

A brief history of space flight from 1961 to 2020: An analysis of missions and astronaut demographics

Supplemental Material

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1. Supplemental results tables

1.1. Quasi-separation of data

Table S1 Cross-tabulation between gender and education, showing quasi-separation of data. Data shown are the number of astronauts of each gender in each education category. Education data were missing for n=5 astronauts.

Education	Female	Male	Total
No college	0	5	5
BS	6	90	96
MS	19	238	257
PhD/MD	39	160	199
Total	64	493	557

Table S2 Cross-tabulation between agency and education, showing quasi-separation of data. Data shown are the number of astronauts from each agency in each education category. Education data were missing for n=5 astronauts.

Education	Agency						Total
	NASA	Roscosmos	ESA	CNSA	CSA	JAXA	
No college	1	2	1	1	0	0	5
BS	53	26	7	7	1	2	96
MS	171	68	12	1	2	3	257
PhD/MD	124	47	16	0	6	6	199
Total	349	143	36	9	9	11	557

1.2. Gender: Mission-level

Due to missing data, 20 spaceflights (1.7%) could not be included in regression analysis of astronaut gender. A total of 1150 spaceflights therefore contributed to the analysis. At the level of individual missions, there were significant effects on gender by military background, children and age at launch (Table S3). Similarly to the individual-level analysis, astronauts were significantly less likely to be female with increasing age and with increasing numbers of children, and if they had a military background. The point estimates for the likelihood of an astronaut being a female have increased over time, but this was not statistically significant.

Table S3 Mission-level effects on gender. Statistically significant Type III effects highlighted with bold typeface. Odds ratios (OR) for being female are shown for each level of categorical variables, and for each one unit increase of continuous variables.

Covariate	F	Type III test			Odds ratios		
		df1	df2	p-value	Level	OR	95% CI
Education	1.0	2	1131	0.359	No college	-	-
					B	Reference level	
					M	1.17	0.24; 5.80
					PhD/MD	2.44	0.49; 12.21
Marital status	1.1	2	1131	0.324	Unmarried	Reference level	
					Married	0.74	0.16; 3.44
					Divorced	3.31	0.33; 33.30
Total missions	0.7	1	1131	0.406	OR/mission	0.86	0.61; 1.22
Children	18.2	1	1131	<0.001	OR/child	0.37	0.24; 0.59
Decade	1.4	4	1131	0.221	1960s	Reference level	
					1970s	-	-
					1980s	1.45	0.08; 26.38
					1990s	3.38	0.20; 57.91
					2000s	6.43	0.34; 121.28
					2010s	9.70	0.38; 244.67
Agency	2.1	5	1131	0.063	NASA	Reference level	
					ROSCOSMOS	0.10	0.02; 0.50
					ESA	0.21	0.02; 1.87
					CNSA	1.16	0.04; 33.19
					CSA	1.71	0.12; 23.66
					JAXA	0.19	0.02; 2.19
Military background	5.5	1	1131	0.019	No	Reference level	
					Yes	0.27	0.09; 0.80
Age at launch	12.2	1	1131	0.001	OR/year	0.86	0.80; 0.94
Mission duration	0.0	1	1131	0.926	OR/day	1.00	0.99; 1.01

df: degrees of freedom; CI: confidence interval

1.3. Military background: Mission-level

Due to missing data, 23 spaceflights (1.8%) could not be included in regression analysis of military background. A total of 1231 spaceflights therefore contributed to the analysis. Results of the mission-level analysis of military background are given in Table S4. As with the individual-level analysis, there were significant effects of education, launch decade and gender on the likelihood of the astronaut having a military background. Men were more than four times as likely to have a military background than women.

Post-hoc tests for education are given in Table S16. Astronauts with a PhD/MD education were significantly less likely to have a military background than astronauts with a Bachelor's-level (OR=0.023)

or Master's level (OR=0.025) education. Other education levels were not significantly different from each other.

Post-hoc tests for launch decade are given in Table S17. Astronauts in the 1960's and 1970's were significantly more likely to have a military background than astronauts in the 1980's, 1990's, 2000's and 2010's. The likelihood of an astronaut having a military background at the mission-level was not significantly different between any other launch decades.

