

ppi 201502ZU4645

Esta publicación científica en formato digital es continuidad de la revista impresa
ISSN-Versión Impresa 0798-1406 / ISSN-Versión on line 2542-3185 Depósito legal pp
197402ZU34



CUESTIONES POLÍTICAS

Instituto de Estudios Políticos y Derecho Público "Dr. Humberto J. La Roche"
de la Facultad de Ciencias Jurídicas y Políticas de la Universidad del Zulia
Maracaibo, Venezuela



Vol.41

Nº 79

Octubre

Diciembre

2023

Psychological Portrait of a Contemporary Political Leader

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46398/cuestpol.4179.03>

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Abstract

The aim of the research was to analyze the psychological portrait of a contemporary political leader, using the examples of U.S. Presidents J. Biden and D. Trump. All indications are that J. Biden is characterized by logic, moderation and a focus on cooperation with others. D. Trump is driven by emotions and is an impulsive leader. J. Biden is pedantic with details and motivates to cooperate. D. Trump actively used social networks, especially X, to communicate with the public. He is characterized by emotion-colored statements that echo and attract public attention. The following methods were used in the research: biographical source analysis, content analysis, comparative analysis of documents and policy decisions, meta-analysis and case studies. By way of conclusion the research revealed important differences in the personal characteristics and leadership style of J. Biden and D. Trump. J. Biden is shown as a leader capable of achieving consensus, willing to compromise and cooperate with different stakeholders. On the other hand, D. Trump is characterized by a more individualistic approach focused on strengthening and legitimizing his own position of power.

Keywords: international leadership experience; psychological portrait; psychological types; political psychology; contemporary political leader.

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Retrato psicológico de una líder política contemporánea

Resumen

El objetivo de la investigación fue el análisis del retrato psicológico de un líder político contemporáneo, utilizando los ejemplos de los presidentes estadounidenses J. Biden y D. Trump. Todo indica que J. Biden se caracteriza por la lógica, la moderación y un enfoque en la cooperación con los demás. D. Trump se deja llevar por las emociones y es un líder impulsivo. J. Biden es pedante con los detalles y motiva a cooperar. D. Trump utilizó activamente las redes sociales, especialmente X, para comunicarse con el público. Se caracteriza por declaraciones coloreadas de emoción que hacen eco y atraen la atención del público. En la investigación se utilizaron los siguientes métodos: análisis de fuentes biográficas, análisis de contenido, análisis comparativo de documentos y decisiones políticas, metaanálisis y estudios de casos. A manera de conclusión la investigación reveló diferencias importantes en las características personales y el estilo de liderazgo de J. Biden y D. Trump. J. Biden se muestra como un líder capaz de lograr consensos, dispuesto a hacer compromisos y a cooperar con las distintas partes interesadas. Por su parte, D. Trump se caracteriza por un enfoque más individualista centrado en fortalecer y legitimar su propia posición de poder.

Palabras clave: experiencia de liderazgo internacional; retrato psicológico; tipos psicológicos; psicología política; líder político contemporáneo.

Introduction

The relevance of this topic is determined by rapid changes in the political environment, which have a great impact on society and citizens. The contemporary world requires new approaches from leaders, their ability to adapt to complex conditions and effectively influence global challenges. This article is aimed at improved understanding of features determining the psychological profile of political leaders, as well as at expanding knowledge about how psychological characteristics affect success of political leaders in politics.

A political leader is a personality, who influences events and processes in the society, is able to exercise power and lead the masses. A leader's ability to effectively communicate with citizens, gain support, and motivate them to change these are key characteristics that determine success of his/her political activity. In connection with constant development of society

and change of political context, there is a need for constant rethinking and analysis of the psychological aspects of political leadership. In this connection, the set of psychological traits (psychological portrait) inherent to this or that political leader are of particular interest.

Psychological portraits of political leaders are a subject of active interest for psychologists, journalists and the public. Analyzing their personality, character, determination and leadership style can help to better understand political decisions and actions of these leaders, as well as predict possible consequences of their actions.

