically what kind of QCA approach will be used?

A QCA approach can be seen as the middle of the road between pure qualitative and quantitative methods aiming to incorporate the best of both worlds (Ragin et al., 2012, p. 6). Most importantly it allows for a systematic comparison of multiple cases, without giving away a lot of the conceptual complexity of these cases (Ragin et al., 2012, p. 6). The application of QCA implies that the researcher compares multiple cases not just based on either their shared outcomes or their shared conditions, but by investigating the outcomes based on the difference in conditions. The method thereby allows for more than just an approximation of correlation, giving way to the discovery of causally relevant conditions and the unravelling of causal complexity (Ragin et al., 2012, pp. 3-5). The most important weapon in QCA's arsenal for these purposes is the so called truth table, which lists the combinations of conditions and outcome associated with each case (Ragin et al., 2012, p. 5). One can then assess the

causal patterns based on the combination between conditions and outcomes observed in this table. In order to make this observation, each condition and outcome is scored based on its presence, such as the presence or absence of a scandal. If present, the case scores a 1 while not present gets a 0. This process is called the calibration and this is the part that gives QCA its qualitative element, for the decision for many variables is not obvious in or out, especially when one works with non-dichotomous or “fuzzy” scores. Therefore, a QCA method always requires a qualitative interaction with the cases to justify the researcher’s decision for whether a specific case is “in” or “out”. In the end, the QCA method, is because of the elements just described, a very suitable method for a multitude of goals. Such as theory testing, theory exploration, but also the simple summarization of data (Ragin et al., 2012, pp. 15-16).

QCA works perfectly with regard to the practical aims of this paper. It can help first off, by looking at the connection between agency and success once the content analysis is done. Having scored multiple president’s personality and presence of success based on a truth table, it should be possible to very easily assess whether there is an initial relation between the two. Secondly the QCA method will be helpful once the structuralist variables are added to this table in determining which agency and structure variables are together relevant for success. A simple case study would not have been able to capture all the relevant elements for as many presidents as this QCA model, which allows for a comparison of a larger group of cases. A quantitative comparison on the other hand does not require the interaction with the cases that a QCA does, which would lead to very arbitrary quantifications of generally non-quantitative entities, which is why in the end the decision has been made to use this hybrid approach. A last note should be made. The application of this method, a crisp-set QCA (based on dichotomous scores) will be used instead of a fuzzy-set QCA. This decision has been made with regard to the aim of this thesis to primarily use a QCA to clearly and intuitively weed out the relevant conditions, while a fuzzy-set approach, while more nuanced in its calibration, would have worked counterproductive in this regard, making softer and thus more unclear distinctions.

3.3.3 The Case Study

After having assessed which of the different variables are relevant to presidential success and which are not, there is still one more methodological step to take. The QCA method is very well suited for unravelling causal relevance, but never aims to prove the empirical mechanism linking the variables to the outcome (De Meur, Rihoux & Yamasaki, 2012, p. 159). The question that therefore remains, is whether the remaining variables actually empirically influenced the successes prescribed to some of the cases. For instance, if one finds in the truth table that personality and polarization have a relevant relation to success, one still needs to find out whether this relation can be empirically verified. Therefore to test the acquired pattern, a case study will be employed. This is done precisely because a case study is well suited to identify causal mechanisms (Gerring, 2009, p. 44). A case study by

definition aims to research one or a few cases in-depth (Gerring, 2009, p. 37). This application of an in depth small-N study looking for causal relations is exactly what this fifth methodological step requires. By taking an in depth look at two of the five cases selected above, it should be possible to assess whether these relevant variables actually were empirically relevant as well, given that the right cases are selected and a suitable case study is applied. First off, what cases should those be? The best case-selection technique to use here is the typical case, which is representative to the population by definition (Gerring, 2009, pp. 89-93) and will thus be able to be generalized to the other cases. When is a case typical in this instance? For one, it needs to be a lame duck and two, it needs to be representative with regard to the “relevant conditions” which follow from the QCA method. Due to this last point, the cases themselves cannot be selected until later. Moreover, the source of the data to assess the actual presence of the data is very contingent on the variables themselves. Some might be sufficiently investigated with an analysis on relevant newspaper articles while others might need more original sources or more academic sources. Which precise form and source will be used for this analysis will therefore be discussed in the analysis chapter itself.

3.3.4 Operationalization & Codification

So far it has remained unclear how the variables are exactly measured or interpreted. This paragraph will try to clear this up. Most importantly, it is necessary to explain how the personality traits will be coded. The way that will be done resembles a middle way between a pure quantitative and a pure qualitative content analysis. Following the method applied by Hermann (1980), the presence of the traits will be measured based on the percentage of the verbs used by the president in the news conferences that meet criteria for each trait. This is the quantitative side of the method, however, instead of making this assessment purely on the verbs, their value will be determined based on their textual context, which is more qualitative than quantitative. Verbs are for instance only seen as indicating a *belief in ability to control events* when the context of those verbs indicates the president accepts or takes responsibility (on behalf of himself or the government) for initiating or planning an action (Hermann, 1980, p. 20). The codification works similarly for the trait *need for power*, where the context of the verbs should indicate that the president: “proposes or engages in a strong action (an assault or attack, a verbal threat, an accusation, or a reprimand), gives unwanted advice or assistance, tries to regulate others’ behaviour, tries to persuade, bribe other without constructive goals, tries to gain fame or impress and is concerned with his reputation” (Hermann, 2003, p. 190). The last personality trait, *a sense of purpose*, is not a trait based on Hermann’s model, but a comparable codification has been crafted for this model. Again the analysis will look at the percentage of verbs within their context, which in this case should indicate that the president appeals to the authority of his office, appeals to the mandate he has been given by the voter and underscores the need and necessity of the actions he has taken or will take for the American people. For all three traits it is assumed that the higher the percentage of verbs indicating to that trait the more this traits is assumed to be present in

the personality of a president. The second aim of this section is to clarify the operationalization of the various variables used beside the personality traits, so these will now be discussed one by one. The outcomes of which can be found in Table 3.2 which depicts the precise values which correspond with the preliminary analysis used for the case selection. Of the results that cannot be found directly, but were a combination of datasets, one can find an overview that combines these datasets in annex numbers II and III.

Table 3.2: Scores of variables per case.

	Eisenhower	Reagan	Clinton	Bush	Obama
POL	0,468	0,603	0,790	0,877	1,008
ECON	7,6 (5,9+1,7)	9,4 (6,2+3,2)	6,6 (4,2+2,4)	8,1 (5,0+3,1)	7,3 (6,3+1,0)
Prestige	61,5%	49,9%	60,9%	31,9%	48,8%
Ideological Compatibility	59%	45,5%	46,4%	43,1%	45,7%
Scandals	N	Y	Y	N	N
Party Unity (within opposition)	77%	86,5%	90%	91%	93%
Behaviour (LD Vetoes / Pre-LD average)	Cooperative 44 / 46	Cooperative 19 / 20	Combative 12 / 8	Combative 11 / 1	Combative 10 / 1

Polarization

Polarization can be measured for voters as well as for politicians. Because of the nature of this thesis, polarization is measured as among members of Congress. The data on the polarization has been drawn from the VoteView's (2017) measurement of difference in Party Means on the liberal-conservative scale overtime. The VoteView's methods and database, based on a DW-Nominate Estimation, give a good overview of the difference in political position in Congress over time and has therefore been used in research before (see Poole & Rosenthal, 2000). The values one sees in Table 3.2 are the average of the different mean position between Democrats and Republicans in the Senate and the House. More details of how these values were reached can be found in appendix III.