Table S4 Mission-level effects on military background. Statistically significant Type III effects highlighted with bold typeface. Odds ratios (OR) for having a military background are shown for each level of categorical variables, and for each one unit increase of continuous variables.

Covariate	Type III test				Odds ratios		
	F	df1	df2	p-value	Level	OR	95% CI
Education	44.0	3	1211	<0.001	No college	Reference level	
					B	2.13	0.04; 101.80
					M	2.24	0.05; 102.76
					PhD/MD	0.05	0.00; 2.44
Marital status	0.8	2	1211	0.459	Unmarried	Reference level	
					Married	1.36	0.30; 6.11
					Divorced	0.46	0.05; 4.26
Total missions	0.1	1	1211	0.779	OR/mission	1.03	0.82; 1.31
Children	0.3	1	1211	0.607	OR/child	0.93	0.71; 1.22
Decade	3.3	5	1211	0.006	1960s	Reference level	
					1970s	0.52	0.11; 2.47
					1980s	0.11	0.02; 0.54
					1990s	0.09	0.02; 0.42
					2000s	0.06	0.01; 0.33
					2010s	0.11	0.02; 0.74
Agency	1.7	4	1211	0.140	NASA	Reference level	
					ROSCOSMOS	0.51	0.22; 1.17
					ESA	0.89	0.25; 3.23
					CNSA	-	-
					CSA	0.35	0.03; 3.59
					JAXA	0.07	0.01; 0.81
Gender	8.1	1	1211	0.004	Female	Reference level	
					Male	4.50	1.60; 12.67
Age at launch	0.1	1	1211	0.733	OR/year	1.01	0.96; 1.06
Duration	1.6	1	1211	0.210	OR/day	1.00	0.99; 1.00

df: degrees of freedom; CI: confidence interval

1.4. Post-hoc test results

Table S5 Pairwise comparisons for effect of agency on astronaut gender (individual-level analysis).

Agency (A)	Agency (B)	Mean difference (A-B)	SE	p-value
JAXA	CSA	-0.19	0.164	0.245
	CNSA	-0.06	0.093	0.548
	ESA	0	0.031	0.957
	Roscosmos	0.02	0.025	0.529
CSA	NASA	-0.07	0.041	0.067
	JAXA	0.19	0.164	0.245
	CNSA	0.14	0.188	0.471
	ESA	0.19	0.164	0.239
CNSA	Roscosmos	0.21	0.165	0.211
	NASA	0.12	0.159	0.464
	JAXA	0.06	0.093	0.548
	CSA	-0.14	0.188	0.471
ESA	ESA	0.06	0.093	0.538
	Roscosmos	0.07	0.092	0.438
	NASA	-0.02	0.095	0.840
	JAXA	0	0.031	0.957
Roscosmos	CSA	-0.19	0.164	0.239
	CNSA	-0.06	0.093	0.538
	ESA	0.01	0.023	0.523
	NASA	-0.08	0.040	0.057
NASA	JAXA	-0.02	0.025	0.529
	CSA	-0.21	0.165	0.211
	CNSA	-0.07	0.092	0.438
	ESA	-0.01	0.023	0.523
NASA	NASA	-0.09	0.040	0.023
	JAXA	0.07	0.041	0.067
	CSA	-0.12	0.159	0.464
	CNSA	0.02	0.095	0.840
NASA	ESA	0.08	0.040	0.057
	Roscosmos	0.09	0.040	0.023

Table S6 Pairwise comparisons for effect of education on military background (individual-level analysis).

Education (A)	Education (B)	Mean difference (A-B)	SE	p-value
PhD/MD	M	-0.55	0.067	<0.0001
	B	-0.51	0.087	<0.0001
	No college	-0.39	0.329	0.239
M	PhD/MD	0.55	0.067	<0.0001
	B	0.04	0.08	0.627
	No college	0.17	0.325	0.611
B	PhD/MD	0.51	0.087	<0.0001
	M	-0.04	0.08	0.627
	No college	0.13	0.329	0.701
No college	PhD/MD	0.39	0.329	0.239
	M	-0.17	0.325	0.611
	B	-0.13	0.329	0.701

Table S7 Pairwise comparisons for effect of decade of first spaceflight on military background (individual-level analysis).

