Dear Editors, and Reviewers,

We appreciate the opportunity you gave us to undertake revisions to improve our manuscript: "The Personality Traits of Populist Leaders and Their Foreign Policies: Hugo Chávez and Donald Trump" - SQ-2020-08-0460. We have followed closely the two reviewers' suggestions, and also the editors' helpful direction and emphasis on what changes to introduce in this revised version.

We have also edited the text: cut down the introduction, adopted some major changes in parts of the text to fit the suggestions of the reviewers, and preserved a tidy text in terms of structure, organization, and word count. We believe the resulting revised manuscript is greatly improved over the previous version. We explain the changes we have made below, following the helpful decision letter from the editors:

The editors and reviewers mention and encourage us to advance in a more direct way how our study on personal characteristics of populist leaders can connect and shed light on broader International Relations debates specially to engage a wider academic audience. We engage with literature that asserts populist leaders tend to undermine the pillars of the international liberal order from within and outlines the risks of their actions on this matter. We also connect our work with recent IR scholarship on the notion of "international order," on which populist leaders' actions informed by their personal characteristics can also shed further light. We have brought these debates into the paper in relation to our argument for the key importance of personal characteristics of leaders in the introduction, literature review, and in the conclusion through outlining a future research agenda.

Moreover, we also emphasize even more the notion and idea in the existing literature that populist leaders might tend to adopt more conflict-driven foreign policy behavior, limiting the possibilities of enduring cooperation. This is something that impacts on the stability of the international liberal order. This aspect was the core of our argument in the previous version but now we take it further, as explained above. We have rephrased the central question of our work slightly to capture in a much better way the main goal of our paper, which is scrutinizing the noncooperation and even hostile behavior of populist leaders in international politics. In addition, we also connect the mentioned IR debates to the notion of populist leaders and their personality traits by drawing on the analytical benefits of Leadership Trait Analysis (LTA).

Following the recommendation of both reviewers and the editors we have included a much higher number of spontaneous source materials for both Trump and Chávez. Now we use material that was delivered for different types of audiences, contexts, policy domains, and in different time settings. We agree with the reviewers that including more material secures validity and reliability of the results and its subsequent interpretation. In addition, we also detail much more clearly our method, research design, how we use the material, and how we comply with the methodological standards of the LTA approach.

Considering we increased the number of words employed for the analysis and amplified the scope of the verbal material we used to carry out the assessment, some of the scores obtained by the leaders changed. The variation in leaders' scores modified some of the results. Hence, the analysis in this new version reflects these changes. We now put more emphasis on the potential effects of leaders' unusual profiles in foreign policy decision-making processes, as this could be an important factor explaining their behavior (compared with the norming group of world leaders). We used literature on LTA to explain why extremely high and low scores for certain traits can make cooperation difficult.

With these new results, we addressed the concern expressed by Reviewer 2 about the apparent disconnect between the study's findings and the evidence about the two leaders. We agreed with the reviewer's assessment on Chávez's authoritarian characteristics and his actions to gain more power. However, personality traits can be better understood when considering a leader's combined personal characteristics. In line with our main argument, a central component of populist leaders' rhetoric is their strong focus on relationships and maintaining people's support. A crucial element in the Socialism of the 21st Century ideology advanced by Chávez is the empowerment of the Venezuelan people. In this sense, his actions both domestically and in foreign policy were always justified by this alleged desire to give more power to those who were oppressed under previous governments. In this context, the attacks he received from the opposition were generally portrayed as an attempt to cease the revolutionary project that was intended to put the people of Venezuela at the center of all decision-making processes. Chávez's low scores and Trump's average scores on this trait are in line with what the literature describes as the "people-elite-general will" triad where the actions of populist leaders are framed as representing the general will of the people, not as a personal enterprise to seek power.

In terms of Trump's scores on "conceptual complexity," which were flagged by both reviewers, they varied with the new sample of verbal material, although not substantially. In this case, Trump appears as having leaning high scores on this trait (instead of high). In our analysis we stressed that while high levels of this trait are commonly associated with leaders who are capable of considering multiple perspectives, the literature also shows that high complexity may also result in a leader who is overwhelmed by information—which could lead to poor decision-making (see our reference in the main text to the work of Schafer and Crichlow 2010 on this specific matter). Specifically, in response to one of the comments made by Reviewer 1, while conceptual complexity may reflect some aspects of a leader's cognitive style, this trait does not measure intelligence; if the previous version of our paper somehow hinted at that, it was a mistake and we have changed it.

A comment on the stability of personality traits. As you will see, our results changed when we modified the sample of verbal remarks employed in the analysis. While personality traits remain relatively stable over time, this does not mean that they remain static during a person's lifetime. Personality traits may change with age, context, and personal circumstances. While LTA provides a good tool to assess leaders' personality and help predict behavior, the technique is not exempt from the common problems that Psychology faces in assessing people's characteristics in clinical, educational, and work contexts. In this sense, leaders' traits may vary depending on the policy area in question. The LTA literature has shown that some people use contextual cues to determine what they do, which make them more prone to their trait scores changing depending on the situation. In this sense, considering Chavez's and Trump's openness to information, the variation in some of their scores does not come as a surprise.

We have also expanded on our case selection and clarified what a study on Global North and Global South populist leaders and their left-right ideologies can bring to the study of populism in Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) and IR.

<u>Other changes suggested:</u>

- We have toned down the claim that populism in IR should be all about "traits," as one of the reviewers rightly questions. We have rather framed our contribution as an approach that can easily supplement other studies of populism in IR that adopt an

ideational, strategy, or discursive approach as well as on the erosion of the liberal international order. These are the dominant theoretical frames in populism in FPA/IR.

- We have also shortened the introduction as well as edited the language. We have relied on a native English-speaking language editor as neither of the authors are so themselves.
- We have also used a different set of literature produced by female scholars working on populism in IR and LTA and foreign policy to reduce possible gender biases.

Overall, we believe this new round of revisions have improved the quality of our paper in comparison to the previous version. We are grateful to the reviewers and editors for their suggestions that have made us rethink and improve substantial aspects of the theoretical and methodological pillars of the paper.

Thanks so much for your help to improve our work!

The authors.

