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[sisaddergi@gmail.com](mailto:sisaddergi@gmail.com)

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## **METHODS OF ASSESSING LEADER’S PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND LEADERSHIP STYLE**

*Liderin Kişisel Özelliklerini ve Liderlik Tarzını Değerlendirme Yöntemleri*

**Valeri MODEBEADZE**

*Prof. Dr.*

*Georgian Technical University*

*ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1232-4841*

[modebeadzevaleri07@gtu.ge](mailto:modebeadzevaleri07@gtu.ge)

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**Abstract:** The aim of this research was to discuss and analyze various methods of assessment of leader’s personal characteristics and leadership style. In fact, there are various methods that can be used to assess personal qualities and psychological characteristics of a leader. This research focused mainly on the methods developed by distinguished American scientists such as Margaret Herman, James David Barber and David A. Winter. With regards to research methods, a document analysis method was used to obtain valid information and to analyze and describe various methods of assessment of leader’s personal traits and leadership style. This research revealed that it is quite possible to obtain information about leader’s personal qualities and psychological characteristics even without meeting him or her. Marguerite Herman developed a method of assessing the personality traits of leaders which is known as Personality Assessment-at-a-Distance. This method allows us to evaluate leader’s personal qualities and psychological characteristics distantly by analyzing his or her speeches and conversations.

**Keywords:** Leader’s Assessment, Personal Characteristics of a Leader, Leadership Style, Personality Assessment-at-a-Distance, Classification of Leaders.

**Öz:** Bu arařtırmanın amacı, liderin kişisel özelliklerini ve liderlik tarzını değerlendirmenin çeşitli yöntemlerini tartışmak ve analiz etmektir. Aslında bir liderin kişisel niteliklerini ve psikolojik özelliklerini değerlendirmek için kullanılabilir çeşitli yöntemler vardır. Bu arařtırma, esas olarak Margaret Herman, James David Barber ve David A. Winter gibi seçkin Amerikalı bilim adamları tarafından geliştirilen yöntemlere odaklandı. Arařtırma yöntemleri ile ilgili olarak, geçerli bilgiler elde etmek ve liderin kişisel özelliklerini ve liderlik tarzını değerlendirmenin çeşitli yöntemlerini analiz etmek ve tanımlamak için bir doküman analizi yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Bu arařtırma, liderin kişisel nitelikleri ve psikolojik özellikleri hakkında onunla tanışmadan da bilgi edinmenin oldukça mümkün olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Marguerite Herman, Uzaktan Kişilik Değerlendirmesi olarak bilinen liderlerin kişilik özelliklerini değerlendirmek için bir yöntem geliştirdi. Bu yöntem, liderin konuşmalarını ve konuşmalarını analiz ederek kişisel niteliklerini ve psikolojik özelliklerini uzaktan değerlendirmemizi sağlar.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Lider Değerlendirmesi, Liderin Kişisel Özellikleri, Liderlik Tarzı, Uzaktan Kişilik Değerlendirmesi, Liderlerin Sınıflandırılması.

## INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a rare, though innate talent. Strong individuals are empowered to make important political decisions. The personality traits of a leader affect his ability to make foreign policy decisions. It is important to study the personality traits of a leader and evaluate leader's performance. The personal qualities of a leader help us to understand how and why he makes this or that decision. While cognitive theories examine how perceptions and misconceptions of reality affect the decision-making process, affective theories are interested in how the leader's personal qualities and emotions influence the decisions he or she makes.

Winter believes that personality traits influence the leader's ability to analyze and interpret events, as well as his potential to perceive and describe objective reality. It depends on the personality traits of the decision-maker how he will react and respond to different kinds of emotions. Winter breaks down personality into four elements: temperament, cognitions, motives, and social context. The human temperament is made up of observable components of behavior, which is formed from birth and rarely changes. Such observable components of behavior are, for instance, energy level and neuroses. Each of us has unique and certain mental qualities. There are four types of temperament: sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic and melancholic. The social context also consists of observable components and includes factors such as gender, class, race, culture, ethnicity and generation. Unlike temperament and social context, cognition and motives are less observable (Winter, 2003).

