FMUS 2020 Trump Executive Order Research

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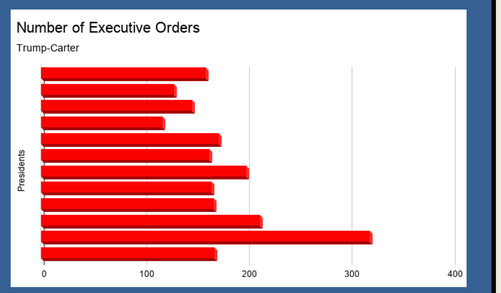
ABSTRACT

President Donald J. Trump's presidency has been one of high critique as well as high praise for his "unprecedented" approach to governing. Both sides looking more towards his character as the reason for this “uniqueness” rather than finite means of measurement. We took a statistically in-depth look into President Trump's governing style to determine if it could be factually proven that his unique governing style is truly different from that of past Presidents.
We did this specifically through the lens of executive orders. we will search public databases and review historical models to see whether or not Trump's use of executive orders truly sets him apart from past Presidents in a way that can be statistically backed. We will be looking at the differences between our current administration's use of Executive Orders and our pasts to test for patterns that will lead us to our answer. We will document whether Trump's administration differs from the "run of the mill" Presidents of the past. Thus, allowing us to answer whether the "uniqueness" of Trump's administration is something of fact or fiction.



INTRODUCTION

According to a Washington correspondent, “Donald Trump was a very different kind of presidential candidate and from the moment he was inaugurated, it was clear he was going to be a very different kind of president.” From the beginnings of his run for office and his presidency, it was clear that the media expected and believed that President Trump would be a president unlike the United States has ever seen before. We set out to discover if this statement was true. Is Trump a truly unique President? The way in which we researched was by looking at Trump’s executive orders and comparing them to past presidents. Executive orders are important to assess because the nature of them is directly connected with the president. Since Executive orders are inherently through the president, one can analyze a president by what that president does through executive orders. Trump has been characterized as one of the most if not the most unique presidents of all time. A past tv show host, millionaire, and celebrity turned President is something that is in many ways, unique to the office of the president. He had no former experience in law, the military, or government. By looking at what may have affected Trump and past presidents through comparing, we were able to see if Trump is a unique president.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The way in which we researched whether or not Trump is a unique president was through executive orders. The factors that we considered and researched were the
Number of executive orders
Law degrees of each President
Their Party
Approval rating
War time presidencies
Military experience
Senate Majorities
Natural disasters
The presidents researched dated back from Trump to Carter.
Through comparison we were able to gauge patterns of each president while seeing what similarities and differences they had to Trump that may have affected their executive orders.

RESULTS

Law Degree: Bill Clinton had the most executive orders of any president with a law degree, it was in his first term that he had 200 orders go through. Off of our data we can make the assumption that when a President possesses a law degree he will be less likely to use the executive power, compared to those without a law degree.
Party: Since Carter, the Republican Party has had more executive orders, while also having one more candidate since Carter. Carter and Clinton are outliers having more executive orders in their first terms than Republican candidates but when given a second term like in the case of Clinton, dropping that number significantly. On average Republicans have a higher propensity to use the executive power yet Democrats trail just behind them and based on trends have a higher use of executive orders in their first term when they follow a Republican President. While W. Bush had 118 executive orders his second term, Obama had 147 his first term. This could be due to the number of orders that they overturn from the past President.
Approval Rating: In general Republican Presidents have had higher approval ratings than Democratic Presidents. There are a few exceptions to this. The first being Trump who had the lowest Public Approval Ratings ince Bush's second term at 40%. Second terms have also proved to be low points from Presidents who face scandal, somehow Clinton escaped this, rising from a 50% to a 61%.. For those who rose in Public Approval their frequency of orders went down as well as when Public Approval dropped, like in the case of George W. Bush, whose approval declined, 62% to 37%, as well as his number of executive orders in his second term, 173 to 118.
War: Those in times of War have had an increase in how many orders they pass. This in part could be due to their public image as “peacekeepers' ' Presidents who had wars during their terms seemed to be focused more internationally than domestically which could also explain why they didn’t sign as many executive orders, examples included Bush and Obama. This seems to be the general trend for presidents who are comparable to one and other. We have seen war be a very unifying thing post 9-11 and turn into a very devise thing now 20 years later.
Military Experience: Presidents with military backgrounds have had higher numbers for the amount of executive orders that they signed. This can affirm our prediction or the leadership style taught in the military as well as the understanding of order that they carry because of their service. Clinton had the highest executive orders for a non-serviceman, breaking 200. Military service affects how the human mind views order and teaches that order is the responsibility of leadership. When you are in charge of a country it would make sense that you would pass more orders in order to maintain your own order and control.
Senate Majority: When a President's party has the majority in the Senate their number of executive orders is much higher than they were when the majority is not held. We can see this play out in Obama's drop in orders when he lost the majority within the senate, 57% majority to 53%.
Natural Disaster: It seems as though when we experience a low amount of natural disasters that executive orders rise. Presidents in fact have an easier time passing executive orders because of the state of peace within our country. When there is chaos that comes in the form of natural disasters Presidents have the option to execute executive orders but many times like in George W. Bush’s Presidency, they need to focus on being the face of the movement for disaster relief. Natural disasters are unifying forces for our country and as a result laws and bills go through very smoothly when it pertains to relief efforts because we are focused on one relief effort as a country. It is a lovely time for bipartisanship and this is reflected in Presidents who had lost senate control in times of disaster yet were able to sign orders pertaining to relie without a hitch, like Obama.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on all the data that we have collected, President Trump is not any different than any other President in his situation based on his use of executive orders. Many people believe that he is a very special case due to his rhetoric and how many perceive his governing style yet when it comes to his use of executive orders he is not very different than any other President. If anything Trump might act less when using the executive power. Trump could very well be a different President than the rest but when it comes to his use of the executive order he really isn’t much different.

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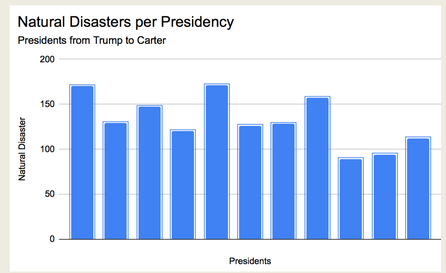

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