THE PERSONALITY TRAITS OF POPULIST LEADERS AND THEIR FOREIGN POLICIES: HUGO CHÁVEZ AND DONALD TRUMP

Abstract

This paper seeks to advance the study of the nexus of populism and foreign policy by showing the connection between the personality traits of the leader and the foreign policy behavior of the state that they represent. It focuses on the political personality profiles of two populist leaders who can be characterized as antiplural, Hugo Chávez and Donald Trump, as a way to empirically further substantiate the recent research agenda on populism in world politics. The paper builds the two populist leaders' political profiles through the use of the Leader Trait Analysis methodological approach. It contends that there are patterns in populist leaders' personalities that can act as key drivers of their noncooperative and conflict-inducing behavior in foreign policy. The results show the characteristics that appear as the strongest predictors of their behavior in the international arena are their low task orientation and high focus on relationships.

Keywords: Leadership Trait Analysis, populism, leaders, foreign policy, Trump, Chávez

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of populist leadership has received increasing attention in International Relations (IR). Part of this attention is due to the international actions of former United States president Donald Trump (2017–2021). However, populist leadership has a long tradition in Latin America too. While Trump undermined the stability of the liberal international order and his actions have been depicted as illogic (Drezner 2020), the same can also be said about the president of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez (1999–2013). He escalated tensions with the US to fuel his socialist project at home and competed with Brazil as a regional power by offering alternative models of regional order and institutions. Chávez also threatened to withdraw Venezuela's membership of the Organization of American States on different occasions. He even mobilized troops on the border with Colombia to support his ally Ecuador instead of adopting a mediating role, as other South American countries did. Similarly, Trump's relations with the world have been characterized as unpredictable and erratic (Drezner 2020). His actions would undermine the stability of the liberal international order when, for instance, he withdrew from the nuclear deal with Iran, affecting the stability of the Middle East and the security of the US's key allies in the region. Trump also adopted economic nationalism, targeted friends and foes through tariff wars, and withdrew the US from key climate change accords. He also shamed NATO member states for not contributing enough to the costs of this institution and threatened on several occasions to withdraw US participation of it.

These examples show that some antiplural populist leaders tend to adopt noncooperative, conflict-driven, and even hostile behavioral patterns in the international system. Their somewhat unpredictable and sometimes erratic behavior also amplify the difficulties for other states to establish stable patterns of cooperation with these leaders. How, then, can IR

scholarship make sense of these types of behaviors by certain populist leaders? While some of these behaviors can be attributed to the ideologies that align with populist projects, such as nationalism, socialism, and even a fierce defense of sovereignty, these approaches can be complemented with studies also offering an assessment of the psychology of populist leaders.

While not all populist leaders' foreign policy behavior can be explained by personality traits alone, we contend that the latter can help understand their noncooperative and conflict-inducing actions in the international system. We understand this type of behavior as a series of threats and actions taken by the leader that undermine collaboration between states within multilateral institutions, as well as the actions that undermine bilateral relations—ranging from the use of threats, to coercive measures, to possible military action. Thus, this paper addresses the following question: Are there patterns in populist leaders' personalities that can act as key drivers of their noncooperative and conflict-inducing behavior?

We argue that the tendency of populists to react in hostile ways to regional and international peers and institutions starts from the psychological characteristics of the leader, and not just from the type of ideology driving the populist government around notions of people versus elite and the general will. We tackle the research question with the Leadership Trait Analysis (LTA) framework pioneered by Hermann (1980, 2003). This approach is an at-a-distance assessment technique to study the personality profiles of leaders through the use of seven traits. Within this framework, we argue that populists' personal characteristics tend to differ from other world leaders; further, in line with the populist triad "people-elite-general will," these individuals' reasons for seeking power play a relevant role in the populist leadership style seen.

We focus on Trump and Chávez as cases from the Global North and Global South respectively. Most of the existing studies on populist foreign policy center exclusively on leaders from either the Global North or the Global South but not on both in tandem (e.g. Chryssogelos 2017; Destradi and Plagemann 2019; Plagemann and Destradi 2019; Wehner and Thies 2021; Wojczewski 2019a, 2019b). The study of Trump and his unpredictable behavior has been analyzed as a unique case in IR (see Drezner 2020). However, when compared with other cases from the Global South such as the one of Chávez we can draw important lessons on the importance of personal characteristics for understanding states' international behavior through the figure of the leader. A study that brings together these two cases is but an initial step and calls for more comparative work to be done on populist leaders beyond their individual ideologies. In fact, an agent-centered perspective like the one adopted here can also contribute to and complement recent debates in IR on revisionism and the patterns of instability vis-à-vis the international liberal order that populist leaders tend to bring with their actions (see e.g. Lake, Martin, and Risse 2021; Adler-Nissen and Zarakol 2020; Nye 2017; Ikenberry 2018; Jervis et al. 2018).

The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows: First, we assess the different conceptualizations of populism in Comparative and International Politics and show their lack of attention to the personal attributes of the leader. Second, we offer a brief theorization on leadership in general and populist leadership in particular, as well as outline our expectations in light of the analytical benefits of LTA. Third, we specify our research design. Fourth, we conduct an empirical analysis to determine populist leaders' personality traits that can help explain their noncooperative and conflict-inducing foreign policy behavior, which seems detrimental to the stability of the international liberal order. Fifth and finally, we offer a comparison of our cases and identify some avenues for future research on populist figures'

personalities and their attitudes toward the international order at the interplay of FPA and IR debates.

POPULISM IN COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

The study of populism in international politics has been built out of the different theories of the phenomenon within Comparative Politics. The most used approaches have been the ideational and discursive ones, while not much ink has been expended on the study of populism as a political strategy in international politics. In the ideational strand, populism is defined as a "thin-centered" ideology that usually coexists with "thicker" ideologies such as socialism or liberalism or even other "thinner" ones like nationalism (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017, 5; Destradi and Plagemann 2019). Meanwhile, the discursive approach follows the work of Laclau (2005), in which the phenomenon of populism becomes a structuring discourse for a new reality as a consequence of dislocation in the hegemonic discourse. People, elite, and general will are empty signifiers that are filled with meaning by the discursive practice of the leader (see Laclau 2005). In the political strategy approach, the leader articulates a political strategy to connect with the people as a way to achieve and then retain political power. If anything, the leader goes beyond their own core beliefs to perform a strategic act that consolidates their power—depending on the opportunities they create and the context they face (Weyland 2001).