Decade (A)	Decade (B)	Mean difference (A-B)	SE	p-value
11-20	01-10	0.20	0.119	0.091
	91-00	0.12	0.122	0.318
	81-90	0.07	0.125	0.568
	71-80	-0.20	0.149	0.187
	61-70	-0.39	0.143	0.007
01-10	11-20	-0.20	0.119	0.091
	91-00	-0.08	0.066	0.225
	81-90	-0.13	0.077	0.089
	71-80	-0.40	0.119	0.001
	61-70	-0.59	0.103	<0.001
91-00	11-20	-0.12	0.122	0.318
	01-10	0.08	0.066	0.225
	81-90	-0.05	0.071	0.476
	71-80	-0.32	0.114	0.005
	61-70	-0.51	0.101	<0.001
81-90	11-20	-0.07	0.125	0.568
	01-10	0.13	0.077	0.089
	91-00	0.05	0.071	0.476
	71-80	-0.27	0.112	0.017
	61-70	-0.46	0.107	<0.001
71-80	11-20	0.20	0.149	0.187
	01-10	0.40	0.119	0.001
	91-00	0.32	0.114	0.005
	81-90	0.27	0.112	0.017
	61-70	-0.19	0.126	0.133
61-70	11-20	0.39	0.143	0.007
	01-10	0.59	0.103	<0.001
	91-00	0.51	0.101	<0.001
	81-90	0.46	0.107	<0.001
	71-80	0.19	0.126	0.133

Table S8 Pairwise comparisons for effect of agency on military background (individual-level analysis).

Agency (A)	Agency (B)	Mean difference (A-B)	SE	p-value
JAXA	CSA	-0.17	0.253	0.505
	ESA	-0.44	0.174	0.012
	Roscosmos	-0.32	0.155	0.040
	NASA	-0.48	0.146	0.001
CSA	JAXA	0.17	0.253	0.505
	ESA	-0.27	0.232	0.249
	Roscosmos	-0.15	0.222	0.501
	NASA	-0.31	0.212	0.142
ESA	JAXA	0.44	0.174	0.012
	CSA	0.27	0.232	0.249
	Roscosmos	0.12	0.125	0.340
	NASA	-0.04	0.11	0.691
Roscosm os	JAXA	0.32	0.155	0.040
	CSA	0.15	0.222	0.501
	ESA	-0.12	0.125	0.340
	NASA	-0.16	0.074	0.029
NASA	JAXA	0.48	0.146	0.001
	CSA	0.31	0.212	0.142
	ESA	0.04	0.11	0.691
	Roscosmos	0.16	0.074	0.029

Table S9 Pairwise comparisons for effect of decade of first spaceflight on astronaut age (individual-level analysis).

Decade (A)	Decade (B)	Mean difference (A-B)	SE	p-value
61-70	71-80	-3.81	0.901	<0.001
	81-90	-5.39	0.780	<0.001
	91-00	-5.09	0.811	<0.001
	01-10	-8.69	0.825	<0.001
	11-20	-7.47	1.007	<0.001
71-80	61-70	3.81	0.901	<0.001
	81-90	-1.58	0.761	0.038
	91-00	-1.28	0.786	0.104
	01-10	-4.89	0.795	<0.001
	11-20	-3.66	0.985	<0.001
81-90	61-70	5.39	0.780	<0.001
	71-80	1.58	0.761	0.038
	91-00	0.30	0.537	0.578
	01-10	-3.31	0.578	<0.001
	11-20	-2.08	0.854	0.015
91-00	61-70	5.09	0.811	<0.001
	71-80	1.28	0.786	0.104
	81-90	-0.30	0.537	0.578
	01-10	-3.61	0.574	<0.001
	11-20	-2.38	0.848	0.005
01-10	61-70	8.69	0.825	<0.001
	71-80	4.89	0.795	<0.001
	81-90	3.31	0.578	<0.001
	91-00	3.61	0.574	<0.001
	11-20	1.22	0.843	0.146
11-20	61-70	7.47	1.007	<0.001
	71-80	3.66	0.985	<0.001
	81-90	2.08	0.854	0.015
	91-00	2.38	0.848	0.005
	01-10	-1.22	0.843	0.146

Table S10 Pairwise comparisons for effect of agency on astronaut age at first spaceflight (individual-level analysis).