Economy

The state of the economy is an important variable, for it influences the likelihood of bipartisan support and therefore the strength of the institutional constraints on a lame duck. The way it is measured here is as the misery rate, a combination of the unemployment and inflation rate, taken as the average over the lame duck period. There however is no database going back to the times of Eisenhower, so the two indexes had to be combined (added up to one another) from two separate databases of the US Bureau

of Labour Statistics (2017) which can be found in the annex. One for the unemployment rate of the total population of sixteen and over and one for the relative Inflation Rate (CPI) calculated as the average for the lame duck period per president. The logic states that the higher the misery rate the more inclined people will be to work with the president instead of against him. More data and calculations on the misery rate can be found in appendix II.

Prestige

What Neustadt called prestige is essentially the same as what most people would call the president's approval rating; it influences the likelihood that other political actors will be inclined to work with the president. The higher his approval rating the more inclined those actors will be to work along with the president and the more likely success is. The approval rating is taken from the Gallup poll database (2017) and measured by the average of the lame duck period starting from the December after the last midterms until his replacement.

Ideological Compatibility

The ideological compatibility that is measured here refers to the manner to which the ideas of the president relate to that of Congress. Measured by the average concurrence between the votes of members of Congress and the president's position in the lame duck period, which is calculated as the votes supporting a president's position divided by the number of issues taken a position on by the president. The data has been taken from Brookings' 2017 Vital Statistics on Congress Report (2017). Due to the lack of data on 2016, Obama's score is based on just 2015 instead of a lame duck average. The way these scores should be interpreted is as the higher the better, for it will be easier for the president to find support in Congress the closer his position is to Congress.

Scandals

A scandal is seen as the presence of a political blunder that harmed the political image and position of the president, possibly hindering him in conducting successful policy. It should thus not only be an incident which has garnered a lot of media attention, but also one that had political consequences. There are three possible cases of this. For Reagan, one can name the Iran-Contra affair as a possible scandal. While not being personally held responsible, it led to a 21% drop in Reagan's approval rating and it also severely damaged the US's reputation abroad (Ranstorp, 1997, p. 203). Bush could also be attributed a scandal: his response to Hurricane Katrina. The crux however is that blame was only to a limited extent put on the president, just 13% (CNN, 2005) and the scandal did not change anything in the continuous decline of his approval ratings, so this will not be counted as a relevant scandal. The most obvious scandal of a lame duck in US political history is probably Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinski, which did not do much for his approval rating, but it did cost him so much political capital

that it lead to the start of an impeachment procedure, which therefore will be counted as a present scandal.

Party Unity

Party unity is another variable which aims to check how likely it is that a minority president can find support for his policies within the opposition. The extent to which party members vote among party lines, gives insight in the likelihood of this being the case. It is measured as the percentage of votes among party lines within the opposition party during the last two years of the president's time in office. The data on the average party unity in the lame duck period, within the opposition party in both the house and the senate stems from the Brookings' 2017 Vital Statistics on Congress Report (2017). A side note on this data is that given the lack of data on his lame duck period, Obama's percentage is only based on the numbers from 2014. One should be aware that the lower this party unity, the more likely it is the president can get to a majority in Congress via dissidents from the opposition and is thus more likely to be successful.

Behaviour

The aim here is to assess whether the president has behaved cooperatively or confrontationally towards Congress. The idea here being that the more cooperative he behaves the more likely he is to find common ground and a majority for his plans. The way behaviour and more importantly the classifications cooperative and combative are measured, works as follows. The assumption is made that uncooperative- or combative presidents will use more vetoes against Congress than cooperative presidents, they do not seek to adapt their position to that of Congress to find a majority but will believe more in the truth of their own position, acting unilaterally and combative to the "wrong" position of Congress. In order to determine behaviour, the relative number of vetoes implemented by the president in the lame duck period will be used. Important to note, these vetoes are relative to the number of vetoes used before the lame duck period kicked in. One, because it tells how the president's behaviour vis-à-vis Congress was different to before this period started. Two, there is a general decline from president to president in the number of vetoes used, which blocks one from fairly assessing inter-presidential differences, so one can better look at the president's own relative behaviour. When are presidents then exactly combative? When the average number of vetoes in the periods before the lame duck period is lower than the number of vetoes in the lame duck period (the usage of vetoes increased). The opposite is true for cooperative presidents, the number of vetoes decreased or stayed the same opposite to the periods before. The data on which these numbers, as shown in Table 3.2 are based can be found on the website of the Presidency Project, which collects and represents data on the American Presidency (Peters, 2017a).

Chapter IV: Analysis & Findings

4.1 Assessing Agency

4.1.1 Scoring Personality

As has been described in the previous chapter, the first step on the agenda is to do a content analysis of the five cases in order to measure the presence of the three personality traits introduced earlier. The content analysis coded (groups of) verbs within the context of the paragraph analysed. All verbs could thereby be placed under one of the three traits or none at all. Once all verbs for a president were coded the saliency of each trait among all verbs was calculated. This has been expressed as the percentage of the total number of verbs categorized under that specific category. The results of this can be seen below in Table 4.1 In the appendix I & IV one can find the coding sheet and the codified documents which give a more detailed description of how this analysis has been conducted.

Table 4.1: Results of content analysis personality traits.

	Total number verbs	Percentage <i>belief in ability to control events</i>	Percentage <i>need for power</i>	Percentage <i>Sense of purpose</i>
Eisenhower	1246	3,29%	2,65%	3,45%
Reagan	1251	5,84%	2,72%	2,32%
Clinton	1366	3,8%	3,59%	2,42%
G. W. Bush	1371	4,08%	3,79%	3,06%
Obama	1409	5,32%	4,26%	3,34%
Average percentage	-	4,46%	3,4%	2,92%