These three classical understandings of populism in Comparative Politics share a common core: the triad of people, elite, and general will. "The people" is an abstract and diffuse social construction that gives plenty of room for the populist leader to stretch, manipulate, and construct its meaning. "The elite" is usually the political and economic elite of the country;

when it comes to the global dimension, references are to a "cosmopolitan elite" (Wehner and Thies 2020). Thus, populism for some leaders is about rescuing the native values of the country and people in contrast to a cosmopolitan elite that rules and undermines the people as sovereign of a given country or region (see Chryssogelos 2020). Finally, "general will" reflects the populist leader's belief that only they know what the people desire and want (see Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017). This triad is thus expected to be present and manifest in the rhetoric of the populist leader, and, above all, in the foreign policy behavior of the state under their mandate (Wehner and Thies 2020). The internationalization of this triad in global politics is what makes the latter populist in nature.

The above-explained three streams of research in Comparative Politics have been brought into the study of populism in International Politics too. Although populist leadership is a present and pressing phenomenon in different national settings around the world, the eventual manifestations of it, specifically in the international politics of a given country, have only recently started to receive academic attention (see Chryssogelos 2017; Destradi and Plagemann 2019; Stengel, MacDonald, and Nabers 2019; Wehner and Thies 2020; Stengel, MacDonald, and Nabers 2019). Not much has been said, then, on the relationship between the personality profiles of populist leaders and their international behavior. Most of the scholarly interest in populism and international politics has revolved around whether there is a relationship between the two, what kind of influence populism has on international politics, how populist leaders undermine and are a threat to the liberal order, as well as the type of discourses and ideologies that populist leaders advance internationally (see Stengel, MacDonald, and Nabers 2019; Chryssogelos 2017; Destradi and Plagemann 2019). In fact, the personality traits of the so-called populist leader and whether they account for the foreign policy patterns of a given state have not yet received due scholarly attention.

Drezner (2020) advances the study of the psychological aspects informing the leadership style of Trump. He shows how his unique personality traits intersected with the growing prerogatives that the US presidency enjoys as an institution. Drezner uses three traits to study Trump's presidential style: quick temper, short concentration span, and poor impulse control. The conclusion is that: "As President, Trump has acted like many toddlers: he is bad at building structures, but fantastic at making a complete mess of existing ones" (Drezner 2020, 400). While this work shows the potential to develop a research agenda on the psychology of populist leaders, its claim that Trump's personality traits are unique makes using it in comparisons with other leaders difficult. Likewise, Destradi and Plagemann (2019) show how populist leaders tend toward the personalization of the foreign policy-making process. They also posit that the impact populist projects have on global politics depends on a thick ideology being in play. It is thus the combination of thin-thick ideology that explains foreign policy behavior, rather than existing personality traits. Nevertheless, Destradi and Plagemann (2019) call in their study for more empirical analysis to uncover the political personality profiles of populist leaders.

Despite the abovementioned calls for psychological studies on populist leaders in international politics, the research focus has been so far on whether there is such a thing as a "populist foreign policy" and, if this is indeed the case, what distinguishes it from a nonpopulist one. Verbeek and Zaslove (2017) assess the relationship between populism and foreign policy and conclude there is no one type thereof. The core ideology informing the populist project is key for the different types of foreign policy seen. The ideology that populism is paired with is thus integral to elucidating whether a populist foreign policy is for or against the liberal order (Wehner and Thies 2021). Similarly, Stengel, MacDonald, and Nabers (2019) provide an understanding of the manifestations of populism in world politics and highlight the different

existing gaps in the study of the nexus of populism and foreign policy—but without directly referring to leaders' traits, profiles, and belief systems.

Other works using the thin-centered concept of populism also go in a different direction from that of the leader figure and their personal characteristics. Sagarzazu and Thies (2019) look at the populist rhetoric of Chávez as driven by anti-imperialist notions. Further, the type of discourse and rhetoric that populist actors unfold in the foreign policy realm is also crucial in the researching thereof (Wojczewski 2019a; Zeemann 2019). Others evaluate the utility of the concept of "populism" and tend to characterize it at the international level as "antiplural" (Chryssogelos 2017; Plagemann and Destradi 2019). Moreover, some have analyzed populist movements that seek to advance an anticosmopolitan agenda and thus target and undermine the European Union integration project (Ivaldi 2018; Stavrakakis et al. 2017). More recently, the journal *Foreign Affairs* has become home to a number of analyses of how populist leaders are a threat to liberal democracy and thus the current international order (Colgan and Keohane 2017; Nye 2017; Zakaria 2016).

Özdamar and Ceydilek (2020) are an exception here, as they unpack the sociocognitive aspects of different populist leaders in Europe using the Operational Code Analysis framework to establish whether these individuals are overall cooperative or hostile toward other actors. However, this study includes only one leader who has made it to power in a European country: Viktor Orbán in Hungary. The rest of the cases—such as Marine Le Pen (France), Geert Wilders (Netherlands), Nigel Farage (Britain), Jimmie Åkesson (Sweden), Frauke Petry (Germany), and Norbert Hofer (Austria)—have not made it to power as head of state and/or government. Therefore, unlike this study, we intend to assess the personality traits of two populist leaders who did make it to power—as it is here where they were formally able to put

their own imprint on the foreign policy-making process and thus affect both regional and international orders.

Thus, the International Politics literature goes in different directions per the varying concepts and theories of populism articulated within Comparative Politics. Above all, these works tend to overlook such leaders' characteristics and personality traits. If populists advance antiplural, anticosmopolitan, and antidemocratic agendas, or possibly quite the opposite, then in all these cases the leader's characteristics may have some degree of influence on the decision-making processes—and thus they should be considered as a key aspect in the study of the nexus of populism and international politics. Likewise, personality traits are expected to shape, affect, and thus explain how populism as a strategy, discourse, and thin ideology is advanced in the international realm.

LEADERSHIP STYLE AND PERSONALITY OF POPULIST LEADERS

It is hard to think about populist leaders without associating them with specific characteristics and a particular style of rule. The study of populist leadership styles has drawn scholarly attention from numerous fields and perspectives. For instance, these individuals' particular communication style and rhetoric have been widely described (Ahmadian, Azarshahi, and Paulhus 2017; Ernst et al. 2019; Bos and Brants 2014; Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Nai 2018). Heinisch (2003) refers to populists' style as generally drawing on agitation, spectacular acts, exaggeration, and calculated provocations, as well as also being characterized by using recourse to common-sense arguments, stereotyping, and extreme emotions to induce fear. On the other hand, Bos and Brants (2014) describe the populist style as a case of being straightforward, emphasizing decisiveness, and criticizing others.

