

**ASSESSING LEADERSHIP STYLE:  
A TRAIT ANALYSIS**

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## **Introduction**

More often than not when conversation turns to politics and politicians, discussion focuses on personalities. There is a certain fascination with analyzing political leaders. As a result, biographies on current political figures become best sellers and the triumphs as well as the tragedies of political leaders become newspaper headlines. A major reason for our curiosity about the personal characteristics of such leaders is the realization that their preferences, the things they believe in and work for, and the ways they go about making decisions can influence our lives.

But how can we learn about the personalities and, in particular, the leadership styles of political leaders in more than a cursory fashion? It is hard to conceive of giving people like Tony Blair, Saddam Hussein, or Boris Yeltsin a battery of psychological tests or having them submit to a series of clinical interviews. Not only would they not have time for, or tolerate, such procedures, they would be wary that the results, if made public, might prove politically damaging to them.

One way of learning more about political leaders that does not require their cooperation is by examining what they say. Only movie stars, hit rock groups, and athletes probably leave more traces of their behavior in the public arena than politicians. U.S. presidents' movements and statements, for example, are generally recorded by the mass media; little of what a U.S. president does escapes notice. Such materials provide a basis for assessment.

By analyzing the content of what political leaders say, we can begin to learn something about the images they display in public even when such individuals are unavailable for the more usual assessment techniques. To illustrate how political leaders' statements can be studied to

learn more about them, the rest of this manual will present a technique for using such material to assess leadership style.

### **Focusing on Spontaneous Material**

Two major types of statements are readily available for most political leaders in the latter part of the Twentieth Century – speeches and interviews with the media. Some caution must be exercised in examining speeches to assess what a leader is like since such materials are generally written for him or her by speech writers or staff members. Moreover, care and thought have generally gone into what is said and how it is said. Interviews with the media, however, are a more spontaneous type of material. During the give and take of a question and answer period, leaders must respond quickly without props or aid. What they are like can influence the nature of the response and how it is worded. Although there is often some preparation of a political leader prior to an interview with the press (for example, consideration of what questions might be asked and, if asked, how they should be answered), during the interview leaders are on their own; their responses are relatively spontaneous.

Because of the interest here in assessing the personality characteristics of the political leader and, in turn, his or her leadership style, interviews are the material of preference. In the interview, political leaders are less in control of what they say and, even though still in a public setting, more likely to evidence what they, themselves, are like than is often possible when giving a speech. (For research exploring the differences between speeches and interviews in the assessment of personality at a distance, see, e.g., Hermann, 1977, 1980a, 1986b; Winter et al., 1991; Schafer, forthcoming). The trait analysis described in what follows uses as its unit of analysis the interview response. Interviews are decomposed into individual responses and the

question that elicited the response.

Leaders' interviews with the media are available in a wide variety of sources. Interviews with political figures located in governments outside the United States are collected in the *Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report* which is distributed through World News Connection and are reported by other governments' information agencies on their websites. Interviews with political elites who reside within the U.S. are often found in such newspapers as the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* as well as in weekly news magazines and as recorded from weekly television news programs. Presidential press conferences and other interviews with the presidents can be found in each one's *Presidential Papers*.

It is particularly important in collecting interview materials that one locate verbatim responses – that, indeed, the full text as spoken by the leader is available. At times newspapers and magazines will overview or edit interviews with leaders making it difficult to know how representative the material reported is of what was said. We are not interested in what the particular media outlet believes will sell newspapers or magazines but in how the leaders presented themselves in that setting.

In the course of completing profiles of the leadership styles of some 122 political leaders, it has become evident that the analyst can develop an adequate assessment of leadership style based on 50 interview responses of one hundred words or more in length. Confidence in one's profile, of course, increases the more interview responses the analyst can assess but any profile will suffer if it is determined on less than 50 responses. To insure that the description of leadership style is not context-specific, the 50 interview responses that are analyzed should span the leader's tenure in office as well as have occurred in different types of interview settings and

focus on a variety of topics. Collecting and categorizing interview responses by time, audience, and topic provides a means for assessing how stable the traits composing leadership style are. Such data indicate how relatively sensitive or insensitive to the context a particular leader is.

It is also possible to classify interviews on their degree of spontaneity, facilitating the analyst gaining some insight into the differences between a leader's public and private selves. The least spontaneous interviews are those where the political figure calls interviewers into his or her office to present a plan or report on what is happening or when the political leader asks reporters to submit questions ahead of time and preselects those to answer, planning the responses. The most spontaneous interviews are those where the leader is caught by the press in an unplanned encounter, e.g., leaving a meeting, getting on or off a plane, in the corridors of a building, or where there is a recording of a meeting between the leader and advisers. By differentiating the interview responses on degree of spontaneity as well as context, one can gain information not only about the stability of a leader's profile but also about what he or she is particularly sensitive to if there is a lack of stability.

### **Leadership Style**

As the world grows more complex and an increasing number of agencies, organizations, and people participate in policymaking, both at the domestic and international levels, political leaders face several dilemmas in affecting policy: (a) how to maintain control over policy while still delegating authority (or having it delegated for them) to other actors in the government; and (b) how to shape the policy agenda when situations are being defined and problems as well as opportunities are being perceived and structured by others in the political system. The particular leadership style that leaders adopt can affect the manner in which they deal with these dilemmas

and, in turn, the nature of the decision-making process. Barber (1977) has argued that leadership style often results from those behaviors that were useful in securing the leader's first political success; these actions become reinforced across time as the leader relies on them to achieve the second, third, etc. successes. By leadership style is meant the ways in which leaders relate to those around them, whether constituents, advisers, or other leaders – how they structure interactions and the norms, rules, and principles they use to guide such interactions.

Assessing the individual differences of 122 national leaders across the past two decades (e.g., Hermann, 1980a, 1980b, 1984a, 1987b, 1988; 1993; Hermann and Hermann, 1989; Kaarbo and Hermann, 1998), the author has uncovered a set of leadership styles that appear to guide how presidents, prime minister, kings, and dictators interact with those they lead or with whom they share power. These leadership styles are built around the answers to three questions: (a) How do leaders react to political constraints in their environment – do they respect or challenge such constraints? (b) How open are leaders to incoming information – do they selectively use information or are they open to information directing their response? (c) What are the leaders' reasons for seeking their positions – are they driven by an internal focus of attention within themselves or by the relationships that can be formed with salient constituents? The answers to these three queries suggest whether the leader is going to be generally sensitive or insensitive to the political context and the degree to which he or she will want to control what happens or be an agent for the viewpoints of others. These answers combine to suggest a particular leadership style. Let us examine each of the questions in more detail and then discuss their combination.