The scores in Table 4.1 above tell us how the five presidents scored on each trait relative to each other and relative to other traits. These scores on their own do not tell a lot about how they relate to success in the lame duck period. In order to make this relationship more visible these scores will, as has been explained in chapter III, be converted to a truth table. Each president will be given either a 1 or a 0 for each trait and the same goes for the dependent variable success. The question is however, when one should grant a case either a 1 (the trait is present) or a 0 (the trait is not present). Given the relative closeness of the scores displayed in Table 4.1 this is always going to be an uneasy cut off, but the choice to pick a crisp set model has been discussed before. Without the presence of a predetermined common average for these traits, the cut-off point has to be determined based on the scores from this particular content analysis alone. The simplest method to do this would be to take the scores from all traits together and then take their average as the cut-off point between 0 and 1. However one trait scores relatively high on average while another scores relatively low. Using an average of all scores

would be a crude way of making an already crude cut-off. The scores of the *belief in ability to control events* namely crank up the average with its score between 3% and 6% making the cut-off unfair for the other traits which score between 2% and 5%. Therefore the more elegant approach is to make a cut-off point for each trait individually based on their individual averages. This gives space to differentiate between presidents without the relative weight of the other traits skewing the average. This means that, as can be seen above, the cut-off points are 4,46% for *the belief in the ability to control events*, 3,4% for *need for power* and 2,92% for *sense of purpose*. Now relative to how a president scored on that category compared to the group’s average he gets either a 1 (when he scored above average) or a 0 (beneath average). What information to extract from this truth table is in part also dependent on how the dependent variable has been calibrated. In chapter three all cases have been discussed with regard to whether or not one could point towards a measurable success. In line with the arguments made there the five cases were awarded either a 1 (success) or a 0 (no success) as can be seen below in table 4.2. At this point no distinction has been made between domestic and foreign policy successes for the personality conditions are capable of influencing both.

Table 4.2: Truth table on relation between personality and success.

	A: Belief in ability to control events	B: Need for power	C: Sense of purpose	Y: Success
Eisenhower	0	0	1	1
Reagan	1	0	0	0
Clinton	0	1	0	0
G. W. Bush	0	1	1	1
Obama	1	1	1	1

What conclusion should one draw from this truth table? The idea is to look which scores on the outcome correspond with a consistent score for all cases on one or more of the conditions. By which is meant that when a condition is always present when the outcome is present, one can assume a relationship between the two. The way that this relation is assessed is via Boolean Reduction, a method best explained by Charles Ragin (2014). This method requires one to first turn the positive results (e.g. Y is present) as shown in table 4.2 into so called Boolean formulas. These formulas consist of the combinations of conditions for all successful pathways to the outcome. In this case, this means writing down a formula with functions for Eisenhower, Bush and Obama. Such a formula looks like this: $Y = abC + aBC + ABC$. Capital letters herein represent present conditions and small letters represent non-present conditions. The aim of the method then is to reduce this method by comparing all combinations with one another to see which conditions change (Ragin, 2014, pp. 89-98). The conditions that change are then removed for they were not necessary to the presence of outcome Y. So

abC would be compared to aBC leaving aC, abC with ABC leaving C and aBC with ABC leaving BC. Thus this reduction of Table 4.2 would leave us with the following formula: $Y = aC + BC + C$. This formula is however not the end point of the reduction. One is looking for the minimal number of conditions, meaning one has to compare this second formula with the original formula and see which combination of functions together or alone represent all cases (Ragin, 2014, pp. 95-98). To make this last assessment one often uses the following table:

Table 4.2.1: Prime implicants of Table 4.2.

	abC	aBC	ABC
aC	x	x	
BC		x	x
C	x	x	x

The “prime implicant” of Table 4.2 thus clearly is condition C. It on its own is capable of covering all cases and can be seen as necessary to the presence of outcome Y. Based on this the formula one can derive from Table 4.2 is the following: $Y = C$, meaning that A and B are in the end unnecessary personality traits. Boolean reduction thus tells us that one can find just one consistency across the board. All cases that have a measurable success also score above average on the trait *sense of purpose*. Moreover, all cases without this success score below average on this trait. This seems to signal the existence of a pattern between having a high sense of purpose and a lame duck success. For the other traits however, no consistent pattern can be found.

4.1.2 Scoring behaviour, prestige and scandals

The next step of this method is to expand the truth table, by firstly adding the other agency conditions as discussed in the chapters above, next to the personality traits. These other agency conditions are “behaviour”, “prestige” and “scandals”. Just like with the personality traits they will be granted either a 1 (condition was present) or a 0 (condition was absent). For each condition then it is important to explain how and why each case has been granted the scores that can be seen in table 4.3. Starting with “behaviour”, this condition refers to the manner to which the president behaved more cooperatively or more confrontationally towards Congress than before the lame duck period. This has been measured by comparing the relative number of vetoes before and after the beginning of this period. If there were less vetoes then one could assume the president’s behaviour was more cooperative and if there were more vetoes his behaviour could be seen as combative. Because the assumption is that cooperative behaviour leads to higher chances of success, cooperative presidents have been granted a 1 for behaviour while confrontational presidents have been granted a 0. This means, based on the values

visible in table 3.2 that Eisenhower and Reagan can be granted a 1 while the other should be granted a 0.

The second condition that needs to be explored is that of prestige, better known as the approval rating. The idea behind this condition is that (domestic) actors will be more likely to work in concert with the president when he is popular, increasing the chance of success. When can one say that the necessary prestige is present to create cooperation? The most logical cut off point is to take a 50% average approval rating in the lame duck period. If a president scores above this threshold then he has the support of more than half the country and it will thus be more likely that other political actors want to profit off of his success and support him. Therefore, every president with a prestige higher than 50% will be granted a 1 and every president with a lower rating will be granted a 0. For most cases, this makes a clear distinction Eisenhower and Clinton way above the threshold receive a 1, Obama and Bush clearly below 50% score a 0. There is however, a problematic case here. Reagan scores, as can be seen in Table 3.2, an average of 49,9%. This is technically beneath the threshold, but the difference is so small that it is hard to make such a decision upon it. In order to decide what to do with this case one can dissect the average and go back to the general trend of Reagan's approval rating, the data of which can be found on the presidency project website (Peters, 2017b). This data shows that at the start of the lame duck period Reagan makes a huge drop in approval (from 64% to 47%). He thus had lost a lot of credit in a very short time, credit that took him the rest of his presidency to restore. It seems likely due to this drop that other political actors were, at least early on in his lame duck period, less likely to hitch their wagon to Reagan. Later on it might have been easier for him to find support based on his prestige, but the general trend is him restoring the credit he has lost, which must have made at least others wary of supporting him outright, which is why he has been granted a 0 for this condition.

Thirdly, one has to look at the presence or absence of scandals. In the third chapter the possible presence of these scandals has already been discussed. Only for Clinton and Reagan one could speak of a scandal which had broad political impact on the president (an impeachment and an extreme approval drop). For neither Obama nor Eisenhower one can truly point towards an obvious scandal. For Bush one could mention his handling of hurricane Katrina, but that scandal had no real broad impact on Bush's already weakening political position. As a result Reagan and Clinton will be granted a 1 for the presence of their scandals, while the other got a 0 for the absence of any impactful scandals.

Lastly, there is the matter of the outcome, success. Previously Eisenhower, Bush and Obama all received a 1 for the presence of this outcome, however here this becomes more ambivalent for President Obama. His lame duck achievements were rooted in foreign policy and it is conceivable that there was a link between these successes and his personality. The conditions added here have very little to no impact on foreign policy, making it implausible to argue that there would be a link between their presence or absence and success in foreign policy. Logically one would thus only look at

domestic policy, where these conditions matter. This means that one has to change Obama’s score from a 1 (success) to a 0 (no success) for otherwise there would be complications in accurately explaining the patterns of these new conditions. In the part below where these patterns will be analysed, we will talk more on the significance of this complication.