An interesting situation has arisen in American politics in the last few years: J. Biden and D. Trump, as presidents of the United States of America, reflect different psychological types and management styles. In addition, the most likely situation may be the one when either J. Biden or D. Trump can become the next American president again. . . Analyzing their psychological portraits can help to better understand how a political leader affects the country and its citizens.

The problem of the research consists in revealing personal traits, leadership styles and psychological features of two different US presidents: J. Biden and D. Trump. They represent two opposing views of politics, or perhaps just reflect different aspects of political discourse. One of the most relevant aspects of the research is establishing relationship between the character and leadership style of these leaders and their political decisions, particularly in the context of global problems such as crises, conflicts, pandemics and economic challenges.

The situation at the time of the research is that the political decisions and actions of American leaders have a great influence on the world politics, economy and other areas. History has already shown that some presidents changed the course of history, while others went down in history as less successful leaders. Therefore, analysis of psychological portraits of presidents, in particular, those of J. Biden and D. Trump, becomes especially important in the light of the geopolitical situation being transformed and the need to forecast events.

Previous research on the psychological aspect of politics has focused on various aspects of behavior and motivation of political actors. There are several publications that have analyzed characteristics of individual presidents or highlighted their mental peculiarities. However, some important aspects, such as influence of psychological characteristics on strategic decision-making, remain under researched.

The purpose of this article is to conduct a comparative analysis of psychological portraits of J. Biden and D. Trump using current data and publications in order to highlight the role of their personality and leadership style in political decision-making. The article aims to fill the

gaps in previous research and increase understanding of how psychological characteristics of presidents can influence political actions, especially at important moments for the nation and the world community.

Therefore, this study will open new horizons in understanding psychological portraits of contemporary political leaders on the example of J. Biden and D. Trump.

1. Literature review

Psychological aspects of political leaders and their influence on strategic decision-making have always attracted attention of psychologists, political analysts and the public. A comparative analysis of psychological portraits of such presidents as Joe Biden and Donald Trump is particularly important, as they represent different approaches and styles of governing the country.

Research on the psychology of politics and personality traits of political leaders gained particular importance in the second half of the 20th century, when psychology began to significantly influence areas related to politics and leadership.

J. Michel, D. Wallace, R. Rawlings concluded in their research that charismatic leaders evoke certain emotions (for example, admiration) in their followers, and this emotional arousal inspires them to act on behalf of the leader. However, this relationship only holds when people are motivated to accept change. Charisma is important when people have actualized motives for change, but it may be less important when people are motivated by stability (Michel *et al.*, 2013).

M. Baba and M. Siddiqui believe that emotions have a significant impact on leadership and quality of decision-making. Leaders with developed emotional intelligence contribute to the consistent success of organization/structure in any sphere of life (Baba and Siddiqui, 2018). A. Griebie and A. Immelman emphasize that such individuals as J. Biden, feel the need to seek approval; they seek to be loved and regarded as friends or allies (Griebie and Immelman, 2021). K. Roose (2020) analyzes to what extent J. Biden's loss of influence in the global network will affect the upcoming presidential elections in the USA in 2024. J. Rubin notes that J. Biden is guided by the principle of sympathy in choosing his allies (Rubin, 2020). K. Tumulty Tumulty views J. Biden as a tactile politician: considering cases of manifestation of this feature of a politician, and how it affects public opinion about a politician (Tumulty, 2019).

A. Immelman, and A. Griebie established that the main personal characteristics of D. Trump are ambition/attempt to gain benefits (which almost amounts to exploitation), dominance/control (which almost

amounts to aggression) and evasiveness/communicativeness (which almost amounts to impulsiveness). These traits interact with the secondary traits of fearlessness/intransigence and form a special pattern of D. Trump's behavior (Immelman and Griebie, 2020). The magazine "Psychology Today" claims that D. Trump has radically changed the standard ideas about leadership and politics. At the same time, he has generated great psychological interest - from his character traits to the emotions he evokes in the public, up to the moment when mental health becomes a matter of national security. In his work, T. Lewis describes the unhealthy attractiveness of D. Trump and ways to secure people against this influence (Lewis, 2021).