Agency (A)	Agency (B)	Mean difference (A-B)	SE	p-value
NASA	Roscosmos	2.22	0.496	<0.001
	ESA	1.32	0.828	0.111
	CNSA	4.70	1.804	0.009
	CSA	-0.74	1.525	0.629
	JAXA	0.84	1.400	0.548
Roscosmos	NASA	-2.22	0.496	<0.001
	ESA	-0.90	0.909	0.320
	CNSA	2.48	1.817	0.172
	CSA	-2.96	1.578	0.061
	JAXA	-1.38	1.429	0.334
ESA	NASA	-1.32	0.828	0.111
	Roscosmos	0.90	0.909	0.320
	CNSA	3.39	1.935	0.080
	CSA	-2.06	1.668	0.218
	JAXA	-0.48	1.558	0.759
CNSA	NASA	-4.70	1.804	0.009
	Roscosmos	-2.48	1.817	0.172
	ESA	-3.39	1.935	0.080
	CSA	-5.44	2.350	0.021
	JAXA	-3.86	2.215	0.081
CSA	NASA	0.74	1.525	0.629
	Roscosmos	2.96	1.578	0.061
	ESA	2.06	1.668	0.218
	CNSA	5.44	2.350	0.021
	JAXA	1.58	2.014	0.433
JAXA	NASA	-0.84	1.400	0.548
	Roscosmos	1.38	1.429	0.334
	ESA	0.48	1.558	0.759
	CNSA	3.86	2.215	0.081
	CSA	-1.58	2.014	0.433

Table S11 Pairwise comparisons for effect of agency on age at launch (mission-level analysis). P-values are adjusted for multiple hypothesis testing (Holm step-down procedure).

Agency (A)	Agency (B)	Contrast estimate (A-B)	SE	p-value
NASA	Roscosmos	1.22	0.588	0.038
	ESA	2.25	0.985	0.022
	CNSA	7.96	2.231	<0.001
	CSA	-0.73	1.793	0.685
Roscosmos	JAXA	2.93	1.669	0.080
	NASA	-1.22	0.588	0.038
	ESA	1.03	1.075	0.336
	CNSA	6.74	2.257	0.003
ESA	CSA	-1.95	1.852	0.293
	JAXA	1.71	1.706	0.317
	NASA	-2.25	0.985	0.022
	Roscosmos	-1.03	1.075	0.336
CNSA	CNSA	5.70	2.383	0.017
	CSA	-2.98	1.985	0.134
	JAXA	0.68	1.868	0.718
	NASA	-7.96	2.231	<0.001
CSA	Roscosmos	-6.74	2.257	0.003
	ESA	-5.70	2.383	0.017
	CNSA	-8.68	2.839	0.002
	JAXA	-5.03	2.724	0.065
JAXA	NASA	0.73	1.793	0.685
	Roscosmos	1.95	1.852	0.293
	ESA	2.98	1.985	0.134
	CNSA	8.68	2.839	0.002
JAXA	CSA	3.66	2.391	0.127
	NASA	-2.93	1.669	0.080
	Roscosmos	-1.71	1.706	0.317
	ESA	-0.68	1.868	0.718
JAXA	CNSA	5.03	2.724	0.065
	CSA	-3.66	2.391	0.127

Table S12 Pairwise comparisons for effect of launch decade on age at launch (mission-level analysis). P-values are adjusted for multiple hypothesis testing (Holm step-down procedure).