Table 4.3: Truth table on relation between agency and success.

	A: Belief in ability to control events	B: Need for power	C: Sense of purpose	D: (Cooperative) Behaviour	E: (High) Prestige	F: Scandals	Y: Success
Eisenhower	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
Reagan	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Clinton	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
G. W. Bush	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Obama	1	1	1	0	0	0	0 (1)

Just as has been done with Table 4.2 and the personality traits, Boolean reduction will be applied to this table in order to assess which combination of conditions was relevant to the outcome. First off, based on the table one can create the following formula for cases with outcome Y present: $Y = abcDef + aBCdef$. Reducing this formula would mean one has to compare these two combinations with one another and take out those conditions that differ, because one is looking for the conditions that were consistent in order to determine a relation. Such a comparison would, for this table, reduce the formula to the following function: $Y = aCf$. This would mean that success in the lame duck period, in this table, is contingent on the absence of *a belief in the ability to control events*, the presence of a *sense of purpose* and the absence of a *scandal*. However, for two reasons this combination has to be reduced to $Y = Cf$. Firstly, whilst looking at just the personality traits, as done with Table 4.2 above, one came to the conclusion that condition A was not necessary to the presence of Y. The only reason A still does turn up in the model of Table 4.3 is because Obama had to be taken back out due to the implausible relationship between domestically focused conditions D, E & F and a foreign success. The relationship between his success and personality is however still plausible, meaning that one has to take into account that it had been concluded before that only C was a necessary personality trait. Secondly, despite the first point, it also seems theoretically not very plausible that the absence or a low level of this belief in one’s own ability to shape one’s environment would be conducive to political success. The presence of a sense of purpose can however have a positive effect on the way the president behaves and thus is likely to have success, while the presence of a scandal can ruin his

relation with other actors which is why its absence is a plausible reason as to why those cases even had chances at success.

These results can be related to the agency hypotheses as coined in the second chapter. Based on the mentioned findings one can so far make a conclusion based on two of these hypotheses H1b and H1c:

H1b: If the president is in the last two years of his second term and has a relationship with Congress that is based on cooperative behaviour, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.

H1c: If the president is in the last two years of his second term and enjoys high prestige, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.

Both these conditions, prestige and behaviour, have been assessed above. This analysis showed that there was no consistent relationship between either prestige or behaviour and successful lame duck policy. Because of the lack in consistency between the cases with such a success on these specific conditions one has to conclude that they are not particularly relevant nor necessary to the realization of this success. Therefore the first conclusion one can draw is that hypotheses H1b and H1c cannot be supported. The other agency hypotheses, H1a and H1d so far do not need to be rejected, they do show a relation with the outcome, their support however will depend upon the empirical presence in the case study that will follow this section.

4.2 Assessing Structuralist Conditions & the Complete Model.

The next step in this analysis is the calibration of the structuralist conditions: “polarization”, “economy”, “party unity” and “ideological compatibility”. The first of those, polarization, has been defined above as the difference of the mean position of Democrats and Republicans on the liberal-conservative scale. The idea being that the larger the difference of this mean position, the harder it would be for a president to find a majority for his policy proposals, especially given that the opposition is often in power in this period. Voteview’s dataset (2017) from which this data has been retrieved expresses the mean position on a scale from -1 to 1 with minus one being most liberal and one being most conservative. The value of the mean difference thus ranges between 0 and 2, zero being no polarization and 2 being maximum polarization. The values one can find in Table 3.2 for each president are the average mean differences in Congress during the president’s lame duck period, which is the average between the House value and the Senate value, as Voteview does not combine these values themselves. The follow up question is, when values should be granted a 1 (polarization present) or a 0 (absent). In order to determine this, Voteview’s database was used to take the average mean difference for all recorded sessions of the House and the Senate (going back to 1879). The average of the House being 0,677 and the Senate 0,596. The mean difference of Congress overtime has therefore been the average of these values, namely 0,636 (VoteView, 2017)(see annex III). In order to

determine the presence of polarization, this all-time average of Congress was taken as the threshold. Cases scoring higher were deemed to have seen polarization, for cases scoring lower below it was deemed to be absent, meaning Eisenhower and Reagan had relatively no polarization while the rest of the cases did.

Second, the state of the economy has been calculated via the misery rate, the combination of the unemployment rate and the inflation rate. The values in table 3.2 represent the combination of the lame duck average of the inflation and the unemployment rate. The aim of these values is to assess whether the economic situation could possibly be dire enough to undo the day-to-day political divisions and give the president room to conduct policy with bipartisan support. When is this situation of a dire economy present (1) and when is it absent (0)? Based on the same data (US Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2017) used to calculate the averages for the lame duck periods found in Table 3.2, an average of the misery rates for each president's entire presidency can be calculated. If the misery rate is higher than in the lame duck period than it was over their entire presidency, it is more likely that there was pressure on Congress to cooperate, giving the president more opportunities to successfully pass a bill. In that case the president will receive a 1 in the truth table, if the value is lower to the president's average he will receive a 0. From the US Bureau of Labour Statistics (2017) one can find the following averages over the cases' entire presidency: Eisenhower 9,3 , Reagan 12,2 , Clinton 7,8 , Bush 8,1 and Obama 9,4. Looking back at the values in Table 3.2 one can see that relative to their average rates the lame duck rates of everyone except Bush are lower. They will all receive a 0. Bush however scores exactly the same on average as he did on average in his lame duck period. The context becomes important here, in his lame duck period the banking crisis of 2007-2008 started, meaning that the economy was starting its rapid decline which increased the misery rate and propped up the average. Based on the larger economic context Bush will receive a 1 for present. Because while his lame duck average is equal to his general average, the day to day situation was most definitely more dire in this later period than it was before.

Thirdly, there is the condition of party unity, which is the extent to which members of Congress vote based on their party line with the maximum being 100%. The lower this number is the better for the president as it will be easier for him to extract votes from the opposition. But when can one logically call the party unity high and when can it be called low? To determine the difference the average party unity since the start of measurement (1953) needed to be calculated based on Brookings' Vital Statistics on Congress (2017). This average opposition party unity is 82,6 meaning that when a president experienced a higher party unity within the opposition (see Table 3.2), he received a 1 and if lower he received a 0, which was only the case for President Eisenhower.

Finally, there is the condition of ideological compatibility, which indicates the extent to which there is an overlap between the positions the president takes on issues and the positions members of Congress

take. The higher this overlap, the more likely the president's chance of legislative success. The values in Table 3.2 were measured as the number of votes supporting a president's position divided by the number of issues taken a position on by the president. When can one say there was ideological compatibility? Since this is about the percentage of concurrence the threshold between presence and absence has been put on 50%. If there is a concurrence of higher than 50% there is ideological compatibility (1), whereas a lower value will be seen as no compatibility (0). Only Eisenhower however was lucky enough to experience this. A last note on the scoring of the outcome, this is done similarly to table 4.3.