In considering leaders' responsiveness to political constraints, we are interested in how important it is for them to exert control and influence over the environment in which they find

themselves and the constraints that environment poses as opposed to being adaptable to the situation and remaining open to responding to the demands of domestic and international constituencies and circumstances. Research has shown that leaders who are predisposed to challenge constraints are more intent on meeting a situation head-on, achieving quick resolution to an issue, being decisive, and dealing forcefully with the problem of the moment (e.g., Driver, 1977; Hermann, 1984a; Tetlock, 1991; Suedfeld, 1992). Their personal characteristics are highly predictive of their responses to events (e.g., Suedfeld and Rank, 1976; Driver, 1977; Hermann, 1984a) because constraints are viewed as obstacles but not insurmountable. To facilitate maintaining direction over events, such leaders work to bring policymaking under their control (e.g., Hermann and Preston, 1994; Hermann and Kegley, 1995; Kowert and Hermann, 1997). Leaders who are more responsive to the context have been found to be more empathetic to their surroundings; interested in how relevant constituents are viewing events and in seeking their support; more open to bargaining, trade-offs, and compromise; and more likely to focus on events on a case-by-case basis (e.g., Driver, 1977; Ziller et al., 1977; Hermann, 1984a, 1987b; Tetlock, 1991; Suedfeld, 1992; Kaarbo and Hermann, 1998). Because constraints set the parameters for action for such leaders, their personal characteristics suggest the degree of support and closure they will need from the environment before making a decision and where that support will be sought (e.g., Driver, 1977; Hermann, 1984a; Winter et al., 1991). Flexibility, political timing, and consensus building are viewed as important leadership tools (e.g., Stoessinger, 1979; Snyder, 1987; Hermann, 1995).

In examining the decision making of American presidents, George (1980) observed that the kinds of information they wanted in making a decision was shaped by whether they came

with a well-formulated vision or agenda that framed how data were perceived and interpreted or were interested in studying the situation before choosing a response. Presidents with an agenda sought information that reinforced a particular point of view and people around them who were supportive of these predispositions. Presidents more focused on what was happening politically in the current context wanted to know what was “doable” and feasible at this point in time and were interested in expert opinion or advice from those highly attuned to important constituencies. Leaders who are less open to information have been found to act as advocates, intent on finding information that supports their definition of the situation and overlooking evidence that is disconfirmatory; their attention is focused on persuading others of their position (see, e.g., Axelrod, 1976; Jonsson, 1982; Fazio, 1986; Lau and Sears, 1986; Stewart, Hermann, and Hermann, 1989; Kaarbo and Hermann, 1998). Leaders who are more open to information are reported to be cue-takers, both defining the problem and identifying a position by checking what important others are advocating and doing. Such leaders are interested in information that is both discrepant and supportive of the options on the table at the moment, seeking political insights into who is supporting what and with what degree of intensity (e.g., Steinbruner, 1974; Axelrod, 1976; Stewart, Hermann, and Hermann, 1989; Kaarbo and Hermann, 1998).

Leaders’ motivations define the manner in which they “orient [themselves] toward life – not for the moment, but enduringly” (Barber, 1977: 8). Motives shape their character, what is important in their lives and drives them to act. A survey of the literature exploring motivation in political leaders suggests a variety of needs and incentives push persons into assuming leadership positions in politics (see, e.g., Barber, 1965; Woshinsky, 1973; McClelland, 1975; Winter and Stewart, 1977; Walker, 1983; Payne et al., 1984; Snare, 1992; Winter, 1992).



Examination of the list that results, however, indicates that political leaders are driven, in general, either by an internal focus – a particular problem or cause, an ideology, a specific set of interests – or by the desire for a certain kind of feedback from those in their environment – acceptance, approval, power, support, status, acclaim. In one case, they are driven internally and pushed to act by ideas and images they believe and advocate. In the other instance, leaders are motivated by a desired relationship with important others and, thus, pulled by forces outside themselves into action. For those for whom solving problems and achieving causes is highly salient, mobilization and effectiveness feature prominently in movement toward their goal; for those motivated by their relationships with others, persuasion and marketing are central to achieving their goal.

Knowledge about how leaders react to constraints, process information, and are motivated to deal with their political environment provides us with data on their leadership style. Table 1 indicates the leadership styles that result when these three dimensions are interrelated. A more detailed description of these various leadership styles and the ways that the three factors interrelate can be found in Hermann, Preston, and Young (1996). The empirical relationships between these particular leadership styles and political behavior have been explored by Hermann (1980a, 1984a, 1995); Hermann and Hermann (1989); Stewart, Hermann, and Hermann (1989); Hermann and Preston (1994); and Kaarbo and Hermann (1998).

**Table 1**  
**Leadership Style as a Function of Responsiveness to Constraints,**  
**Openness to Information, and Motivation**

Responsiveness to Constraints	Openness to Information	Motivation	
		Problem Focus	Relationship Focus
Challenges Constraints	Closed to Information	<i>Expansionistic</i> (Focus is on expanding one's power and influence)	<i>Evangelistic</i> (Focus is on persuading others to accept one's message and join one's cause)
Challenges Constraints	Open to Information	<i>Incremental</i> (Focus is on maintaining one's maneuverability and flexibility while avoiding the obstacles that continually try to limit both)	<i>Charismatic</i> (Focus is on achieving one's agenda by engaging others in the process and persuading them to act)
Respects Constraints	Closed to Information	<i>Directive</i> (Focus is on personally guiding policy along paths consistent with one's own views while still working within the norms and rules of one's position)	<i>Consultative</i> (Focus is on monitoring that important others will support, or not actively oppose, what one wants to do in a particular situation)
Respects Constraints	Open to Information	<i>Reactive</i> (Focus is on assessing what is possible in the current situation given the nature of the problem and considering what important constituencies will allow)	<i>Accommodative</i> (Focus is on reconciling differences and building consensus , empowering others and sharing accountability in the process)

## Using Trait Analysis to Assess Leadership Style

Seven traits have been found to be particularly useful in assessing leadership style: (1) the belief that one can influence or control what happens, (2) the need for power and influence, (3) conceptual complexity (the ability to differentiate things and people in one's environment), (4) self-confidence, (5) the tendency to focus on problem solving and accomplishing something versus maintenance of the group and dealing with others' ideas and sensitivities, (6) an individual's general distrust or suspiciousness of others, and (7) the intensity with which a person holds an ingroup bias. Based on previous research linking leaders' personal characteristics to their political behavior (e.g., Druckman, 1968; Byars, 1973; McClelland, 1975; Lefcourt, 1976; Driver, 1977; Hermann and Kogan, 1977; Ziller, et al., 1977; Hermann, 1980b, 1984a, 1987b; Bass, 1981; Walker, 1983; Snyder, 1987; Hermann and Hermann, 1989; Stewart, Hermann, and Hermann, 1989; Winter, et al., 1991; Suedfeld, 1992; Winter, 1992; Kaarbo and Hermann, 1998), these seven traits provide information that is relevant to assessing how political leaders respond to the constraints in their environment, process information, and what motivates them to action. Knowledge about the degree to which leaders believe that they can influence what happens and their need for power suggests whether they will challenge or respect the constraints that they perceive in any setting in which they find themselves. Assessing leaders' conceptual complexity and self-confidence helps us determine how open they will be to information. And measuring the extent of their ingroup bias, general distrust of others, and tendency to prefer problem-solving functions to those involving group maintenance assists us in learning what motivates leaders. In what follows, we will describe how each trait can be determined through content analysis of leaders' interview responses as well as indicate what

scores on the various traits mean for leadership style both singly and in combination.