Decade (A)	Decade (B)	Contrast estimate (A-B)	SE	p-value
61-70	71-80	-4.68	0.724	<0.001
	81-90	-7.06	0.761	<0.001
	91-00	-10.12	0.774	<0.001
	01-10	-15.03	0.800	<0.001
	11-20	-18.50	0.897	<0.001
71-80	61-70	4.68	0.724	<0.001
	81-90	-2.38	0.621	<0.001
	91-00	-5.44	0.650	<0.001
	01-10	-10.35	0.682	<0.001
	11-20	-13.82	0.791	<0.001
81-90	61-70	7.06	0.761	<0.001
	71-80	2.38	0.621	<0.001
	91-00	-3.06	0.361	<0.001
	01-10	-7.97	0.441	<0.001
	11-20	-11.44	0.605	<0.001
91-00	61-70	10.12	0.774	<0.001
	71-80	5.44	0.650	<0.001
	81-90	3.06	0.361	<0.001
	01-10	-4.91	0.333	<0.001
	11-20	-8.38	0.541	<0.001
01-10	61-70	15.03	0.800	<0.001
	71-80	10.35	0.682	<0.001
	81-90	7.97	0.441	<0.001
	91-00	4.91	0.333	<0.001
	11-20	-3.48	0.478	<0.001
11-20	61-70	18.50	0.897	<0.001
	71-80	13.82	0.791	<0.001
	81-90	11.44	0.605	<0.001
	91-00	8.38	0.541	<0.001
	01-10	3.48	0.478	<0.001

Table S13 Pairwise comparisons for effect of education on mission duration (mission-level analysis). P-values are adjusted for multiple hypothesis testing (Holm step-down procedure).

Education (A)	Education (B)	Contrast estimate (A-B)	SE	p-value
No college	B	-8.27	3.013	0.006
	M	-9.96	3.102	0.001
	PhD/MD	-6.97	2.895	0.016
B	No college	8.27	3.013	0.006
	M	-1.70	1.422	0.233
	PhD/MD	1.30	1.468	0.377
M	No college	9.96	3.102	0.001
	B	1.70	1.422	0.233
	PhD/MD	2.99	1.347	0.027
PhD/MD	No college	6.97	2.895	0.016
	B	-1.30	1.468	0.377
	M	-2.99	1.347	0.027

Table S14 Pairwise comparisons for effect of agency on mission duration (mission-level analysis). P-values are adjusted for multiple hypothesis testing (Holm step-down procedure).

Agency (A)	Agency (B)	Contrast estimate (A-B)	SE	p-value
NASA	Roscosmos	-28.93	5.563	<0.001
	ESA	-4.11	2.097	0.050
	CNSA	7.32	1.399	<0.001
	CSA	-1.57	2.971	0.598
Roscosmos	JAXA	-5.47	3.922	0.163
	NASA	28.93	5.563	<0.001
	ESA	24.81	5.466	<0.001
	CNSA	36.25	6.582	<0.001
ESA	CSA	27.36	6.123	<0.001
	JAXA	23.46	6.075	<0.001
	NASA	4.11	2.097	0.050
	Roscosmos	-24.81	5.466	<0.001
CNSA	CNSA	11.44	2.699	<0.001
	CSA	2.55	3.509	0.468
	JAXA	-1.36	4.237	0.749
	NASA	-7.32	1.399	<0.001
CSA	Roscosmos	-36.25	6.582	<0.001
	ESA	-11.44	2.699	<0.001
	CSA	-8.89	3.331	0.008
	JAXA	-12.79	4.352	0.003
JAXA	NASA	1.57	2.971	0.598
	Roscosmos	-27.36	6.123	<0.001
	ESA	-2.55	3.509	0.468
	CNSA	8.89	3.331	0.008
JAXA	JAXA	-3.90	4.796	0.416
	NASA	5.47	3.922	0.163
	Roscosmos	-23.46	6.075	<0.001
	ESA	1.36	4.237	0.749
JAXA	CNSA	12.79	4.352	0.003
	CSA	3.90	4.796	0.416

Table S15 Pairwise comparisons for effect of launch decade on mission duration (mission-level analysis). P-values are adjusted for multiple hypothesis testing (Holm step-down procedure).