Table 4.4: Truth table on relation between agency, structure and success.

	A	B	C	D: Behaviour	E: Prestige	F: Scandals	G: POL	H: ECON	I: Unity	J: ICO	Y: Success
Eisenhower	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Reagan	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Clinton	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
G. W. Bush	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
Obama	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0 (1)

Table 4.4 above represents the full scope of all conditions used in this analysis, both agency and structure variables alike. This table can therefore give a full overview of which conditions are truly important to the outcome. Assessing which ones those are, requires one to use the same technique of Boolean reduction, as used above. If one looks at the pathways of Eisenhower and Bush, the cases where the outcome is present, then one can find two differing ways to reach outcome Y. Which leads to the following formula: $Y = abcDEfghiJ + aBCdefGHIj$, of which the first pathway is that of Eisenhower and the latter is that of Bush. If one reduces these via Boolean reduction, thus removing all conditions that score differently, then one is left only with $Y = aCf$. This is not different from the results taken from the agency-table 4.3. The most important thing one learns from this is that it appears to be so that the structural conditions which were added in Table 4.4 as opposed to 4.3 do not seem to impact the outcome. All the structural conditions that were present under Eisenhower, were absent under Bush and vice versa, making it implausible that there is a relation between those conditions and the outcome. Returning to the resolution of this truth table, $Y = aCf$, one has to come to a similar conclusion as with truth Table 4.3. Namely that one cannot justify the presence of the lower case A (absence of the belief in the ability to control events) in the formula, given the theoretical implausibility of the relation between its absence and the presence of outcome Y, and the earlier conclusion from truth Table 4.2 that only C was a relevant personality trait. This means that based on

all conditions taken together one can argue that $Y = Cf$ is the correct formula to represent the relations between the conditions and the outcome.

Given this information, one can now make an assessment on the structuralist hypotheses posed in chapter two. Below one can see the all the hypotheses which were referred to.

H2a: If the president is in the last two years of his second term and has to deal with a high misery rate, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.

H2b: If the president is in the last two years of his second term and has to deal with low polarization, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.

H3a: If the president is in the last two years of his second term and has to deal with a divided government, but with a low party unity within the opposition, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.

H3b: If the president is in the last two years of his second term and has to deal with a divided government but, with a high ideological compatibility, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.

All four of these hypotheses cannot be supported based on the results of this chapter. Neither the misery rate, nor low polarization or low party unity or high ideological compatibility appear to influence lame duck success based on the QC-analysis above. This means that all of the structuralist factors have hereby been eliminated from the rest of our model. Therefore one already gets a preliminary insight in the answer to the research question to what extent agency matters to lame duck policy success vis-à-vis structure. It appears at the very least that structure is not more important than agency, given that none of its variables were truly related to the outcome and two agency variables were. However, this does not yet amount to a full-fledged conclusion, for while one can conclude that based on the QC-analysis one does not have to disconfirm the hypotheses for personality and scandals, one also cannot yet support them. This is namely due to the fact that the analysis above distinguishes patterns but never supports whether there is an empirically observable mechanism behind the relation between that pattern and the outcome. The function of the following section will be to look at that empirical mechanism and see whether these two remaining agency factors, the lack of a scandal and the presence of a sense of purpose, truly had a traceable impact on the success of a president.

4.3 Further inspection: Eisenhower & Clinton

The empirical relevance of personality and scandals to lame duck success will be tested based on two case studies, with each variable getting their own case. The aim is thus to assess to what extent these

variables were actually relevant to the specific success (or failure) of that case. With this examination one should be able to make clear whether the relation between Y and C and f was merely a pattern. The title of this paragraph already indicates which cases will be used for this purpose.

Both were chosen carefully, Eisenhower will serve the purpose of examining the relation between *a sense of purpose* and success and Clinton the relation between scandals and success: to which will be turned later. First off Eisenhower, who is a lame duck with a measurable lame duck success, the signing of the 1960 Civil Rights Act. Secondly, Eisenhower clearly has both an above average *sense of purpose* and lacks a proper scandal. He therefore is a typical case with regard to the relevant conditions of this study, making his case generalizable to the larger population of lame duck presidents. When can one conclude that a sense of purpose impacted the outcome? What evidence either supports or denies this suspicion? Based on the way this trait has been codified (see Appendix I for details), *a sense of purpose* means that the president believes in his duty as president to serve the public, a role for which he feels (only) he has the legitimacy and skills to fulfil. Which means for the Civil Right Act that, in order to support a relation, one should be able to find evidence of the president indicating that passing this bill was part of his (personal) duty, that it was necessary legislation. This means that the president signals that passing that bill is needed now and cannot be or no longer can be ignored, that it has an urgency, or is even seen as a personal obligation to the American people.

One should therein distinguish between certain and unique evidence as inspired by the explanation of Beach and Pedersen (2013). The first of these is evidence which if not present can disconfirm the hypothesized relationship, for it is the minimally necessary condition for this relation to be true. The unique evidence then is the opposite, for its presence can validate the predicted relationship given that the condition of that evidence would be unique to the predicted relationship of the variables (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, pp. 101-102). If one can find proof of this sense of purpose in public statements then one has found *certain evidence*, for it at the minimum only supports the notion that the bill was *framed* as necessary. Meaning that if present, one is certain of the relation between the variables on the level that the appearance of a sense of purpose affected success. One does not have to disconfirm the empirical relationship. If one can also find proof that the president personally held this belief as well, one can speak of *unique evidence*. The first thing one thus has to do is go through all relevant public statements on civil rights before and after the passage of the bill, six in total, in order to discern to what extent it was framed to be part of Eisenhower's duty as president and as necessary legislation to pass it. If one can find proof of this, then the second step is to turn to the Eisenhower administration's internal memos, personal letters and biographic accounts to try and find whether the sense of purpose was not only a strategic move but also a personally held belief. If so, then one can say that one found unique evidence that *a sense of purpose* had a direct relation to the outcome. This is not to understate a myriad of other factors that played a role in the passage of this bill, like societal context and the political make up of Congress. But as to proof that this trait had any effect at all one should at the very

least find that the sense of purpose was present with regard to this case and that it was then used strategically, which is what will be done right here.

Looking at the lame duck presidency of Bill Clinton will serve the purpose of observing the relation between the presence or absence of a scandal and the outcome of lame duck policy. This case was chosen for this purpose as opposed to the more typical Eisenhower case (absent scandal, lame duck success), because of very practical methodological limitations. Proving the effect of something that is not present, a scandal in this case, is rather difficult. One cannot find evidence of the effect of non-presence. What one can do, is assess the effect of a the presence of a scandal and from there on out deduce what that result means for the absence of that variable. Bill Clinton specifically was thus chosen because he for one, had a notable political scandal and in line with the presumed relationship from the QC-analysis, also did not have a notable success. Moreover, he also did not score positively on *a sense of purpose* meaning that he is the perfect case to look at the isolated effect of a scandal. The specific scandal that will be looked at is the Monica Lewinsky-scandal, after Watergate probably the most notable political scandal in modern American history. Given the stature of this scandal and the big political impact it had, namely a procedure of impeachment, this case can be seen as typical for scandalized lame ducks, making it possible to generalize the findings.