Populist leadership has been usually conflated with charismatic leadership and the idea of a strongman/strongwoman leading the masses while possessing the capacity to impose decisions in a top-down manner (Weyland 2001). However, there is much greater variety in leadership types among populists than just the strongman/strongwoman. Populist leaders need to be creative in differentiating themselves from the established elite that they question, and they do so by highlighting their outsider status from political life through gender, ethnic, and professional markers (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017, 68). Thus, populism refers to leadership as the need for "the most extraordinary individuals to lead the most ordinary of people" (Taggart 2000, 1).

From a psychological perspective, some scholarly work has been done to unravel the specific personality traits of populist leaders, although not by using LTA. For instance, Nai and Martínez i Coma (2019) use personality inventories to assess populist leaders, finding that they score low on agreeableness, emotional stability, and conscientiousness. These leaders also scored higher on extraversion, narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism. Some specific work has already been conducted on the two leaders addressed in this paper. Fortunato, Hibbing, and Mondak (2018) stress the relevance of Trump's personality, indicating that his campaign was about his personality, the voter's own one, and the connection between the two. Similarly, Nai and Maie (2018) also assessed Trump's personality during his election campaign and found that he was rated very low on agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability, average on openness, and very high on extraversion and the "dark triad" (narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism).

Meanwhile, research conducted on Chávez's personality using well-established psychological tools is less prolific. However, it is possible to find references to his leadership style to explain his political behavior and support from constituents. Weyland (2003) argues that Venezuela's domestic crisis created a psychological need to believe in salvation and a potential bearer of it. These problems allowed for situational charisma, which Chávez used to boost his populist leadership style. Weyland (2003) also suggests that Chávez's support depended partially on his own personal characteristics, such as crude diction and belligerent rhetoric. In addition, Chávez's oratorical and improvisation skills are usually recognized as relevant features of his leadership style. Frajman (2014) refers to Chávez's charisma and strong personality as elements that helped maintain an emotionally charged connection with his followers. He stresses here Chávez's loquaciousness and overconfidence, as he would talk to the public weekly for hours on end for over a decade.

While the studies presented above are helpful to understand the need to determine and unpack the key psychological features that help explain populists' behavior, these traits have hitherto not been directly connected to their international politics. Populist leaders, especially those that rely on antiplural and antiliberal rhetoric, are presented as undermining the international order, as their actions enhance patterns of noncooperation. In other words, understanding how the personality traits of such antiplural leaders inform their international choices becomes paramount.

POLITICAL LEADERS AND LTA IN FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS (FPA)

The assessment of political leaders has a long tradition in FPA. One of the first works to initiate the systematic analysis of leaders as decision-makers in foreign policy appeared in 1954 with Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin (Hermann 2009; Hudson 2002; Levy 2003). It acknowledges the importance of focusing on decision-makers, for it is the way individuals perceive or interpret events that determines the behavior of a particular state and its foreign policy decisions (Hermann 2009; Levy 2003). The study of personality or political behavior makes sense when we consider the central axiom of political psychology, namely that the actions taken by a leader are shaped and channeled by their personality and particular perceptions, memories, judgments, goals, means of expression, and emotional self-regulation (Winter 2003).

Hudson (2013) has argued that in the field of international relations what happens between nations originates from decisions made by humans, whether acting individually or collectively. Thus the foundations of international relations are the human beings who make those decisions, who cannot be thought of either as strict rational actors or as abstract entities equivalent to the state. People thus affect how international issues are framed, the options considered, the choices made, and what is ultimately implemented (Hermann 2009). Consequently, the study of political leaders has been approached from different perspectives. These studies have focused on leaders' personal characteristics, cognitions, motives, and psychobiographical analysis (Cuhadar et al. 2017; Dyson 2006; Hermann 1980; Kesgin 2013; van Esch and Swinkels 2015; George 1969; Holsti 1970; Levi and Tetlock 1980; Malici and Malici 2005; Post 2003; Schafer and Walker 2006a; Thiers 2021)

Within studies emphasizing personality traits, the LTA model—whose leading proponent is, as noted, Hermann—classifies leaders' predominant strategies and styles in approaching foreign policy issues. Leadership style is defined as "the ways in which leaders relate to those

around them, whether constituents or other leaders – how they structure interactions and the norms, rules, and principles they use to guide such interactions" (Kaarbo and Hermann 1998, 244). LTA has produced robust and reliable results in the study both of leaders' traits and the influence of such traits on foreign policy (see Kaarbo 2018). Hermann (2003) recognizes seven specific traits that are useful in assessing leadership style: (1) belief that one can control events; (2) need for power; (3) conceptual complexity; (4) self-confidence; (5) tendency to focus on problem-solving versus maintenance of the group; (6) distrust; and, (7) in-group bias (see Table 1).

These sets of traits on their own or as pairs or triplets, as presented in Table 2 below, will be critical to assess potential similarities and differences between Trump and Chávez in shedding further light on their respective tendencies to adopt noncooperative and conflict-inducing behavior at the international level. As outlined earlier in the paper, noncooperative behavior refers to a series of threats and actions taken by the leader that undermine collaboration between states in multilateral institutions (be they regional or international) as well as the actions that undermine bilateral relations, ranging from the use of threats, to coercive measures, to possible military action.

Table 1: Personality Traits in LTA

Trait	**Description**
Belief that one can control events (BACE)	Interpretation of the degree of control over situations
Need for power (PWR)	Need for establishing, maintaining, or restoring one's power

Conceptual complexity (CC)	Degree to which individuals recognize more than one dimension or perspective on issues or topics
Self-confidence (SC)	Sense of self-importance and image of one's capacity to cope satisfactorily with objects and persons
In-group bias (IGB)	A way of perceiving the world in which one's group holds center stage
Task focus (TASK)	Focus on the completion of a task or preserving group spirit and morale
Distrust (DIS)	General feeling of doubt and wariness about others; a predisposition to be suspicious of others' motives and actions

Source: Hermann (2003).

Additionally, Hermann (2003) proposes three questions that can be used to build a profile of leadership styles. Each question addresses some of the personality traits mentioned above.

Table 2: Questions for Identifying Personality Traits

Questions	**Traits**
How does the leader react to political constraints? Do they respect or challenge them?	BACE PWR
How open are leaders to incoming information?	SC CC
What are the leaders' reasons for seeking their positions?	TASK IGB DIS

Source: Hermann (2003).