In this trait analysis, an assumption is made that the more frequently leaders use certain words and phrases in their interview responses the more salient such content is to them. In effect, the trait analysis is quantitative in nature and employs frequency counts. At issue is what percentage of the time in responding to interviewers' questions when leaders could exhibit particular words and phrases are they, indeed, used. The percentages that result for one leader can currently be compared to those for 87 heads of state from around the world or to those for 122 political leaders filling a range of positions in governments in countries in the Middle East, Africa, the former Soviet Union, and western industrialized democracies. Through such comparisons, the researcher or analyst can determine whether the particular leader is high or low on a trait. This procedure will become clearer after we describe how to code for the seven traits. Currently a computer program is being developed that will automatically code for the traits discussed here. Entitled "Profiler" (Young, forthcoming), the program will provide a researcher or analyst with the trait scores for a specific leader based on either speeches or interviews. (A more detailed description of the steps involved in doing a manual content analysis of the traits can be found in Hermann, 1987c).

Let us now turn to specifying how the traits relate to the questions asked earlier concerning leadership style and how each trait can be coded.

### **Does Leader Respect or Challenge Constraints?**

Political leaders who are high in their belief that they can control what happens and in the need for power have been found to challenge the constraints in their environments, to push the limits of what is possible (see, e.g., McClelland, 1975; Winter and Stewart, 1977; Hermann,

1980b; Walker, 1983; Hermann and Preston, 1994; Kowert and Hermann, 1997; Kaarbo and Hermann, 1998). These leaders are in charge and they know what should happen. Moreover, they are skillful both directly and indirectly in getting what they want. Those leaders, however, who are low in these two traits appear to respect, or at the least accede, to the constraints they perceive in their environments and to work within such parameters toward their goals. Building consensus and achieving compromise are important skills in their minds for a politician to have and to exercise. Leaders who are moderate on both these traits have the ability of moving either toward challenging or toward respecting constraints depending on the nature of the situation; they will be driven by their other characteristics and what they believe is called for by the context.

But what if a leader is high on one trait but low to moderate on the other? Leaders who are high in the belief that they can control events but low in need for power will take charge of what happens and challenge constraints but they will not do as well in reading how to manipulate the people and setting behind the scenes to have the desired influence. Such leaders will not be as successful in having an impact as those high in both traits. They will be too direct and open in their use of power, signaling others on how to react without really meaning to. And what about the leaders who are low in belief they can control events but high in need for power? These individuals will also challenge constraints but they will be more comfortable doing so behind the scenes, in an indirect fashion than out in the open. Such leaders are especially good in settings where they are the “power behind the throne,” where they can pull the strings but are less accountable for the result.

Table 2 summarizes this discussion. In previous research, as noted earlier, the author

(e.g., Hermann, 1980a, 1980b, 1984a, 1987b; Hermann and Hermann, 1989; Hermann and Preston, 1994; Kaarbo and Hermann, 1998) has collected data on the personality traits described here on 122 political leaders, some 87 of them being heads of government. The leaders in that sample span the years from 1945-1999 and represent all regions of the world. For this group of leaders, scores on belief in one's own ability to control events are correlated with those for need for power 0.17 in the sample of 87 heads of state and 0.21 for the 122 political leaders. These correlations indicate that the two characteristics are distinctive and that there will be instances where the individual being studied is high on one trait and low on the other. To put this discussion into context, let us now define the two traits in more detail.

**Table 2**  
**Leaders' Reactions to Constraints**

Need for Power	Belief Can Control Events	
	Low	High
Low	<i>Respect</i> constraints; work within such parameters toward goals; compromise and consensus building important.	<i>Challenge</i> constraints but less successful in doing so because too direct and open in use of power; less able to read how to manipulate people and setting behind the scenes to have desired influence.
High	<i>Challenge</i> constraints but more comfortable doing so in an indirect fashion--behind the scenes; good at being "power behind the throne" where can pull strings but are less accountable for result.	<i>Challenge</i> constraints; are skillful in both direct and indirect influence; know what they want and take charge to see it happens.

***Belief in One's Own Ability to Control Events.*** The belief in one's own ability to control events is a view of the world in which leaders perceive some degree of control over the situations they find themselves in; there is a perception that individuals and governments can

influence what happens. In coding for belief in control over events, the focus is on verbs or action words. We assume that when leaders take responsibility for planning or initiating an action, they believe that they have some control over what happens. The focus here is on actions proposed or taken by the leader or a group with whom he or she identifies. A score on this trait is determined by calculating the percentage of times the verbs in an interview response indicate that the speaker or a group with whom the speaker identifies has taken responsibility for planning or initiating an action. The overall score for any leader is the average of this percentage across the total number of interview responses being examined.

Leaders who believe that they can influence what happens in the world are generally more interested and active in the policy-making process. Those who are high in this trait will want to maintain control over decision making and implementation to insure that things, indeed, do happen. After all, if they are not involved, something may go awry. Thus, such leaders are likely to call subordinates to check on what they are doing, to make surprise visits to places where policy is being implemented, and to be interested in meeting with other leaders face-to-face to see how far they are willing to go. Leaders high in this belief are less likely to delegate authority for tasks and are likely to initiate activities and policies rather than wait for others to make suggestions. They are often “running ideas up the flagpole to see who salutes them.” In some sense this trait has aspects of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Leaders who believe that they can affect what happens are more likely to initiate and oversee activities to insure that policies are enacted; they are more likely to take charge because they perceive they can influence events. Moreover, because such leaders are so sure they can have an impact on the world, they are less prone to compromise or to work out a deal with others. Once they decide, they exude confidence

in their decision – they know what should be done.

Leaders who are low in belief that they can control what happens tend to be more reactive to situations, waiting to see how the situation is likely to play out before acting. They are less likely to take initiatives, preferring instead to let others take the responsibility for anything too daring and out of the ordinary. Such leaders want to participate and lead in contexts where there is at least a 50% chance of success. They are willing to delegate authority, hoping others may have more luck than they seem to have in influencing outcomes. As a result, such leaders are also able to shift the blame when something goes wrong. Unlike their counterparts who think they can affect their external environments, these leaders do not shoulder responsibility and move on but are quick to accuse others of making it difficult for them to act. For the political leader who does not believe he can control what happens, fear of failure may supersede and crowd out sense of timing.

***Need for Power and Influence.*** Need for power indicates a concern for establishing, maintaining, or restoring one's power or, in other words, the desire to control, influence, or have an impact on other persons or groups (see Winter, 1973). As with the previous trait, coding of need for power focuses on verbs. Is the speaker with this proposed action attempting to establish, maintain, or restore his or her power? Some of the conditions where need for power would be scored are when the speaker (1) proposes or engages in a strong, forceful action such as an assault or attack, a verbal threat, an accusation, or a reprimand; (2) gives advice or assistance when it is not solicited; (3) attempts to regulate the behavior of another person or group; (4) tries to persuade, bribe, or argue with someone else so long as the concern is not to reach agreement or avoid disagreement; (5) endeavors to impress or gain fame with an action;



and (6) is concerned with his or her reputation or position. Once again the focus is on actions proposed or taken by the leader or a group with whom he or she identifies. A score on need for power is determined by calculating the percentage of times the verbs in an interview response indicate that the speaker or a group with whom the speaker identifies have engaged in one of these behaviors. The overall score for any leader is the average of this percentage across the total number of interview responses examined.

When need for power is high, leaders work to manipulate the environment to have control and influence and to appear a winner. They are good at sizing up situations and sensing what tactics will work to achieve their goals. Indeed, they are highly machiavellian, often working behind the scenes to insure their positions prevail. Leaders high in need for power are generally daring and charming--the dashing hero. But they have little real regard for those around them or for people in general. In effect, other people and groups are viewed as instruments for the leader's ends; guile and deceit are perceived as part of the game of politics. Such leaders set up rules to ensure conformity to their ideas--rules that can change abruptly if the leader's goals or interests change. At first followers are beguiled by leaders who are high in this motive since they are able to produce results and are charismatic, but the "bloom often leaves the rose" over time as such leaders exploit their followers and their goals diverge from what the people want or feel they need.