This analysis will be approached as follows. It will start by randomly gathering articles on the relation between the Lewinsky scandal and the political agenda of President Clinton from two of the most prominent national newspapers in the US: *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. These articles must be written within the period between the news break of the scandal in January 1998 and a month after the acquittance of the president in February 1999. Within that period one should be able to find analyses by journalists and accounts of members of both the legislative and executive branch on the effect of the scandal on the political system. To clarify, news articles one month after the acquittance are also taken into account in order to include articles and accounts on the effect of the failed impeachment in this analysis. In the end, fifteen articles were gathered semi-randomly, on the condition that they at the least were written within this time period, that were closely related to the Lewinsky scandal and the president's legislative agenda. Having gathered those articles, one starts looking for evidence within these articles of a negative effect of the scandal on Clinton's policy. This could for instance either mean that former political allies no longer supported Clinton's proposals or that they outright opposed him. There are multiple forms of evidence one can find therein. *Certain evidence* of a negative effect would be evidence that suggests a shift in focus of the legislative agenda due to the scandal. This would tell us not necessarily what the effect of the scandal is directly, but shows that it influenced behaviour and at the least scared the president into changing his agenda, which is an indirect certain effect. Moreover, if this as the minimum effect of a scandal is not found one cannot support the empirical relationship. The second form of evidence, *direct certain evidence*, would be evidence which indicates growing resistance on or even failure of legislation by and due to

extra Republican opposition. Political resistance by the opposition is of course not out of the ordinary even without a scandal, which is why it cannot be considered as unique. However, it does have a direct effect on the outcome as part of the legislative options of the president, which is why it needs to be taken into account. The third form of evidence, *unique evidence*, which is also direct evidence, indicates growing resistance by Democrats or even legislative failure due to Democrat resistance. This being rather implausible without a scandal, forcing them to defect from supporting the president, is what makes it unique evidence of the effect of scandals. Based on what kind of evidence can be found in those articles, one can then assess how the absence of scandals might affect lame duck success and whether or not one can no longer support the earlier hypothesis.

4.3.1 Eisenhower's sense of purpose

Starting off with Eisenhower and the 1960 Civil Rights Act, the first order of business is to look at public statements made by the president about the act (and civil rights in general) before, during and after the introduction of the bill. These official statements range from State of The Union (SOTU) addresses to messages to Congress to news conferences. Certain evidence of a sense of purpose would then be evidence that points towards the use of an urgency or necessity argument made by the president to sell the bill and the cause of civil rights in general. The image one can get from reading these statements is quite conclusive. On multiple occasions the president argues:

In a message to Congress: “*We must continue to seek every practicable means for reinforcing these principles and making them a reality for all (...) the United States has a vital stake in striving wisely to achieve the goal of full equality under law for all people*” (Eisenhower, 1959, February 5).

“*The right to vote, the keystone of democratic government, must be available to all qualified citizens without discrimination (...) Supplemental legislation, therefore, is needed” (Eisenhower, 1959, 5 February).*

To the National Convention on Civil Rights: “*... a work that in my opinion is one of vital, prime importance to the United States and to its future*” (Eisenhower, 1959, June 9).

In the 1960 SOTU: “*The right to vote has been one of the strongest pillars of a free society. Our first duty is to protect this right against all encroachment*” (Eisenhower, 1960, January 7).

In the 1961 SOTU: “*This pioneering work in civil rights must go on. Not only because discrimination is morally wrong, but also because its impact is more than national--it is world-wide*” (Eisenhower, 1961, January 12).

Of all these quotes, one might argue that his statements to the National Convention on Civil Rights might be a case of preaching to the choir, but the other examples here point towards a strategy. These other four public statements show how Eisenhower tried to sell this bill and its underlying cause by

linking the issue of civil rights in general to larger American rights like voting rights. Arguing that guaranteeing these rights to all is essential to the idea of America and that it is therefore necessary that Congress, having stake in that same American project, supports this new bill and this movement. The language that the president uses therein is exemplary for his message. Using words like *must*, *vital* and *duty* underscores the notion that there is a larger *purpose* behind this bill which ought to move people into supporting it. The other two public statements that make up the population of relevant statements did not contain such evidence, but can be found together with the others in appendix V.

The second question now is whether this message spinning the bill and movement as being of purpose to the American ideal, came from a personal sense of purpose with regard to the idea of civil rights. In order to find this, an examination of memos, personal letters and accounts from Eisenhower and his administration has been conducted. The first interesting thing that came from this analysis is that of all these accounts relatively little is about civil rights in general and the 1960 bill especially, this already gives an indication as to how dispassionate the president was with regard to this topic. Most of the accounts that did refer to this topic though were about the 1957 bill, which was deemed relevant enough to base the necessary findings upon. Can one find hard evidence in these personal accounts? Yes and no. Personal letters he has written to Bryant Supplee and Ralph McGill show us that Eisenhower indeed was a firm believer in the president's duty to uphold the constitution and the right of equality for all (Galambos & Van Ee, 2001, p. 415; Eisenhower, Personal Letter, 1959, February 26 (see Appendix VI)). However, these same sources at the same time show that Eisenhower wishes to moderate the debate on race and that he believes that modest progress is the only way forward, which is not really indicative a very passionate and purposeful view of civil rights. This notion of Eisenhower's lukewarm relation with the plight for civil rights is supported by multiple second hand sources. In the introduction of the book on the Eisenhower papers by Galambos and Van Ee (2001), the authors reiterate the notion that while Eisenhower felt the movement had justice on its side, he as a southerner had sympathy for the southerners' plight, which lead him to introduce modest reforms as to not "tear the fabric of southern society" (Ibid., p. xxvi). An author like Burke confirmed and extended this view, stating that Eisenhower was uncomfortable with racial issues, afraid to be forced to engage with prejudices and advocacy movements, feeling more safe when engaging it strictly as a political management issue (1990, p. 189). Personal accounts by the highest ranking African-American member of the Eisenhower administration effectively shut the door on the idea that Eisenhower felt a true sense of purpose with regard to the cause of civil rights. He states that: "... In my many talks with him in this area, I found him neither intellectually nor emotionally disposed to combat segregation in general" (Morrow, 1975, pp. 121-122).