As shown in our literature review, populist leaders tend to exhibit a personalistic approach to advancing policymaking processes. They have also been depicted as rogue actors who undermine international cooperation, installing themselves as representatives of the people versus an established elite and acting on behalf of the general will. Thus, we expect to find differences between these leaders and the average world leader's personality traits. We also expect to see similar patterns in the personality traits that drive leaders to prioritize building relationships and taking actions that sustain the nexus leader-people at the expense of more cooperative relationships with other international actors and domestic elite groups that do not follow the premises of the populist project.

Within the three dimensions proposed by Hermann (2003) (Table 2), the traits that could best help explain populists' foreign policy behavior are the ones that correspond to the third question about leaders' motivations for seeking office. Leaders may be driven by an internal focus (a problem), a specific cause, an ideology, or a set of interests, or by the desire for feedback such as acceptance, power support, or acclaim from those in their surrounding environment (a relationship) (Hermann 2003). In assessing motivation, the focus is put on why the leader sought office and their need to preserve and secure the group (Hermann 2003). Considering Hermann's (2003) framework, we expect that populist leaders—in this case, Chávez and Trump—share a focus on relationships (low task orientation), high in-group bias, and high levels of distrust.

Task orientation versus relationships: Leaders who are highly focused on achieving a given task emphasize moving the group forward toward a goal, push the group to work on solving a particular problem, and are willing to sacrifice a high level of morale in the group for

accomplishing that task (Hermann 2003). Conversely, relationship-oriented leaders are sensitive to what people want; they emphasize group maintenance, retain constituents' loyalty, and keep morale high (Hermann 2003). Populist leaders' main characteristic is their personal and direct relationship with the people that they represent. Moreover, as soon as the leader feels betrayed by their people and closer group, the populist tends to redefine the meaning of the people and inner circle of advisors. Shaming the ones that are no longer part of the group is part of the leader's repertoire. Thus, we expect both Chávez and Trump to have a stronger focus on relationships compared to their task orientation. We consider populist leaders to be more prone to maintaining their followers (the people) in foreign policy issues, which may explain why their decisions seem less cooperative and, at times, utilitarian and erratic. Our expectation is also in line with the results obtained by Kesgin (2019), who compared Israel's prime ministers and found that leaders who are labeled as hawks have a strong relationship focus compared to dovish peers.

In-group bias: Leaders who present high scores on this trait have a strong emotional attachment to the in-group (social, political, ethnic) and are prone to perceive only the good aspects of their group and deny their weaknesses (Hermann 2003). They are concerned when other groups, organizations, or countries try to meddle in their own group's internal affairs (Hermann 2003). These leaders tend to see the world in "us versus them" terms, which is in line with the description of populists. While we expect to find high levels of in-group bias in the case of both Chávez and Trump, research on this trait and its relationship with conflict-inducing foreign policy behavior has had mixed results. For instance, Shannon and Keller (2007) found that in-group bias is a good predictor of leaders' willingness to violate international norms. On the other hand, and at odds with his original prediction, Kesgin (2019) found that this trait does not help distinguish between hawkish and dovish leaders. Lazarevska, Sholl, and Young (2006)

compared the verbal expressions of terrorist and nonterrorist leaders to identify common characteristics in their communication styles. Contrary to their expectations, they found that individuals in the terrorist group have lower in-group bias scores than nonterrorist political leaders do.

High distrust of others: This is another relevant trait that could help explain populist leaders' noncooperative and sometimes hostile international behavior. Leaders who score high in distrust are more suspicious about the motives and actions of others, especially those who are seen as competitors. These leaders tend to be vigilant and hypersensitive to criticism. Distrust has been widely associated with noncooperative and conflict-inducing behavior in foreign policy. For instance, Kesgin (2019) found that distrust is one of the traits that can, in fact, help differentiate between hawkish and dovish leaders. Shannon and Keller (2007) identified high distrust as the most important predictor of leaders' willingness to violate international rules. Wesley (2013) linked George W. Bush's unusually high levels of distrust with his incorrect belief about Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction, which led to the 2003 US invasion. Through the analysis of British prime ministers, Foster and Keller (2020) show that those high in distrust are particularly likely to initiate militarized state disputes when levels of economic deterioration increase. All these studies support the assumption that populist leaders will score high on this trait.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA

The LTA approach is a content analysis technique developed to address the difficulty and sometimes impossibility of conducting a conventional psychological evaluation of political leaders. Hermann (2008) indicates that the content analysis method provides a tool to collect

information about leaders' beliefs, motives, and relationships with equals, subordinates, and constituents. This at-a-distance approach's central premise is that psychological characteristics can be assessed through the systematic analysis of what leaders say. Hermann's (2003) assumption is that the more often leaders use certain words and phrases, the more significant such content is to them. Hence, the LTA model is quantitative and uses frequency counts (Hermann 2003). Hermann's technique has produced a sample of 284 world political leaders to date, generating norms that allow for comparisons between them across both time and space (Cuhadar et al. 2017). LTA has also produced norming groups separated into world regions to be able to conduct more specific comparisons.

Following Hermann's (2003) guidelines, our analysis is based on spontaneous verbal material, including interviews and press conferences given by Chávez and Trump. Unlike with official speeches, leaders tend to be less in control of what they say during interviews; hence, they are more likely to show themselves as they really are (Hermann 2003). In the case of Trump, we collected all his spontaneous remarks from January 2017 to January 2021 as found on the White House website in the section "Remarks." Several of these remarks started with a brief speech, but we only drew on his answers to the follow-up questions usually posed by the press. We analyzed 1,088,457 words across 519 documents.

In the case of Chávez, we use spontaneous remarks delivered during his mandate from 1999 to 2012. We also utilized translated material found on LexisNexis's database as well as our own translations of spontaneous remarks originally delivered in Spanish. The verbal material was retrieved from the Venezuelan Ministry of Communication and Information and the *Todo*

Chávez website.[1] We analyzed 190,345 words across 52 documents. We use material from all years of Chávez's and Trump's respective presidencies to ensure that the profiles are not context-specific (Hermann 2003). While there is a difference in terms of the number of words analyzed in both profiles, the total in both cases largely surpasses the reliability requirement of fifty interview responses of one hundred words or more in length (Hermann 2003). Considering the research question, this study employed the sample of 284 world political leaders as the norming group to establish comparisons between Chávez and Trump and other decision-makers.