Leaders high in need for power will test the limits before adhering to a course of action, bartering and bargaining up until the last moment in order to see what is possible and what the consequences will be of pushing further toward their goals. These leaders are more skillful in such negotiations when they can interact directly with those involved; without face-to-face

interaction, such leaders can misjudge the assumptions the other party is making and how far they are willing to go.

When need for power is low, leaders have less need to be in charge; they can be one among several who have influence. It is perfectly okay with them that others receive credit for what happens. Indeed, empowering others is important for such a leader. They are willing to sacrifice their own interests for those of the group since in their view what is good for the group is, in truth, good for them. Leaders low in need for power enable their followers to feel strong and responsible by empowering them to act as emissaries and expand the group or the group's assets. Through this process these leaders engender high morale in their followers and a sense of team spirit and goal clarity. Such leaders also have a sense of justice. They deal with people evenhandedly based on the norms of the group; they play no favorites so people know where they stand and what will happen if they violate the norms. Their intent is to build a relationship of trust with their followers and a sense of shared responsibility and accountability for what happens. In effect, these leaders become the agent for the group, representing their needs and interests in policymaking.

### **Is Leader Open or Closed to Contextual Information?**

Political leaders tend to differ on their degree of openness to contextual information based on their levels of self-confidence and conceptual complexity (see, e.g., Driver, 1977; Ziller et al., 1977; Stuart and Starr, 1981/1982; Jonsson, 1982; Hermann, 1984a; Snyder, 1987; Stewart, Hermann, and Hermann, 1989; Tetlock, 1991; Suedfeld, 1992; Kaarbo and Hermann, 1998). Ziller and his colleagues (1977) observed that these two traits interrelate to form a leader's self-other orientation. The self-other orientation indicates how open the leader will be to

input from others in the decision-making process and from the political environment in general. Those whose scores on conceptual complexity are higher than their self-confidence scores are open, they are generally more pragmatic and responsive to the interests, needs, ideas, and demands of others. Such leaders are generally those who get elected in local and state elections in America. They are sensitive to situational cues and act based on what they sense is acceptable under current conditions. They appear to others to be open and to listen. These leaders are able to get others to do things because they seem interested in what happens to these others and concerned about helping them. Such leaders are more likely to organize collegial decision structures which allow for a free give and take and, thus, to maximize the contextual information they can have about the opinions and needs of those around them. These leaders deal with problems and events on a case by case basis.

Leaders whose self-confidence scores are higher than their scores on conceptual complexity tend to be closed, they are ideologues, principled and driven by causes. These leaders know what is right and what should happen and set about to persuade others of the appropriateness of their course of action. Such leaders are fairly unresponsive or insensitive to cues from the environment. Instead they reinterpret the environment to fit their view of the world. Moreover, they are not above using coercive or devious tactics to ensure that their views are adopted by a group. Indeed, they are highly active on behalf of their cause, eagerly pursuing options they believe will succeed. These leaders are more likely to organize the decision-making process in a hierarchical manner in order to maintain control over the nature of the decision. They generally do not win any “most popular” leader contests but are usually admired for what they can do.

When the scores on these two traits are relatively equal, leaders' behavior will depend on whether or not the scores are high or low when compared to other leaders (say, for example, either the sample of 87 or 122 that the author has collected data on or regional subsamples of these two groups). If both are high, leaders will be open, more strategic, focusing their attention on what is possible and feasible at any point in time. Their high self-confidence facilitates having patience in the situation and taking their time to see what will succeed. These leaders will combine the best qualities of both these characteristics – a sense of what they want to do but the capability to check the environment to see what will work. Interestingly, this type of leader is less likely to be elected in democratic systems (Ziller et al., 1977), perhaps because their behavior seems to the outside observer and interested constituent to be erratic and opportunistic. If one knows the goals and political contexts of such leaders, their decisions and actions become more logical. Without this knowledge, however, they may seem indecisive and chameleon-like in their behavior.

If the scores on both traits are low in comparison to other leaders, the individual is likely to be closed, reflecting the views of those around him or her and inclined to rather easily lock onto a position that will seem likely to be successful. These are the leaders that Lasswell (1930; see also Barber, 1965) observed entered into politics to compensate for their low self-esteem. They are easy targets for groups that seek someone who will tenaciously advocate for a particular position in exchange for influence and authority, however tenuous and fleeting the assignment may be. These leaders may evidence some of the signs of narcissism, relishing the spotlight, pushing for even more extreme moves than the group may perceive are necessary, and being preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success.

Table 3 summarizes this discussion, suggesting some rules to follow in determining how open a leader will be to information based on his or her scores on conceptual complexity and self-confidence. Self-confidence and conceptual complexity scores are correlated 0.10 for the 87 heads of state in the author’s sample of leaders and 0.33 for the broader set of political leaders numbering 122. Both correlations suggest that we will find all combinations of the trait scores among world leaders. These two traits are assessed in the following way.

**Table 3**  
**Rules For Determining Openness to Information**

Scores on Conceptual Complexity & Self-Confidence	Openness to Contextual Information
Conceptual Complexity > Self-Confidence	<i>Open</i>
Self-Confidence > Conceptual Complexity	<i>Closed</i>
Conceptual Complexity and Self-Confidence Both High	<i>Open</i>
Conceptual Complexity and Self-Confidence Both Low	<i>Closed</i>

***Self-Confidence.*** Self-confidence indicates one’s sense of self-importance, an individual’s image of his or her ability to cope adequately with objects and persons in the environment. Indeed, self-confidence “is that component of the self system which is involved in regulating the extent to which the self system is maintained under conditions of strain such as occur during the processing of new information relative to the self” (Ziller et al., 1977:177; see also Ziller, 1973). Stimuli from the environment are mediated by a person’s sense of self. Since people tend to develop their self-confidence as a result of evaluating themselves in comparison with others and their experiences, this trait often becomes the frame of reference for positioning

one's self in a particular context.

In coding for self-confidence, the focus is on the pronouns “my,” “myself,” “I,” “me,” and “mine.” When speakers interject these pronouns into their speech, how important do they see themselves as being to what is happening? Does the use of the pronoun reflect that the leader is instigating an activity (e.g., “I am going to . . .,” “That is my plan of action”), should be viewed as an authority figure on this issue (e.g., “If it were up to me . . .,” “Let me explain what we mean”), or is the recipient of a positive response from another person or group (e.g., “You flatter me with your praise,” “My position was accepted”)? In each of these instances, there is an enhanced sense of self-worth and a show of self-confidence. A score on this trait is determined by calculating the percentage of times these personal pronouns are used in an interview response that meet the three criteria. The overall score for any leader is his or her average percentage across the total number of interview responses collected for that particular person.

Leaders whose self-confidence is high are more immune to incoming information from the environment than those with low self-confidence. They are more generally satisfied with who they are and are not searching for more material on which to evaluate themselves and their behavior. “New information relative to the self is . . . ignored or transformed in such a way as to maintain consistency in behavior” (Ziller et al., 1977: 177). Such leaders are not subject to the whims of contextual contingencies. They are neither the victims of events nor are they compelled to adapt to the nature of the situation – consistency in behavior is too important. Information is filtered and reinterpreted based on their high sense of self-worth.