So all in all, what should one think of the effect of *a sense of purpose* on the success of the 1960 Civil Rights Act specifically and lame duck successes in general? For one, we can definitely argue that there is certain empirical evidence on the effect of a sense of purpose, which was used by president

Eisenhower as a way of framing the Civil Rights Act. The idea that the passage of this bill was of urgency to and had a purpose for the larger American ideals, played a role in four of the six relevant public statements and therefore seems to have played a role in the passage of this bill. The extent to which a personal conviction on the purpose of passing civil rights legislation played a role however is more of a mixed bag. From personal and second-hand accounts, one can see that Eisenhower was a lukewarm supporter of the movement and civil rights legislation at best. He did see them as necessary in light of the larger American ideals, his duty to the constitution and the saliency of the issue, but he appears to never have seen it as a true personal purpose of his presidency, urging him to push the lame duck constraints. This means that it *cannot* be argued that there *is no* relation between *a sense of purpose* and lame duck success. There is certain empirical evidence that the perception of a proposal being seen as part of the president's purpose, despite the lame duck constraints, plays a role in the success of that bill. So the minimum for us to be certain of the relation has been found. Based on the Eisenhower case there is as of yet however no unique evidence, meaning that there is no empirical proof that the most ideal prediction of a *personal* belief in that purpose also contributed to this success. What does this mean for the related hypothesis H1a:

The more a president has a personality that emphasizes the need for power and the belief in the ability to control events or a sense of purpose, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.

First off, analysis from earlier in the chapter has already informed one that the personality traits of *a belief in the ability to control events* and *need for power* did not appear to have a relationship with lame duck success. So in that sense this hypothesis cannot be fully supported. Secondly however, what has been investigated in the sections above is whether the third trait, *a sense of purpose*, did have a relationship with this success that could be empirically supported. When framed right, then at the very least, the appearance of this sense of purpose can contribute to lame duck success and make that outcome more probable despite the periods many constraints. For the actual presence of such a belief on a personal level no claims can be made based on this analysis however. Therefore, hypothesis H1a can as is, only be partially supported. If one however were to update this hypothesis as to fit those parts that were not falsified, as to make it fit in with our findings, one would end up with the following summarizing statement:

The more a president appears to have a personality that emphasizes a sense of purpose, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.

4.3.2 *The Clinton scandal*

Looking at the relation between scandals and lame duck success our focus will shift to Bill Clinton's Lewinsky scandal. By looking at the news media coverage of the topic one might be able to assess the extent to which there is evidence of a relation between the scandal and the lack of success by Clinton.

The case of Clinton's scandal starts on the 17th of January 1998 when the news breaks of the alleged sexual relations the president might have had with White House intern Monica Lewinsky (DrudgeReport, 1998, January 17). Clinton later that month denies the allegations but political consequences follow anyway. In April and May of that year, one can find reports in *The Washington Post* of Senators claiming the scandal distracts from their legislative agenda and one sees open attacks from high ranking Republicans against the president (Harris, 1998, March 13; Harris, 1998, May 1; Eilperin & Baker, 1998, May 8). These statements can be seen as first signs of *direct and indirect certain evidence* of the effect of the scandal. Things escalate further when on the 17th of August Clinton admits under testimony that the "improper relationship" which he had previously denied did take place. The fact that the president had thereby lied to the American people led to serious political backlash. It was already clear that legislative plans had to take a backseat and that major issues were of the agenda before this news hit (Broder, 1998, August 2; Baker, 1998, August 12). This view gets reiterated once more after this news hits (Clines, 1998, October 11; Dewar & Vobedja, 1998, September 16; Seeyle, 1998, September 1). However, this time reports by *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* not only on Republican resistance, who were openly hostile and want to keep media attention on the scandal, but also shows signs of Democratic resistance. Some indicate to feel betrayed, call for resignation of indicate to censure Clinton's entire legislative agenda (Berke & Alvarez, 1998, September 3; Berke, 1998, August 19; Purdum, 1998, August 23).

This has meant that so far one can, based on the media coverage and statements of relevant political actors, argue to have found evidence of all three kinds of evidence: indirect certain, direct certain and unique evidence. The first of those is a shift in the political agenda. They encompass the majority of the evidence with a wide range of reports from journalists, members of Congress and White House insiders claiming all at one time indicating that at one point in time the legislative agenda in Washington has shifted or was even placed on a backburner due to the scandal. Turning to the second kind of evidence, direct certain evidence, we found this to be less widespread nor as substantial as the indirect certain evidence. There have been clear indications of strong Republican resistance after both big news drops as well. Based on the newspaper coverage, one can say that this resistance had manifested itself in two different ways. On the one hand Republicans attacking and threatening the president openly (which eventually was substantiated with an impeachment procedure), while on the other hand they purposefully aimed to keep the media focussed on this scandal. Now, this is not to say that it resulted in full blown obstructionism. There was quiet legislative cooperation and even some tampering in tone by the Republicans who wanted to look impartial with their eyes on the impeachment procedure (Baker, 1998, August 12; Berke, 1998, August 19). However, there definitively *was* a backlash and an opportunity created for resistance by the diminished political position of the president. Finally, the unique evidence, that of Democratic resistance. In the articles one can definitely find evidence of this happening after the news of Clinton's confession, with

members openly pondering censuring the president or even requesting him to step down. However, the same articles which showed this resistance also showed why in the end this evidence has to be disproven. Given that midterm elections were due at the time of this scandal the political strategy of most Democrats was brought down to the choice of either distancing themselves from President Clinton or banding together behind a Democratic legislative agenda in order to shift the political conversation away from the scandal and towards policy, based on which they then might win re-election. While some indeed did resist, most continued to work together and with the president on moving their legislative agenda to the political agenda (Berke, 1998, August 19; Dewar, 1998, August 30; Dewar & Vobedja, 1998, September 16; Seeyle, 1998, September 1).

What does this mean for the larger story on the effect of political scandals? As it thus turns out one could at best find certain evidence of the negative effect of a scandal on the possibility of legislative success in a lame duck period. Most importantly therein is that it has a very strong effect on the political legislative agenda of not just the president, but of Congress as well. Putting policy on a backburner and giving the opposition incentive to openly attack the president and keep the political focus on the scandal can undermine a lot of plans the president might still have in the lame duck period. If one then extends this argument to the absence of a scandal, one can argue that the positive relationship between this absence and success is empirically supported by the Clinton case insofar that, at the minimum, without a scandal the president can more easily control the political agenda and steer it towards his legislative goals. At best, this case supports this relation because the absence of a scandal not only has the indirect effect of preserving his influence over the political agenda, but also has the direct effect of preventing the potent and direct incentive given by a scandal to the opposition to openly and personally smear the image of the president and keep the conversation away from his policy goals. The question now is how this relates to the hypothesis below:

H1d: If the president is in the last two years of his second term and has had no notable scandals, the more likely he will be to successfully implement his policies despite the lame duck constraints.

Given the fact that one can find the minimum empirical evidence that was necessary in order to be certain of the existence of a relationship with success, one can argue that there is enough evidence to support the idea that the absence of a scandal makes success at the least *more probable*. Had one found unique evidence as well, then that would have been a smoking gun for the relation between a scandal and success. For if this full-fledged resistance within the president's own party would have been found instead of the strategic cooperation that was found now, it would have been imperative for any lame duck success that no scandal occurred at all. At this point a scandal can be seen as a relevant hurdle which, depending on the size of the president's party's minority and the political impact of the

scandal, makes success less or very unlikely (its absence making success thus more likely), while if one would have found the unique evidence one could probably have ruled out any success at all.