The data was analyzed using Profiler Plus (version 7.3.15), a software tool developed by Social Science Automation Inc. This software automates the assessment of the seven traits of the LTA model. Among the advantages of this automation are the possibility of managing large amounts of data in a short period of time, increased reliability, and decreased researcher bias.

As stressed earlier, at-a-distance assessment techniques work under the assumption that psychological characteristics can be inferred based on people's verbal expressions (Schafer and Walker 2006b). The use of LTA is thus grounded in the idea that the way political leaders speak will provide information about their personality traits. Both assumptions may raise some issues about the validity of these techniques. One argument that questions the validity of at-a-distance techniques is that leaders' psychological characteristics cannot be accurately assessed employing verbal material (Schafer 2014). However, this contention is questionable as regular psychological assessments in clinical contexts are mostly conducted by analyzing what people

[1] This website compiles the interviews, press conferences, and writings of Venezuela's former leader. It belongs to the Institute of Higher Studies of the Supreme Commander Hugo Rafael Chávez Frias's Thought, created by the Venezuelan government in July 2013 to preserve and disseminate his legacy (http://www.todochavezenlaweb.gob.ve).

say about themselves or the situation they are facing. As Schafer (2014) notes, the linguistic is simply another form of behavior, thus being the basis of many forms of psychological analysis. Moreover, at-a-distance techniques have been widely utilized to conduct research in this field, providing broad-based validity—particularly construct validity (Schafer 2014). Regarding the question of authorship, LTA examines spontaneous verbal material to minimize the "speechwriter effect." Finally, to tackle leaders' possible attempts to deceive or their "impression management," this study employs a large number of utterances surpassing the basic requirements for performing this sort of assessment. This work also covers different dates, contexts, and audiences, which also helps circumvent leaders' possible attempts to deceive.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tables 3 and 4 below show the scores for Chávez and Trump on each of the seven personality traits plus their Z scores compared to the means for a norming group of world leaders. The low, high, and moderate categories are based on the standard deviation from the mean score. If the score obtained exceeded one standard deviation above the mean for the sample of the norming group, the leader is considered high on the trait in question (Hermann 2003). Likewise, if the score is one standard deviation below the norming group, the leader is considered low on the trait at hand (Hermann 2003). The categories of "lean high" or "lean low" were utilized when the scores were more than 0.5 standard deviations below or above the mean one.

Table 3: Chávez's LTA Scores

Trait	Chávez's LTA & Z Scores	World Leaders Means and SDs (n=284)	Category
BACE	0.383 (0.7)	0.35 (0.05)	Lean High
PWR	0.196 (-1.3)	0.26 (0.05)	Low
CC	0.611 (0.3)	0.59 (0.06)	Average
SC	0.329 (-0.3)	0.36 (0.1)	Average
IGB	0.104 (-0.9)	0.15 (0.05)	Lean Low
TASK	0.554 (-1.1)	0.63 (0.07)	Low
DIS	0.160 (0.5)	0.13 (0.06)	Average
N	52		
Words	190,345		

Table 4: Trump's LTA Scores

Trait	Trump's LTA & Z Scores	World Leaders Means and SDs (n=284)	Category
BACE	0.381/ (0.6)	0.35 (.05)	Lean high
PWR	0.253/ (-0.1)	0.26 (.05)	Average
CC	0.637/ (0.8)	0.59 (.06)	Lean high
SC	0.494/ (1.3)	0.36 (.10)	High
IGB	0.125/ (-0.5)	0.15 (.05)	Average
TASK	0.530/ (-1.4)	0.63 (.07)	Low

DIS	0.269/ (2.3)	0.13 (.06)	High
N	519		
Words	1,088,457		

The results show that both Chávez and Trump present unusual profiles when compared to other world leaders. In the case of Trump, only two of the seven traits are within the norming group's average scores (need for power and in-group bias). This unusual profile speaks of a self-confident and distrustful leader who also presents reduced task orientation compared to other world leaders.

In the case of Chávez, three out of seven traits fall within the average scores for the norming group (conceptual complexity, self-confidence, and distrust). This profile shows a leader who believes he can control events, presenting a lower need for power and reduced task orientation compared to other world leaders. This finding supports the claim about populists' profile and behavior differing from the average world leader. In this sense, populists' personalistic approach and their depiction as rogue actors who undermine cooperation can be in part linked to their atypical leadership profile compared to other world leaders. While more research needs to be conducted to understand the exact effect of overall unusual leadership profiles on foreign policy decisions there are some indications in the literature that the "extreme" manifestation of personality traits may increase the likelihood of these individuals engaging in low-quality decision-making, which in turn increases the prospect of ending up with policy fiascos (see Brummer 2016).

To answer our research question, we use the scores presented in Tables 3 and 4 to determine patterns in Chávez's and Trump's respective personality traits. These results support one of our three initial expectations. Compared to the sample of world leaders, both Chávez and

Trump demonstrate a low focus on task fulfillment (Z = -1.1 and -1.4 respectively), confirming that they are mainly motivated by establishing relationships, retaining the loyalty of their constituents, and keeping the morale of the group high (Hermann 2003). Camaraderie, loyalty, and commitment to the group are qualities highly valued by these types of leaders (Hermann 2003).

The relevance that both Chávez and Trump attribute to achieving high morale and a sense of unity within their group can be clearly linked to one of the main observable characteristics of populist figures: namely their focus on building close ties with their followers and on promoting and defending the people they represent against a national and external elite. This interpretation also aligns with the idea that populist foreign policy enhances the nexus between the leader figure and the people (see Destradi and Plagemann 2019). In this sense, "the people" is a diffuse social construction that gives the leader plenty of room to manipulate and define its meaning and decide what groups and specific sets of people are in/out of this social category (Wehner and Thies 2021).

Contrary to our expectations, high levels of distrust is not a characteristic that both of these leaders share. Chávez shows an average level of distrust (Z = 0.5), indicating that he is moderate and does not stand out compared to other world leaders on this trait. On the other hand, Trump displays high levels of distrust toward others compared to the sample of world leaders (Z = 2.3). This trait can help explain Trump's predisposition to be suspicious about the motives and actions of others, especially those perceived as competitors or to be working against his cause or ideology. High levels of distrust can also justify his sensitivity to criticism and hypervigilant stance in foreign policy matters, as well as his tendency to do things on his own to avoid disruption and sabotage (Hermann 2003). Due to Trump's marked distrust toward others, he was more prone to perceive other actors as threats to his goals and thus to pursue

more defensive strategies in foreign policy issues. Given his wariness of others, forming alliances and building loyalty with followers became relevant parts of his foreign policy decisions. On the other hand, Chavez's moderate levels of distrust could have allowed him to engage more actively in joint enterprises with allies that shared similar ideologies and interests.