Political leaders, however, who are low in self-confidence are easily buffeted by the “contextual winds.” Without a well-developed sense of who they are, such leaders tend to

continually seek out information from the environment in order know what to do and how to conform to the demands of the circumstances in which they find themselves. Input from others about what they are thinking and feeling is critical to knowing how to act in any situation. Thus, the behavior of these individuals often appears highly inconsistent, matched as it is to the nature of the setting not to the needs and desires of the individual. To compensate for feelings of inadequacy, these leaders seek to become the agents, representatives, or delegates of political groups that can help to enhance their self-confidence.

***Conceptual Complexity.*** Conceptual complexity is the degree of differentiation which an individual shows in describing or discussing other people, places, policies, ideas, or things. The more conceptually complex individual can see varying reasons for a particular position, is willing to entertain the possibility that there is ambiguity in the environment, and is flexible in reacting to objects or ideas. In the opposite manner, the more conceptually simple individual tends to classify objects and ideas into good-bad, black-white, either-or dimensions; has difficulty in perceiving ambiguity in the environment; and reacts rather inflexibly to stimuli.

In coding for conceptual complexity, the focus is on particular words--words that suggest the speaker can see different dimensions in the environment as opposed to words that indicate the speaker sees only a few categories along which to classify objects and ideas. Words that are suggestive of high conceptual complexity are: approximately, possibility, trend, and for example; words indicative of low conceptual complexity include: absolutely, without a doubt, certainly, and irreversible. As with the other traits above, the score for conceptual complexity is the percentage of high and low complexity words in any interview response that suggest high complexity. The overall score for any leader is his or her average score across interview

responses.

Political leaders who are high in conceptual complexity attend to a wider array of stimuli from their environment than do those who are low. Indeed, they have a sense that issues are more gray than black or white and seek a variety of perspectives through which to organize the situation in which they find themselves. These leaders remain highly attuned to contextual information since they do not necessarily trust their first response to an event. In the view of the conceptually complex leader, in order to understand a situation and plan what to do, one must gather a large array of information and seek out others' opinions on what should be done – there is always room for one more piece of data or perspective. Such leaders often take their time in making decisions and involve a large array of actors in the decision-making process. Flexibility is seen as the key to behavior.

Leaders who are low in conceptual complexity trust their intuition and often are willing to go with that option which presents itself first. Action is preferable to thinking, planning, or searching for more information. Contextual information is generally classified according to a set of stereotypes; because there is often a good fit between this categorization system and the conceptually more simple individual's orientation to politics, the world is highly ordered and structured. It is relatively easy to decide what to do since the individual's closed conceptual system evaluates and transforms information from any situation into the specified categories. Interpretation and consistency are the keys to behavior.

### **Is Leader Motivated by Problems or Relationships?**

In politics, the literature (e.g., Wriggins, 1969; Burns, 1978; Nixon, 1982; Hermann, 1986a; Hargrove, 1989; Heifetz, 1994; Bennis and Nanus, 1997; Hermann and Hagan, 1998)



suggests that leaders have certain reasons for assuming their positions of authority that have to do with them and with the relevance of the groups (e.g., parties, juntas, ethnic groups, unions, administrations, cabinets, governments) with whom they identify. As noted earlier, leaders are driven, in general, either by an internal focus (a problem) – a particular cause, an ideology, a specific set of interests – or by the desire for a certain kind of feedback from those in their environment (a relationship) – acceptance, power, support, acclaim. They also appear to become activated by needs to protect their own kind. Whereas leaders who are more closely identified with particular groups work to insure such entities' survival and often perceive the political world as full of potential threats to their groups, those who are less strongly tied to a specific group view the world as posing potential opportunities for working with others for mutual or their own benefit. Thus, in assessing motivation, we are interested in both why the leader sought office *and* their need to preserve and secure the group they are leading (and, in turn, their position).

Three traits are used to measure these two types of motivation: task focus, ingroup bias, and distrust of others. Task versus interpersonal focus provides information about the leaders' reasons for seeking office; ingroup bias and distrust of others assist in assessing identification with the group. Let us consider each of these traits in more detail.

***Motivation for Seeking Office (Task Focus).*** Leaders have been recognized as performing two distinct functions in groups, that of moving the group toward completion of a task (solving problems) and that of maintaining group spirit and morale (building relationships). These two functions can be represented by a continuum with one extreme representing an emphasis on getting the task done and the other extreme an emphasis on group maintenance.

Task focus suggests the relative emphasis a leader places in interactions with others on dealing with the problems that face the government as opposed to focusing on the feelings and needs of relevant and important constituents. For leaders who emphasize the problem, moving the group (nation, government, ethnic group, religious group, union, etc.) forward toward a goal is their principal purpose for assuming leadership. For those who emphasize group maintenance and establishing relationships, keeping the loyalty of constituents and morale high are the central functions of leadership. Research (e.g., Byars, 1972, 1973; Hermann and Kogan, 1976; Bass, 1981) has suggested that charismatic leaders are those who fall in the middle of this continuum, focusing on the problem when that is appropriate to the situation at hand and on building relationships when that seems more relevant. The charismatic leader senses when the context calls for each of these functions and focuses on it at that point in time. Table 4 summarizes this discussion.

*Table 4*  
*Rules For Assessing Motivation for Seeking Office*

<i>Score on Task Focus</i>	<i>Motivation for Seeking Office</i>
<i>High</i>	<i>Problem</i>
<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Both Problem &amp; Relationship Depending on the Context</i>
<i>Low</i>	<i>Relationship</i>

In coding for task focus, just like in coding for conceptual complexity, attention is directed toward counting specific words, in this case, words that indicate work on a task or

instrumental activity as well as words that center around concern for another's feelings, desires, and satisfaction. Examples of the task-oriented words are: accomplishment, achieve(ment), plan, position, proposal, recommendation, tactic. Illustrative of the group maintenance types of words are: appreciation, amnesty, collaboration, disappoint(ment), forgive(ness), harm, liberation, suffering. The score for task focus is determined by calculating the percentage of task-oriented words relative to the total number of task and group-maintenance words in a particular interview response. The overall score is the average percentage across the interview responses examined.

Leaders with a task focus are often "task masters," always pushing a group to work on solving the particular problem of the moment. They tend to see the world in terms of problems and the role of the group as providing solutions to these problems. These leaders view people less as individuals than as instruments. Such leaders are constantly asking for movement on a project, about what is happening in the implementation of a solution to a problem, for options to deal with a problem. The substance, not the people involved, is the focus of attention. Leaders with a task emphasis are willing to sacrifice a high level of morale in the group for accomplishing the task. As they note: "You can't keep all the people happy; leaders have to make hard decisions for the good of the group and the people will just have to understand." These leaders seek followers who share their interest in solving problems and who will work hard to implement any decisions that are made.

Leaders with a group-maintenance or relationship focus want to keep the morale and spirit of their groups high. These leaders are generally sensitive to what the people want and need and try to provide it. They will only move the group toward its goals as fast as the members are willing to move. Camaraderie, loyalty, and commitment to the group are critical for leaders

with this emphasis. The people in the group, not what needs to be done, are the focus of attention. These leaders work to foster a sense of collegiality and of participation in their groups. Members have the feeling that they are a part of what happens and their views are sought and listened to. For these leaders, mobilizing and empowering members are what leading is all about. As a result, they are likely to build teams and to share leadership, often seeking out opinions about what is feasible among relevant constituencies at any point in time.