Decade (A)	Decade (B)	Contrast estimate (A-B)	SE	p-value
61-70	71-80	-4.80	1.271	<0.001
	81-90	-3.95	0.909	<0.001
	91-00	-7.28	1.43	<0.001
	01-10	-15.43	2.983	<0.001
	10-20	-51.58	10.552	<0.001
71-80	61-70	4.80	1.271	<0.001
	81-90	0.85	0.965	0.378
	91-00	-2.47	1.107	0.026
	01-10	-10.63	2.339	<0.001
	10-20	-46.78	9.813	<0.001
81-90	61-70	3.95	0.909	<0.001
	71-80	-0.85	0.965	0.378
	91-00	-3.32	0.847	<0.001
	01-10	-11.48	2.346	<0.001
	10-20	-47.63	9.945	<0.001
91-00	61-70	7.28	1.43	<0.001
	71-80	2.47	1.107	0.026
	81-90	3.32	0.847	<0.001
	01-10	-8.16	1.88	<0.001
	10-20	-44.31	9.493	<0.001
01-10	61-70	15.43	2.983	<0.001
	71-80	10.63	2.339	<0.001
	81-90	11.48	2.346	<0.001
	91-00	8.16	1.88	<0.001
	10-20	-36.15	8.254	<0.001
11-20	61-70	51.58	10.552	<0.001
	71-80	46.78	9.813	<0.001
	81-90	47.63	9.945	<0.001
	91-00	44.31	9.493	<0.001
	01-10	36.15	8.254	<0.001

Table S16 Pairwise comparisons for effect of education on military background (mission-level analysis). P-values are adjusted for multiple hypothesis testing (Holm step-down procedure).

Education (A)	Education (B)	Contrast estimate (A-B)	SE	p-value
PhD/MD	M	-0.686	0.086	<0.001
	B	-0.676	0.103	<0.001
	No college	-0.509	0.485	0.295
M	PhD/MD	0.686	0.086	<0.001
	B	0.01	0.087	0.909
	No college	0.177	0.476	0.710
B	PhD/MD	0.676	0.103	<0.001
	M	-0.01	0.087	0.909
	No college	0.167	0.48	0.728
No college	PhD/MD	0.509	0.485	0.295
	M	-0.177	0.476	0.710
	B	-0.167	0.48	0.728

Table S17 Pairwise comparisons for effect of launch decade on military background (mission-level analysis). P-values are adjusted for multiple hypothesis testing (Holm step-down procedure).

Decade (A)	Decade (B)	Contrast estimate (A-B)	SE	p-value
61-70	71-80	0.109	0.132	0.410
	81-90	0.466	0.138	0.001
	91-00	0.528	0.125	<0.001
	01-10	0.595	0.123	<0.001
	10-20	0.474	0.172	0.006
71-80	61-70	-0.109	0.132	0.410
	81-90	0.358	0.123	0.004
	91-00	0.419	0.12	0.001
	01-10	0.486	0.124	<0.001
	10-20	0.366	0.163	0.025
81-90	61-70	-0.466	0.138	0.001
	71-80	-0.358	0.123	0.004
	91-00	0.062	0.089	0.489
	01-10	0.129	0.102	0.206
	10-20	0.008	0.141	0.956
91-00	61-70	-0.528	0.125	<0.001
	71-80	-0.419	0.12	0.001
	81-90	-0.062	0.089	0.489
	01-10	0.067	0.074	0.365
	10-20	-0.054	0.128	0.675
01-10	61-70	-0.595	0.123	<0.001
	71-80	-0.486	0.124	<0.001
	81-90	-0.129	0.102	0.206
	91-00	-0.067	0.074	0.365
	11-20	-0.121	0.117	0.300
11-20	61-70	-0.474	0.172	0.006
	71-80	-0.366	0.163	0.025
	81-90	-0.008	0.141	0.956
	91-00	0.054	0.128	0.675
	01-10	0.121	0.117	0.300