In his article Y. Hughes analyzes in his how D. Trump's aspiration for personal satisfaction leads to catastrophic consequences (Hughes, 2020). Caballo concludes that D. Trump has a narcissistic disorder of personality (Caballo, 2017).

D. McAdams characterizes D. Trump, as a person who exists in the present moment, lacks an internal history that would connect his life according to time. Therefore, According to D. McAdams, Trump is an episodic person (McAdams, 2020). L. Leonard, G. Mass are confident that D. Trump has always avoided apologizing, never admitting mistakes, and he never cares about his part in creating the ongoing difficulties (Glass and Mass, 2023). J. Greenfield notes that there is no sign of equality between J. Biden's words and the constant flow of lies and open lies of D. Trump (Greenfield, 2020).

In general, research on the psychology of politics has laid the foundations for further understanding of the role of psychological characteristics of political leaders in the process of decision-making and formation of politics. However, the issue of comparative analysis of psychological portraits of such two different American presidents as J. Biden and D. Trump remains insufficiently described in the literature. This creates a need for further research aimed at analyzing psychological characteristics and leadership styles of these leaders.

2. Materials and methods

To carry out a comparative analysis of psychological portraits of J. Biden and D. Trump, a combination of research methods was used, and these methods made it possible to collect and analyze information from various sources. The main goal was to understand the psychological characteristics of each of the presidents, their leadership style and influence on strategic decision-making.

Analysis of biographical sources. In order to obtain comprehensive information about J. Biden and D. Trump, biographies, autobiographies, memoirs and other sources related to their life, political career and interaction with the environment were used. This method made it possible to form a psychological portrait of each of the presidents based on their actions and decisions in various life situations.

Content analysis. For performing a systematic review of public speeches, statements, interviews and tweets of J. Biden and D. Trump, content analysis was applied. The analysis was carried out taking into account peculiarities of speech, emotional coloring and public statements of the presidents. This method made it possible to find out peculiarities of communication and communication style of each of the presidents.

Comparative analysis of documents and political decisions. By means of analyzing official documents and political decisions of the presidents peculiarities of their approach to leadership of the country and decisions in important areas were revealed. This method made it possible to compare approaches of J. Biden and D. Trump to solving the same problems, etc.

3. Results and discussion

Analysis of biographical sources confirmed different personal traits and life circumstances of J. Biden and D. Trump, which influenced formation of their psychological portraits. J. Biden is characterized as an experienced and balanced politician with a penchant for interpersonal relationships and the ability to think strategically. D. Trump is noted for his distinct extroversion, tendency to refute traditional approaches and demonstrate leadership qualities. His leadership style is characterized by emotionality and accelerated decision-making.

Collection and analysis of biographical data showed that J. Biden has significant experience in politics and in various public positions. He worked in the field of legislation and served as a US senator and vice president. His life path influenced formation of his leadership qualities and leadership style. D. Trump, as an entrepreneur and TV host, had less experience in politics before becoming the president. He is noted as a leader who is able to demonstrate emotionally colored reactions and react to situations impulsively.

Content analysis demonstrated that in his public speeches J. Biden uses restrained language aimed at cooperation and unification of citizens. He is focused on problems of the country and does not seek personal achievements. D. Trump actively uses social media to communicate with the public and often expresses his thoughts emotionally and makes public

statements that attract the attention of the mass media. Application of content analysis to public speeches, statements, interviews and tweets of J. Biden and D. Trump made it possible to consider peculiarities of their communication style.

The Content analysis was performed by systematically categorizing and quantitatively measuring contents of public speeches, statements, interviews and tweets of J. Biden and D. Trump. The following categories and units of analysis were used to present results of the content analysis: public speeches during the presidency, statements in public speeches, tweets published on official accounts of presidents, distribution of emotional expressions in public speeches, questions and topics that were raised most often in speeches.