At odds with our expectations, in-group bias, which is associated with nationalism, is not a trait that appears to explain these two leaders' less cooperative and conflict-inducing foreign policy behavior. Chávez leans low in this trait while Trump obtains an average score compared to other world leaders (Z = -0.9 and -0.5 respectively). According to Hermann's (2003) description, this result shows that while both leaders were still interested in the maintenance of their in-group, they were more willing to categorize people based on the nature of the situation at hand, so the "we-them" categorization remained fluid and ever-changing depending on the context.

The combination of scores on distrust and in-group bias sheds light on leaders' motivation in how they act toward the world at large (Hermann 2003). In the case of Chávez, his leaning-low scores on in-group bias and average distrust speak of a leader able to recognize the opportunities and threats in the environment and envision win-win agreements (Hermann 2003). This could explain his interest in creating and strengthening regional schemes such as ALBA, Petrocaribe, and Banco del Sur. These enterprises, developed with like-minded leaders, acted as both a mechanism to promote the benefits of his socialist model and to protect it against external threats through loyal alliances. In the case of Trump, his scores cannot be clearly located within Hermann's categories and definitions; considering his results on each trait, however, it can be argued that he proved himself capable of establishing a working relationship with other groups, but would be extremely cautious and vigilant about others' behavior in the

international arena. This combination could make him more prone to changing his mind quickly when it came to international cooperation and hence appear more erratic and unpredictable.

One of the reasons we expected these populist leaders to score high in their levels of in-group bias was the association we made between this trait and leaders' reduced ability to perceive the good aspects of other groups—overrating their own skills and capacities, which could induce poorer decision-making and result in conflict-prone foreign policy behavior. However, as mentioned earlier, research on this trait has produced mixed results. In the context of groupthink, Schafer and Crichlow (2010) problematize the idea of high in-group bias as a clear driver of poor decision-making. They find that leaders who score high on in-group bias are likely to engage in decision-making that features fewer faults. One of the reasons for this is that for groups to solve problems and coordinate complex policies, leaders must believe in and support their group in order to help them carry out decision-making in superior ways (Schafer and Crichlow 2010, 239). In this sense and contrary to our initial reasoning, populist leaders' tendency to pursue noncooperative and conflict-inducing behavior can result from low levels of in-group bias—especially in the case of Chávez. However, this issue needs further research to arrive at more accurate conclusions.

The analysis of Chávez's and Trump's profiles reveals other similarities and differences worth mentioning, as they have implications for the way they led their respective countries. Both leaders display leaning-high scores on their belief in the ability to control events (Chavez Z = 0.7; Trump Z = 0.6), meaning that they perceived that they could exercise some degree of control over the situations in which they found themselves (Hermann 2003). Leaders scoring high on this trait are likely to pursue active policy agendas, seeking to exert control over

policymaking, and are less prone to delegate tasks to others (Shannon and Keller 2007). In times of crises, leaders strong on this belief are more prone to take a central role in the decision-making process (van Esch and Swinkels 2015).

Regarding the trait need for power, both leaders' scores differ. Trump's are average (Z = -0.1), meaning that he does not stand out in his need for power compared to other world leaders. On the other hand, Chávez's need for power is lower than other world leaders (Z = -1.3). This score indicates that Chávez tended to have less of a requirement to be in charge and was inclined to make an effort to empower others, engender high morale, a sense of team spirit, and goal clarity (Hermann 2003). These results make sense if we consider that a central element in Chávez's rhetoric was the relevance he attributed to empowering the people who had been oppressed by the political system in Venezuela before he came to power. While these results may seem at first sight counterintuitive, they make sense when combined with these leaders' high focus on relationships. The average and low scores obtained by Trump and Chávez on need for power can be explained by the particular relationship that exists between populist leaders and their followers. In line with the aforementioned people-elite-general will triad, the actions of populist leaders are framed as representing the general will of the people, not as a personal enterprise to seek power.

Moreover, as indicated in Table 2 above, leaders' scores on the ability to control events and the need for power are indicators of whether they respect or challenge constraints. Considering Chávez's and Trump's leaning-high scores on the belief they could control events and their low and moderate scores on need for power respectively it can be argued that both were inclined to take charge of what happens and challenge constraints, but they would not be as successful in reading how to manipulate the people and exert the desired influence (Hermann

2003). Leaders with these characteristics tend to be too direct and open in their use of power, which undermines their capacity to have an impact on people (Hermann 2003). This combination of traits can help explain the overall perception of these leaders as extremely power-oriented. While exerting power and influencing people are common goals among political leaders, Chávez's and Trump's straightforward style made them less successful in leveraging this influence either in their favor or in a subtle manner. Research has also shown that when self-confidence scores are lower than conceptual complexity ones, the leader may feel overwhelmed or become anxious in dealing with the world's complexities (Schafer and Crichlow 2010), which can explain poor decision-making.

We also found differences in the traits conceptual complexity and self-confidence. While Chávez's scores on both traits are within the averages of world leaders (Z = 0.3 and Z = -0.3 respectively), meaning that these characteristics do not stand out compared to other leaders, Trump's conceptual complexity leans high (Z = 0.8) and his self-confidence is higher than other world leaders (Z = 1.3). While Trump's leaning-high scores on conceptual complexity may seem contradictory as high levels on this trait are usually associated with leaders who are able to analyze contextual information and consider multiple perspectives when solving a problem, high complexity may also lead to a leader who is overwhelmed by information in the surrounding environment (Schafer and Crichlow 2010).

In this sense, high scores could produce problems in decision-making as a result of "undue equivocation, mixed signals to advisors and international actors or putting off important matters" (Schafer and Crichlow 2010, 61). In terms of self-confidence, high scores on this trait reflect a strong sense of self-importance and confidence in their ability to cope with the presenting environment (Hermann 2003). These types of leaders rely on their own worldviews

and instincts, and feel less threatened by their surroundings (van Esch and Swinkels 2015). High scores on this trait have also been associated with a predisposition to making decisions that end up with fiascos (see Brummer 2016). Thus, Trump's scores on both traits speak about a leader who feels overly confident but tends to be overwhelmed by the events around him, which may lead to poor decision-making.