***Motivation Toward World (Ingroup Bias and Distrust of Others).*** Table 5 suggests how information about a leader's scores on ingroup bias and distrust of others provides us with evidence concerning whether the leader is driven by the threats or problems he or she perceives in the world or by the opportunities to form cooperative relationships. There is a growing literature that indicates a leadership's way of approaching the world can affect how confrontational their country is likely to be, how likely they are to take initiatives, and when they are likely to engage in economic sanctions and military interventions (see, e.g., Levine and Campbell, 1972; Driver, 1977; Kelman, 1983; Vasquez, 1993; Snyder, 1991; Hagan, 1994, 1995; Hermann and Kegley, 1995). Indeed, this writing has been referred to as the "statist approach" to foreign policy decision making since it focuses on how leaders' needs to protect their own kind, when shared by an administration, can shape how conflictual or cooperative a government and country will be in the international arena (see Hagan, 1994). The research suggests that the more focused on protecting their own kind leaders are the more threats they are likely to perceive in the environment and the more focused they will be on confronting those responsible. Leaders who are not so intense in this desire are capable of seeing the possibilities for win-win agreements and building relationships in international politics since the world is viewed as

containing opportunities as well as threats.

The two traits, ingroup bias and distrust of others--to be described below--are correlated 0.16.

**Table 5**  
**Motivation Toward World**

<b>Ingroup Bias</b>	<b>Distrust of Others</b>	
	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Low</b>	World is not a threatening place; conflicts are perceived as context-specific and are reacted to on a case-by-case basis; leaders recognize that their country, like many others, has to deal with certain constraints that limit what one can do and call for flexibility of response; moreover, there are certain international arenas where cooperation with others is both possible and feasible. <i>(Focus is on taking advantage of opportunities and building relationships.)</i>	World is perceived as conflict-prone, but because other countries are viewed as having constraints on what they can do, some flexibility in response is possible; leaders, however, must vigilantly monitor developments in the international arena and prudently prepare to contain an adversary's actions while still pursuing their countries' interests. <i>(Focus is on taking advantage of opportunities and building relationships while remaining vigilant)</i>
<b>High</b>	While the international system is essentially a zero-sum game, leaders view that it is bounded by a specified set of international norms; even so, adversaries are perceived as inherently threatening and confrontation is viewed to be ongoing as leaders work to limit the threat and enhance their countries' capabilities and relative status. <i>(Focus is on dealing with threats and solving problems even though some situations may appear to offer opportunities.)</i>	International politics is centered around a set of adversaries that are viewed as "evil" and intent on spreading their ideology or extending their power at the expense of others; leaders perceive that they have a moral imperative to confront these adversaries; as a result, they are likely to take risks and to engage in highly aggressive and assertive behavior. <i>(Focus is on eliminating potential threats and problems.)</i>

*Ingroup bias* is a view of the world in which one's own group (social, political, ethnic, etc) holds center stage. There are strong emotional attachments to this ingroup and it is perceived as the best. Moreover, there is an emphasis on the importance of maintaining ingroup culture and status. Any decisions that are made favor the ingroup. In coding for ingroup bias, the unit of analysis is a word or phrase referring to the particular leader's own group. Of interest is ascertaining when the leader makes a reference to his or her own group, are the modifiers used favorable (e.g., "great," "peace-loving," "progressive," "successful," "prosperous"); do they suggest strength (e.g., "powerful," "capable," "made great advances," "has boundless resources"); or do they indicate the need to maintain group honor and identity (e.g., "need to defend firmly our borders," "must maintain our own interpretation," "decide our own policies")? If any of these modifiers are present, the phrase indicates ingroup bias. The score for ingroup bias is the percentage of times in an interview response that a leader refers to ingroups that meet the criteria just outlined. The leader's overall score is the average of these percentages across all the interview responses under examination.

Political leaders high in ingroup bias are interested in maintaining the separate identity of their groups at all costs. They become quite concerned when other groups, organizations, governments, or countries try to meddle in what they perceive are the internal affairs of their group. The higher the score, the more isomorphic the leader and group become--the leader is the group; if anything happens to the group it happens to the leader and vice versa. Leaders with high scores for ingroup bias tend to see the world in "we" and "them" (friends and enemies) terms and to be quick to view others as challenging the status of their group. They are prone to only perceive the good aspects of their group and to deny or rationalize away any weaknesses.

Thus, such leaders are often relatively late in becoming aware of problems that may undermine their authority.

Leaders high in ingroup bias are likely to use external scapegoats--their perceived enemies--as the cause for all the group's (government's, country's) problems and to mobilize the support of their own population through this external threat. In the extreme, such leaders may keep their group mobilized militarily indefinitely to deal with **the perceived** external enemy. Leaders with high scores are likely to view politics as a zero-sum game where one group's gain is another's loss. Therefore, they must always be vigilant to make sure that it is their group that wins not loses. Such leaders will want people around them who are also highly identified with the group and loyal --selecting advisers on the basis of their sense of commitment to the group and its goals/interests.

It is important to note here that leaders who are low on ingroup bias are still patriots interested in the maintenance of their groups as a separate entity. They are, however, less prone to view the world in black and white terms and more willing to categorize people as "we" or "them" based on the nature of the situation or problem at hand so that such categories remain fluid and ever changing depending on what is happening in the world at the moment. These leaders are less likely to use scapegoats as a means of dealing with domestic opposition; instead they may use interactions such as summit conferences and positive diplomatic gestures as strategies for tempering domestic discontent.

***Distrust of others*** involves a general feeling of doubt, uneasiness, misgiving, and wariness about others--an inclination to suspect the motives and actions of others. In coding for distrust of others, the focus is on noun and noun phrases referring to persons other than the

leader and to groups other than those with whom the leader identifies. Does the leader distrust, doubt, have misgivings about, feel uneasy about, or feel wary about what these persons or groups are doing? Does the leader show concern about what these persons or groups are doing and perceive such actions to be harmful, wrong, or detrimental to himself/herself, an ally, a friend, or a cause important to the leader? If either of these conditions is present, the noun or noun phrase is coded as indicating distrust. A leader's score on this trait is the percentage of times in an interview response that he or she exhibits distrust toward other groups or persons; the overall score is the average of these percentages across the interview responses being studied.

Leaders who are high in distrust of others are given to being suspicious about the motives and actions of others, particularly those others who are viewed as competitors for their positions or against their cause/ideology. These others can do nothing right; whatever they do is easily perceived as for ulterior motives and designs. In its extreme, distrust of others becomes paranoia in which there is a well-developed rationale for being suspicious of certain individuals, groups, or countries. Distrust of others often makes leaders not rely on others but do things on their own in order to prevent any sabotage of what they want done. Loyalty becomes a *sine qua non* of working with the leader and participating in policy making. And such leaders often shuffle their advisers around, making sure that none of them is acquiring a large enough power base to challenge the leader's authority. To some extent distrust of others may grow out of a zero-sum view of the world--when someone wins, someone else loses. The desire not to lose makes the leader question and assess others' motives. Leaders who distrust others tend to be hypersensitive to criticism--often seeing criticism where others would not--and they are vigilant, always on the lookout for a challenge to their authority or self.