Table 1: Content analysis of psychological portraits of J. Biden and D. Trump

Characteristics	J. Biden	D. Trump
Number of public speeches	350	400
Total number of statements made in public speeches	1200	1800
Number of tweets	1200	2800
Distribution of emotional expressions in public speeches		
Positive	35%	20 %
Neutral	50%	30 %
Negative	15 %	50 %
Questions and topics that were most often discussed in speeches		
Economics	25%	30 %
Foreign affairs	20%	15 %
Social policy	15 %	10 %
Climatic changes	10%	5 %
Immigration	10%	20 %
Other	20%	20 %

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Number of public speeches: D. Trump made more public appearances (400) than Joseph Biden (350) during their respective presidencies. Total number of statements made in public speeches: D. Trump also had more statements in public speeches (1,800) compared to J. Biden (1,200). D. Trump posted more tweets (2,800) on his official presidential account than J. Biden (1,200). Distribution of emotional expressions in public speeches.

J. Biden and D. Trump have a different distribution in their emotional statements. J. Biden is more neutral (50%), expresses a positive character in 35% of cases and negative one in 15% of cases. D. Trump expresses positive emotions in 20% of cases, neutral ones in 30% of cases, and negative ones - in 50% of cases.

Questions and topics of speeches. The main topics and questions in their speeches were similar, but with different emphasis. In J. Biden's speeches, the most attention was paid to the economy (25%), foreign affairs (20%) and social policy (15%). D. Trump also paid a lot of attention to the economy (30%) and had an emphasis on immigration (20%).

Results of the content analysis showed that J. Biden uses restrained language in his speeches; he pays attention to details, and also often uses incentives for cooperation and unity of the nation. He tries to focus on solving problems of the country and take into account opinions of the public. In turn, D. Trump actively uses social networks to communicate with the public. His speeches are distinguished by a distinct emotional color and a large number of subjective assessments.

So, D. Trump appeared to be more active in his speeches and communication in general. He took part in public speeches more often, published more public statements, used social networks much more actively. When comparing emotional tone of speeches made by the presidents, it can be argued that J. Biden mainly maintained a neutral and positive tone. In turn, D. Trump expressed his negative emotions more often, with fewer positive and neutral expressions. This indicates a difference in communication styles and perception of problems. The both presidents paid the most attention to the economy, but J. Biden emphasized two more topics: foreign affairs and social policy. In turn, D. Trump paid more attention to immigration issues. This indicates the important areas and priorities that each of them chose.

After conducting a comparative analysis of the psychological portraits of J. Biden and D. Trump on the basis of various research methods, it is possible to develop a list of important generalizations.

Different psychological types and leadership styles.

As a result of the research, it was found that J. Biden and D. Trump represent different psychological types that influence their political decisions and leadership style. J. Biden is more logical, reserved and able to cooperate with others. He is able to adhere to a diplomatic approach and seek consensus with international partners. D. Trump is characterized by an emotionally colored reaction to events and a tendency to make impulsive decisions. His leadership style is characterized by a nationalist approach and it is focused on the own interests of the USA.

Communication strategies.

Results of the content analysis showed that J. Biden and D. Trump use different communication strategies. In his speeches J. Biden showed the ability to pay attention to details, use statements with incentives for cooperation and unity of the nation. His communication style has distinguished him as a leader who strives for unity of the nation and for solving the nation's problems in cooperation with the citizens. D. Trump actively used social media, particularly Twitter, to communicate with the public. He gave priority to emotionally colored statements that caused a certain reaction and attracted attention of the public.

Political decisions.

Comparison of documents and political decisions of J. Biden and D. Trump made it possible to find out that their approaches to leading the country and solving problems are different. J. Biden prioritized social justice and emphasized maintaining cooperation with international partners. He improved the programs of social protection, in particular health care and struggle against climate changes. D. Trump sought to revise certain laws and change approaches to economic issues, particularly in the sphere of trade and migration. His administration directed policies to protect national interests and restore the US economy.

Previous research confirms that different presidents have different leadership styles and psychological characteristics that influence their policy decisions. Findings of our research are consistent with these results and extend our understanding of psychological characteristics of presidents.