Combining conceptual complexity and self-confidence provides information on leaders' openness to contextual information (Table 2). Leaders who are high in both conceptual complexity and self-confidence, as in the case of Trump, are generally open to such information. When leaders are so, they can be quite strategic in their behavior, focusing their attention on what is feasible at any given point in time (Hermann 2003). Likewise, these types of leaders like to become the center of any information network, allowing them to be in the middle of all decisions (Hermann 2003). An interesting characteristic of leaders who score high on both traits is that their behavior can be perceived as highly erratic and changeable, and their actions may seem indecisive and chameleon-like as they are considering different options in order to arrive at a final choice (Hermann 2003).

On the other hand, while Chávez's scores are within the mean of world leaders according to the LTA framework he can still be classified as a leader open to incoming information as his conceptual complexity score is higher than his self-confidence one. His moderate scores indicate that Chávez was pragmatic and responsive to external information (Hermann 2003). Considering the scores of both leaders on this trait, it can be argued that populists do not necessarily always see the world in black-and-white terms. On the contrary, these preliminary findings show that to retain the loyalty of their followers, populist leaders need to be able to

identify and consider different options before making binding decisions in the realm of foreign policy.

Furthermore, populist leaders should be open to incoming information and have the capacity to change strategy if that is deemed necessary to keep the nexus with the people of the populist project as the main priority. While this may differ from the overall public perception of these leaders as obstinate and closed to new information, the results are in line with their capacity to take advantage of and capitalize on people's discontent, distrust, and polarization to achieve their political goals. This characteristic, along with their pragmatism, can, for instance, partially explain the tendency to retract promises and change orientation observed for some populist leaders. These individuals tend to modify their positions as long as they can still maintain a strong relationship with their followers after doing so. The degree of openness to contextual information in the case of Trump supports what scholars and policy analysts have described as his erratic and fluctuating behavior and decisions in foreign policy (see Drezner 2020; Cohen 2019; see also, Destradi and Plagemann 2019). At the same time, this ability to evaluate options and change position if necessary is something that Chávez mastered in Venezuela's relationship with the US and Latin American peers (see Raby 2011).

CONCLUSION

This paper has brought a political psychology and agent-centered approach to studying populist leaders' behavior in international relations. Employing the Leadership Trait Analysis framework, this contribution intended to shed light on further possible explanations for populist leaders' noncooperative and conflict-prone actions in the international arena. While not representing conclusive evidence, the findings lend weight to the idea that populist leaders' foreign policy behavior is not only explained by ideological positions but also by personal

characteristics that might, in fact, increase the likelihood of engaging in less cooperative and more conflict-inducing behavior in foreign policy. These findings complement the existing IR literature that show how populists adopt revisionist positions, and furthermore affect the systemic stability of the international liberal order by taking up specific ideas and ideologies.

While the LTA results confirmed only one of our initial expectations, the study has nevertheless still yielded interesting findings that can contribute to the literature on populism in IR. First, populists' profiles tend to differ from the average world leader as the former display more extreme personality traits, helping explain their unusual behavior. However, more research needs to be done to better understand the connection between these extreme traits and noncooperative and conflict-prone foreign policy behavior. Although high scores may help explain such behavior, by no means do they suggest that all leaders who present extreme traits are populists. These results do provide, though, a pattern of key relevance when studying populist leaders.

The analysis of Trump's and Chavez's scores shows that the characteristics that appear as the strongest predictors of these leaders' noncooperative and conflict-prone behavior in the international arena are their low task orientation and high focus on relationships. In this sense, the impact of populism in foreign policy can be linked with these leaders' tendency to enhance the nexus with the people in standing against an elite at home and abroad. Populist leaders give priority to the building and fueling of the group mentality, helping explain their actions in the international arena. The priorities of maintaining group morale and focusing on building relationships tend to confirm that populist leaders are less keen on using the foreign policy bureaucratic apparatus and prefer to rely more on a reduced group of people who can be considered part of their group instead. However, if the trusted people of the group disappoint

the leader they become political opponents; the leader blames and shames them, as they are no longer considered members of the inner circle.

This study also showed other characteristics common to Chávez and Trump that could shed further light on populist behavior in foreign policy terms. Both leaders leant high in their belief that they could control events, making them more prone to carrying out an active foreign policy agenda and taking center stage in decision-making processes. This characteristic is easily observable for both of these leaders. While Trump and Chávez tended to challenge constraints, they were less successful in using their power to persuade people within their inner circle as they appeared too direct.

This characteristic can be linked to their erratic relationship with their advisors and close collaborators. Both leaders had a track record of publicly ousting teammates, collaborators going rogue, and infamous controversies with former close associates. Moreover, both leaders demonstrated openness to new information, being in line with their capacity and willingness to change foreign policy as many times as necessary to keep up the bond with the people they claimed to represent. In this sense, both leaders indeed showed the ability to adapt and respond to the audience of people who sustained them in power when taking foreign policy decisions. As anecdotic as it may sound, the tariff policy of Trump toward China and his renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement tended to enhance his follower group's morale—as did the slogans "America First" and "Make America Great Again." Similarly, Chávez's selective rhetorical attacks—especially against the United States as the "Empire"—also generated cohesion and increased the leader-people bond in the face of a national and regional elite whose behavior was constructed as helping promote the extension of US influence within both Venezuela and Latin America.

This study has opened up new avenues of research in the study of populist foreign policy. Leaders' personality traits matter and, as seen, are overall consistent with the existing literature on populist foreign policy. Nevertheless, more empirical analysis of other cases is needed to substantiate or challenge these findings. Focus on building relationships with the identified group of people and a close group of advisors (believers in the project) seem to be critical in the way the populist leader approaches foreign policy. Thus, new research should explore whether this apparent homogeneity in the group affects, and if so how, the decision-making process regarding foreign policy. This policy field may be prone to in-group dynamics, as divergence from the populist leader's expectations may mean exclusion from that group.

This paper represents only an initial step in marrying mind and action in the study of populism in world politics and the tendency of these leaders to act in a noncooperative way. The scrutiny of the personality traits of Chávez and Trump has shown that beyond the eventual impact of the head of government on the world at large, as the key agent in the foreign policy of their state, what the populist leader is doing when making foreign policy—whether bilaterally or multilaterally—is to continue solidifying their own understanding of the nexus leader-follower per the triad people, elite, and the general will.

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