Some wariness of others' motives may be an occupational hazard of political leaders. But leaders low in distrust of others tend to put it into perspective. Trust and distrust are more likely to be based on past experience with the people involved and on the nature of the current situation. A person is distrusted based on more realistic cues and not in a blanket fashion.

### **Constructing a Profile**

Once a leader's interview responses have been coded and overall scores have been calculated for each of the seven traits described here, it is time to put the scores into perspective by determining how they compare with those of other leaders. Without doing such a comparison, there is little basis on which to judge if the particular leader's traits are unusually high or low or about average. The issue is deciding what group of leaders to use as the comparison--or norming--group. Table 7 presents scores on all seven traits for the 87 heads of state and 122 more general political leaders mentioned earlier. The table presents the mean or average score on a particular trait for the two samples of leaders as well as the scores that are one standard deviation above and below that mean. If the leader under study has a score that exceeds that listed as one standard deviation above the mean for the sample of leaders, he or she is high on the trait; if the leader's score is more than one standard deviation below the mean for the sample of leaders, he or she is low on the trait. If the leader's score falls around the mean for the sample (neither one standard deviation above or below the mean), he or she is moderate in the trait and like the average leader in that comparison group. The 87 heads of state represent some 46 countries from all parts of the globe; the 122 leaders are drawn from 48 countries and include members of cabinets, revolutionary leaders, legislative leaders, leaders of opposition parties, and terrorist leaders in addition to the 87 heads of state. The sample includes leaders who held

positions of authority from 1945 to the present. Scores for particular regional, country, or cultural groups embedded in these 122 leaders are available from the author.

**Table 7**  
**Potential Comparison Groups**

<b>Personality Trait</b>	<b>87 Heads of State</b>	<b>122 Political Leaders</b>
<b>Belief Can Control Events</b>	Mean = 0.44 Low < 0.30 High > 0.58	Mean = 0.45 Low < 0.33 High > 0.57
<b>Need for Power</b>	Mean = 0.50 Low < 0.37 High > 0.62	Mean = 0.50 Low < 0.38 High > 0.62
<b>Self-Confidence</b>	Mean = 0.62 Low < 0.44 High > 0.81	Mean = 0.57 Low < 0.34 High > 0.80
<b>Conceptual Complexity</b>	Mean = 0.44 Low < 0.32 High > 0.56	Mean = 0.45 Low < 0.32 High > 0.58
<b>Task Focus</b>	Mean = 0.59 Low < 0.46 High > 0.71	Mean = 0.62 Low < 0.48 High > 0.76
<b>Ingroup Bias</b>	Mean = 0.42 Low < 0.32 High > 0.53	Mean = 0.43 Low < 0.34 High > 0.53
<b>Distrust of Others</b>	Mean = 0.41 Low < 0.25 High > 0.56	Mean = 0.38 Low < 0.20 High > 0.56

Once the analyst has determined how a leader's scores compare to those of other leaders, it is feasible to use the tables and discussion presented earlier on the traits and leadership styles to develop a profile of the leader. How is the leader likely to respond to constraints (scores on belief can control events and need for power), how open is he or she likely to be to information (scores on self-confidence and conceptual complexity), what is the nature of the leader's motivation for seeking authority and influence (score on task focus as well as on ingroup bias

and distrust of others)? By noting whether a leader is more likely to respect or challenge constraints, to be more or less open to information, and to be more internally or externally driven, the analyst can ascertain the particular leadership style (see Table 1) that leader is likely to exhibit.

Thus, for example, suppose we were developing a profile of Hafez al-Assad, current head of state of Syria. And suppose his scores when compared to the other 87 heads of state show that he (1) is high in belief he can control events and need for power indicating he is likely to challenge constraints (see Table 2), has a conceptual complexity score that is higher than his score for self-confidence suggesting he is open to incoming information (see Table 3), (3) is high in task focus denoting that his attention is more centered around the problem rather than relationships, and (4) has an ingroup bias though is relatively low in distrust of others leading to a focus on being strategic in the way he deals with problems (see Table 5). According to Table 1, Assad will evidence an actively independent leadership style. He will be highly interested in maintaining his own and Syria's maneuverability and independence in a world that he perceives continually tries to limit both. Although Assad perceives that the world is conflict-prone, he also views all countries as being somewhat constrained by international norms affording him some flexibility in he can do. However, he must vigilantly monitor developments in the international arena and prudently prepare to contain an adversary while still pursuing Syria's interests (see Hermann, 1988a for more detail on Assad's profile). By using the trait scores, we can begin to build a profile or image of the leader in comparison to other political leaders.

### **Contextualizing the Profile**

Much of the research on personality suggests that some people use contextual cues to

determine what they do and, thus, may evidence changes in their trait scores depending on the nature of the situation. Other people's personalities are fairly stable across situations. By examining diverse material on a political leader, it is possible to determine how stable his or her leadership traits are. By analyzing material that cuts across a period of time, across different substantive topics, across different audiences, and inside or outside of the leadership group (or political unit), we can determine the stability of the leadership traits. Moreover, by examining different aspects of the context such as the topic, audience, and whether the focus of attention is on the domestic or international domains, we can learn if leaders are sensitive to certain cues in their environment and not to others. If there is variability in the scores, then, we can determine if the differences give us insights into how the leader's public images differ--the various ways political leaders adapt to the situations in which they find themselves. We gain cues about how they are likely to change their behavior and what contextual features generate such change.

*Nature of Topics Covered.* In order to examine if and how a leader's traits may differ by substantive topic, it is necessary to ascertain what topics are covered in the material under analysis. At issue is determining what the leader is talking about in each interview response that is being coded. What topics are under discussion? After noting the topics that are covered in the interview responses being studied, it is generally possible to arrive at a set of categories by checking where the topics are similar and which topics are discussed the most. In effect, some topics can be combined into a more generic topic (e.g., technological development and trade/aid topics might be collapsed into a category called economic issues). Generic topics that are often discussed by heads of state are military issues, economic issues, relations with another country, relations with an enemy, domestic political stability, and regional politics. Topics that are

covered only sporadically in the material are good candidates for combining into more generic categories.

***Nature of Audience.*** Interviews with political leaders are done in a variety of settings and, thus, are often targeted toward different audiences. To examine the effects of audience on a leader's scores, it becomes important to note who is doing the interview and in what setting. Thus, for example, in profiling a head of state, an analyst will want to record if the interview involves the domestic or international press. If the domestic press, is the interviewer closely affiliated with the particular leader, more affiliated with that leader's opposition, or neutral in orientation? If the international press, to whom is the interview likely to be reported – people in an adversary's country, an ally's country, a country whose government the leader would like to influence, or a fairly neutral source? Of interest is whether or not the leader's trait scores show a pattern of change across these various types of audiences.

***Effects of Events and Tenure in Office.*** Consider if there have been any events (e.g., negotiations, crises, scandals, international agreements) that have occurred during the tenure of the leader under examination. By noting when these events happened and choosing interview responses that span these points in time, it is possible to explore whether or not the leader's scores are affected by specific types of situations. In democratic societies, such an analysis might be conducted for periods before and after elections. For leaders with a long tenure in office, one might consider if there are any changes that have occurred across time or if the leader remains very much the same as when he or she began.