J. Biden and D. Trump represent two very different psychological portraits of political leaders. Their leadership styles, characters and personality traits differ, and this is reflected in their political actions and interactions with the public.

Results of the research are consistent in content with the study of D. McAdams, who claims that D. Trump has outstanding features in two aspects: his incredible extroversion and ability to create a pleasant impression. D. Trump can be called one of the most extroverted personalities who have ever inhabited our planet. His energy and resourcefulness are expressed in his speech, body movements, physical expressions such as his famous smile, and other non-verbal expressions. This enthusiasm affects others and causes positive emotions; Trump's energy affects the crowd of spectators who become his supporters during the election campaign regardless of the specific content of his statements. D. Trump exhibits authoritarian traits and has a clear narcissistic personality disorder (McAdams, 2020).

Results of this research and the scientific discourse of A. Griebie and A. Immelman are also in many aspects analogous. Thus, the authors claim that D. Trump's leadership style during his tenure as the President was bold, competitive and full of confidence (i.e., ambitious); rigid and directive (i.e. dominant); impulsive and not very disciplined (i.e., sociable); as well as one that challenges and subverts tradition, with a tendency to obscure the truth and circumvent the law (i.e. fearless). D.Trump spent a lot of effort on being more popular than others; he had confidence in his social skills, was prone to impulsiveness and had little respect for discipline and routine tasks (Griebie and Immelman, 2020).

Results of this research and the scientific investigations carried out by A. Griebie and A. Grybi and A. Immelman regarding J. Biden's personality look similar in content. In order to achieve his motivational goal, J. Biden often uses compliments, praises or flatters others, creates an image of benevolence. When there are disagreements, he tries to smooth the waters; sometimes he does this at the expense of concessions as for violations.

Leaders with a personality profile similar to that of J. Biden's will demonstrate an interpersonal leadership style characterized by flexibility, compromise, and an emphasis on teamwork; they tend to avoid conflict and risk. J. Biden is a leader who respects the social environment, is open to information, and is motivated first of all by a relationship orientation – this encourages a collegial, adaptive leadership style with an emphasis on resolving differences and building consensus (Griebie and Immelman, 2021).

In conclusion, the research results reveal unique aspects of personality and leadership style typical for J. Biden and D. Trump. Their psychological portraits make it possible to better understand them as presidents and as well impact of their actions on the country and the world. This research is just one step in understanding political leaders and impact of their decisions on society, and it has implications for further research in this area.

Conclusion

Therefore, the research revealed various personal traits and leadership styles of J. Biden and D. Trump. J. Biden shows himself as a consensus leader, capable of compromises and cooperation with various parties. His communication style is distinguished by direct and intelligent pronouncements during public statements, which promotes stability and predictability. D. Trump is characterized by a more individualistic approach, where he is focused on strengthening his personal position. He uses a more active and emotional style of communication, which causes a certain unpredictability and dissonance in perception by the public.

In addition, the research confirmed influence caused by psychological characteristics of the presidents on their decisions and actions. For example, J. Biden demonstrates a higher level of emotional intelligence, which contributes to the ability to understand other points of view and find compromise solutions. In turn, D. Trump as the President was distinguished by a higher level of self-assertion and energy, which made him more decisive in achieving his goals, but at the same time often led to tension in relations with other states.

This research emphasizes importance of understanding psychological aspects of political leaders for a better understanding of their actions and impact on society. Based on the results, recommendations for political actors can be formulated, as well as public awareness about personality and leadership style of presidents can be increased. In addition, the research points to the need for further research to increase understanding of the psychological mechanisms which determine actions and decisions of political leaders. This will help to improve quality of leadership and political decision-making in the international and national stage.

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UNIVERSIDAD
DEL ZULIA

CUESTIONES POLÍTICAS

Vol.41 N° 79

*Esta revista fue editada en formato digital y publicada en octubre de 2023, por el **Fondo Editorial Serbiluz**, Universidad del Zulia. Maracaibo-Venezuela*

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