Chapter V: Conclusion

5.1 Concluding remarks

This thesis can be seen as a response to the notion that the original lame duck model was insufficiently equipped to explain the full extent of the empirical reality, especially with regard to a president’s potential for success. Given that this original model could not explain why such successes occurred the aim of the thesis above has been to assess what possible factors could. Therein it aimed to rectify some of the most crucial mistakes of the lame duck model. Firstly, instead of speaking in terms of a deterministic relationship the argument refers to an in-or-decreased likelihood, which comes closer to the empirical nature of how political success works. Not one factor predetermines whether a policy will be a success or not. These factors can affect the chance of it happening however, so much in fact that under those circumstances success often does not occur. This however does not mean that success is fundamentally impossible, a notion which is backed up by the cases of Bush, Obama and Eisenhower. Secondly, while investigating which factors in-or-decrease the probability of success this thesis included both structuralist and agency variables, which means that instead of basing its claims on just a short range of structuralist factors, like the old model, it functions based on a fuller representation of all possible factors. Following from the aim to rectify these shortcomings of the original model and to research which factors did contribute to success, this thesis raised the following research question:

To what extent does individual agency matter vis-à-vis structuralist factors, in determining the president’s success in conducting policy in the lame duck period?

Table 5.1: Overview of status of hypotheses.

Hypothesis	Agency / Structure	Variables	Supported / Not Supported
H1a	Agency	1. Belief in ability to control events. 2. Need for power 3. Sense of purpose	Partially Supported
H1b	Agency	Behaviour	Not Supported
H1c	Agency	Prestige	Not Supported
H1d	Agency	Scandals	Supported
H2a	Structure	Misery rate	Not Supported
H2b	Structure	Polarization	Not Supported
H3a	Structure	Party Unity	Not Supported
H3b	Structure	Ideological compatibility	Not Supported

The answer to this question can be formed based on the results from the analysis chapter, which tested the eight hypotheses proposing possible relationships between relevant agency and structure variables which were taken from the literature and success. Following from whether these hypotheses could be supported or not one can now assess the answer to the research question. An overview of the result with regard to each hypothesis can be found in Table 5.1 above.

The first tests of the analysis consisted of a QCA method which showed that there was no consistent pattern (every time Y was present so was X) between any of the structuralist variables and success, neither was this true for prestige and behaviour, both agency variables, which could not be supported either. That the QCA method showed no consistent relationship between H2a, H2b, H3a, H3b and success is very relevant to the research question. Because all four structuralist factors were thereby irrelevant to the outcome one, even before making a conclusion about agency, is informed of the weakness and failure of the explanatory position of the structuralist variables. Moreover, as it turned out, the only consistent pattern that could be found in relation to success, was with the personality trait *a sense of purpose* and the presence of a scandal, which are both agency factors. For every case where the former was present and the latter was absent, success did occur. After doing a case study into both factors to determine the extent of an empirical relationship, certain evidence, the minimal evidence necessary for the relationship to be empirically conceivable, was found for both variables. This means that, the appearance of a sense of purpose (with regard to a certain subject or policy) and the absence of a scandal, do appear to increase the likelihood of success in the lame duck period in those specific cases as opposed to the structuralist variables, which have apparent relationship to success. Given that these cases are generalizable to the larger population of lame ducks, one can state that these effects can be extrapolated to lame ducks in general. Moreover, because the thesis included both foreign policy as well as domestic policy one can extend the knowledge of the lame duck previously only applied to foreign policy, also to domestic cases. What does this tell one about the research question? Most importantly, it answers the research question in as far as one can state that based on the analysis conducted in this thesis one can state that individual agency factors, especially image (scandals) and personality (sense of purpose), matter as much- if not more- than structuralist factors in explaining lame duck success. This answer informs one that understanding the successes and failures in this lame duck period requires one to also take into account the agency side of the story. For at the end of the day, it matters who the president is. Not just with regard to the content of public policy, but also with regard to the likelihood of its success. By not taking this into account, the original model thus limits its own capability for predicting and explaining the empirical reality. Given that politicians themselves act upon this original overtly structural and deterministic notion of lame ducks, it would be advisable to review the way we use this term. Seeing them as ugly ducklings instead, as presidents with potential for success (de Cock, 2016) not as doomed failures, by taking into account their role as political agent

as well would thereby not only reshape how we talk about the subject, but might also alter the way in which presidents perceive their own possibilities. The lame duck period might under the right circumstances, no longer be seen a self-fulfilling prophecy waiting to happen, but as a time of new political opportunities.

5.2 Related Statements and Recommendations

This thesis's findings clearly have an effect on the way one assesses lame duck politics and the extent to which one uses agency factors to explain political outcomes in that context. As stated above, the argument here is that one ought to revalue agency as at least equal to structure arguments, given that these were decisive in explaining success relative to their structuralist counterparts. As has been discussed in chapter three though, this thesis consisted not only of a discussion on lame duck politics, but also of larger discussion on agency and structure. On the later topic I would like to argue that the claims made here with regard to the lame duck theory can be extended outside of that context. First and foremost to the context of presidential power and politics which as stated in the second chapter of this thesis, is historically and increasingly structuralist in its focus (Jacobs & Shapiro, 2000, pp. 491-492). It would be healthy to the internal debate of this field if the Neustadtian track, which emphasizes agency, would get some more attention. Secondly and more generally however I would like to argue that the example of the lame duck success is informative to the larger debate between structure and agency in political science in general. When explaining political outcomes one often tends to prefer or hold on to the system level, institutional analyses, like military power, electoral systems and the GDP. These factors certainly are relevant and should most definitively be researched. I however think that this thesis on lame duck success shows that maybe too often this focus on structuralism comes at a cost to the possible consequences of individual agency. Politics is a human enterprise not only conducted for people, but is more importantly conducted by people. This is why research on the consequences of the content of the character, behaviour and reputation of these political actors is so important. Based on this extension of the findings I would therefore like to make the general recommendation of doing more agency level analysis to explain political outcomes. For if agency can make a difference under powerful constraints of the lame duck period, it is very likely it will play an important role elsewhere as well.

Coming back to the specific, while this thesis has resulted in some definitive answers, these answers also lead to new questions which can inspire new research. For one, the analysis showed that there was no consistent pattern between polarization and success. This result was surprising, given the effect that polarization has on the capacity for coalition building, it seemed highly likely that increased polarization would lead to less success, especially given the rapid polarization of American politics. It would therefore be interesting to research the effect of polarization on political strategies. How have these changed and do they actually make passing bills easier? This might help explain why no pattern

could be found in this thesis and expand our knowledge of how the mechanism between polarization and political success works. Secondly, the structuralist factors in this thesis were specified to effects in the US Congress. This made it so that one could not always extrapolate their effects to successes made with regard to foreign policy. It is therefore that it would be recommendable to investigate foreign policy lame duck success like president Obama's where one specifically controls for structuralist variables on the international stage, such as the state of the world economy instead of the misery rate of a national economy. Doing this would expand our knowledge on lame duck success in general, foreign policy success specifically as well as the effect of these structuralist variables. All in all, our knowledge on the lame duck president and his political constraints would increase, making it a worthy subject for a next scientific contribution.

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