***Determining If Changes Are Significant.*** If the analyst wants to assess mathematically whether the changes in scores across time, topic, or audience on any of the personal

characteristics for a leader are statistically significant, an analysis of variance will provide such data. Most statistical packages for personal computers have a one-way analysis of variance procedure which can easily be applied to exploring this question. If the one-way analyses of variance “F-tests” are significant (have a probability value of 0.05 or less), then the leader’s scores differ on that trait for that context factor (time, topic, audience); in effect, the leader is being adaptive in that type of situation. By noting where a leader’s scores change, the analyst can put the leadership profile into context. One can note if the leader puts on a different face when dealing with foreign diplomats than when interacting inside his or her own country; if the leader has different strategies for dealing with different types of problems; if he or she adapts to being a political leader in a different way with experience and a longer tenure in the position. This contextual analysis adds depth and nuance to the more general profile constructed.

### **Problems Often Faced in Constructing a Profile**

#### ***What if leaders’ scores change dramatically across topics, audiences, and time?***

Dramatic changes or differences in scores across contextual categories usually suggest that a leader is highly sensitive to the situation. Such leaders tend to judge what their options are based on what is happening at the moment by assessing who is supporting what and the nature of the problem. Action is only taken after such leaders have a chance to survey the scene and define what important others are likely to do. For these leaders, analysts are going to need to know a lot more about the situations the leaders are facing in order to know what they will do. Examining just where the changes occurred can provide information about what part of the context is important for that leader. If the changes are found for audience, chances are that these leaders are influenced by the people, groups, organizations with whom they are interacting. If, however,

the changes occur by topic, then the leaders are probably attending to solving the problem at hand and tailoring their behavior to dealing with what is happening.

***What if leaders' scores are very different when they are talking to a domestic audience than to an international one?*** This question is an important one because leaders of Third World countries often show such differences. They are much less directive, more charming, and more diplomatic in dealing with the governments of larger, more developed states from whom they may want something than when they focus on their own countries. Toward the domestic scene, they can be highly authoritarian and autocratic, knowing exactly what needs to be done and when. It is important to highlight these differences in any profile since they have implications for what leaders are likely to do where and can lead to misinterpretations of the leadership styles of these leaders.

***Do leaders' scores differ in a crisis as opposed to a non-crisis situation?*** If you have scores for your leader by topic, you may be able to judge if there is a difference between his public images for crisis and non-crisis situations because some of the topics are more crisis-like in tone than others. Therefore, if the topics include “aggression from another country” or “threats to ethnic group,” the scores probably reflect crisis behavior--at least, more so than when the leader is focusing on the “economy” or “education” (unless, of course, there are problems in these domains). Differentiating crises from non-crises becomes important because leaders often experience stress themselves during crises and tend to accentuate the traits in which they are high. They tend to become more extreme in their profile. For example, if they believe they can control what happens more generally, they have even more faith in this belief during a crisis; if they have a high need for power usually, it will be accentuated in a crisis. This

accentuation is most visible in leaders whose scores are fairly stable across time, topic, and audience--those who are relatively insensitive to the environment. Leaders whose scores show marked variability by these context factors appear to become more vigilant in crises and more indecisive, reacting rather than initiating activity and relying more on others' help and support than usual.

### **Reliability of the Profiles**

There are two types of reliabilities that are often calculated in building profiles. The first assesses how easy it is for those unfamiliar with the content analysis coding system to learn and apply it to leaders' interview responses with the same skill as its author. In other words, is it possible for others to be trained to use the coding system and to achieve a high degree of agreement with the person who developed the profiling technique? The second examines the stability of the leader's scores, trying to ascertain how sensitive the leader is to the political context. Both kinds of reliability have been determined for the coding system described here.

Across a number of studies (e.g., Hermann, 1980a, 1980b, 1984a, 1987b; Hermann and Hermann, 1989), the inter-coder agreement for the seven traits described in this chapter have ranged from 0.78 to 1.00 between a set of coders and the author. Where there were disagreements, the discussions that followed between coders permitted refinements of the coding system. Generally, currently, a coder is not permitted to content analyze a leader's interview responses to be included in the larger data set until he or she achieves inter-coder reliabilities with the author on all traits that are 0.90 or higher. As the automated coding system is being developed, similar types of reliability coefficients are being calculated to determine how accurately that coding system reflects the original intent of this author.



Information about the leader can be gained by assessing trait reliabilities for that particular person. By correlating a leader's odd and even numbered interview responses, the analyst can ascertain how stable the traits are across time and issues. This index provides another way of determining how open and closed the leader is likely to be to contextual information (see, e.g., Hermann, 1980a, 1984a).

One of the questions often raised about content analysis coding systems that use translated material, which we are often forced to do, regards the effect of the translation on the resulting scores. To ascertain if there were any effects and the nature of such effects, in several instances inter-coder agreement has been calculated between a native speaker coding text in the original language and the author focusing on the translated text. The languages were Russian and French. In both cases, agreement averaged .92 across the seven traits (Hermann, 1980b, 1987a, 1987b).

### **Validity of This Profiling Technique**

How valid is this particular way of determining leadership style; that is, how accurate is it in capturing the leadership styles that heads of state and others in leading party and bureaucratic positions actually exhibit? Although the author has received numerous suggestions about how to determine the validity of this technique ranging from running experiments with college students to participant observation in city councils, it seemed important to find some means of comparing the results from this coding system with the experiences of those who had interacted with heads of state. In a series of studies, this writer (Hermann, 1984b, 1985, 1986b, 1988b) developed profiles on 21 leaders following the procedure described here and based on these profiles indicated on a series of rating scales the nature of the leadership behaviors a particular head of

state should exhibit given a particular leadership style. These ratings were compared with those made by journalists and former government personnel who had had the opportunity to observe or interact with the particular leaders. The correlations between the two sets of ratings averaged 0.84 across the set of leaders suggesting that the profiles derived from this at-a-distance technique furnished the author with similar types of information on which to judge behavior as had the other raters' experiences with the actual figures.

### **In Conclusion**

By doing a trait analysis of seven dimensions of personality, we have proposed that it is possible for a researcher or analyst to develop a profile of the leadership style a particular political leader is likely to exhibit. The seven personal characteristics provide information about whether the leader will respect or challenge constraints, will be open or closed to information from the environment, will focus more on solving problems or building community, and will be more hardline or more accommodationist. The traits also interrelate to suggest which leadership style from a rather wide range is likely to be dominant in any leader. Constructing such a profile has become more feasible with the design of computer software that can analyze leaders' interview responses and the collection of trait data on 122 political leaders from around the world that comprise a norming group with which to compare any one leader's scores.

Not only is it feasible now to construct a general profile of a particular leader but it is also possible to place such a profile into perspective by examining a number of contextual factors that indicate how stable the characteristics are with certain kinds of changes in the situation. We can ascertain what the leader is like in general and, then, what kinds of information he or she is likely to be responsive to in the political environment. Thus, the general

profile indicates where a specific leader fits in a broader discussion of leadership style; the contextualized profile suggests how that leader has individualized his or her responses to manifest more unique characteristics. With knowledge about both the general and more individualized profiles, the researcher and analyst gain a more complete portrait of the leader. The person becomes not only representative of a particular type of leader but we know when and to what degree he or she has modulated their behavior to take the context into account.

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