### **Assessment of a Leader's Personality at a Distance**

Marguerite Herman developed a method of assessing the personality traits of leaders without interviewing them, known as Personality Assessment-at-a-Distance. The method works using content-analysis, during which transcripts of the spontaneous interviews are analyzed. Margaret Herman believes that direct contact with leaders is not necessary to determine their personal qualities and leadership style. One of the most effective ways to learn more about political leaders' psychological characteristics and identify their personal qualities is to analyze their conversations and speeches. The media constantly writes and covers the speeches and statements of the presidents of different countries. The information provided by the media is a good way to assess leader's personal qualities and to identify a leadership style (Mintz and DeRouen, 2010). Based on the statements and speeches of leaders we can determine what psychological characteristics they possess. Marguerite Herman argues that we need to be careful when analyzing the public speeches of leaders, since the texts of high-ranking leaders (presidents, prime ministers, ministers, etc.) are often written by others. This is reason why Marguerite Herman believes that we should give preference to interview analysis. In her view, interviews which are conducted spontaneously are more trustworthy and include more reliable information about leader's personal characteristics. During the interview, the leaders have to answer the questions quickly and therefore, are forced to express their own opinion spontaneously. Due to the spontaneity of the interview, leaders do not have the opportunity to turn to anyone for help, therefore, by analyzing the interviews we can better draw a psychological portrait of the leader and determine his leadership style. Marguerite Herman also believes that we should be very careful when collecting interviews, as newspapers and magazines often change or shorten the text of the interview according to their interests and preferences. Herman thinks that only magazines and newspapers that cover the entire text of the interview are valuable (Mintz and DeRouen, 2010).

According to Herman, it is possible to classify interviews according to the degree of spontaneity. The least spontaneous is an interview during which a political figure invites interviewers to his or her office or cabinet to inform them of his or her own plan or political vision; or when a political leader asks journalists to send questions in advance in order to select only those issues that are acceptable to him. The most spontaneous interview is the accidental

meeting with the leader when the meeting with the leader takes place accidentally. For example, when a leader leaves a building or a plane, or when we meet him accidentally in the corridor of Parliament (Hermann, 1999).

### **Leadership Style and Classification of Leaders**

Analyzing leadership styles helps us to understand how leaders make decisions and how they react to complex problems. James David Barber believes that leadership style consists of those actions and behaviors that have brought the leader political success. The leader refines and improves these behaviors over time in order to achieve more success in the future. In leadership style, Barber refers to various methods a leader uses when interacting with the people around him: voters, public officials, advisers, and other leaders. Thus, leadership style includes the norms, rules, and principles that leaders use when interacting with individuals around them (Hastedt, 2005).

James David Barber devoted a great deal of time and energy to studying and categorizing the personal qualities of presidents. Barber divides presidents into categories according to two criteria: 1. According to the first criterion, attention is paid to how much energy the president "puts" in his work. Depending on how much time and energy the president devotes to his own work, presidents are classified as passive and active presidents. 2. According to the second criterion, attention is paid to how satisfied the President is with his work. If the president is satisfied with his work, then he is considered a positive president, and if the president is not satisfied with his work, then he is regarded as a negative leader (Barber, 2009).

By combining the above two criteria, it is possible to categorize presidents into four different types:

1. Active-positive (Truman, Carter, Kennedy, Clinton).
2. Active-negative (Johnson, Nixon, Hoover).
3. Passive-positive (Reagan, George Walker Bush).
4. Passive-negative (Eisenhower, Coolidge) (Hastedt, 2005).

Active-positive leaders do not spare energy in the implementation of presidential activities, and get a lot of pleasure from their work. Active-positive presidents are always ready to act. They are highly optimistic, result-oriented, productive and they are always ready to face new challenges. Active-negative leaders like Johnson and Nixon, for example, are compulsive individuals who aspire to gain power in exchange for compensating for their low self-esteem. Active-negative leaders try to dominate others and gain a dominant position in society and find it difficult to control their aggressive feelings (Ahlers, 1980). After spending lots of energy and efforts they find it hard to get satisfaction from the implemented work. They see power as a means of self-realization. Passive-positive leaders are individuals who seek "warmth" as a reward for their positive behavior. Passive-positive leaders do not fully exercise the powers of the president, but get satisfaction from their work. Unlike active-positive presidents, passive-positive leaders are not fully committed to their duties, although they are not dissatisfied with their position and like to implement their presidential activities. Passive-negative leaders like Eisenhower, for example, get little satisfaction from their work and rarely use their presidential powers. They are in politics only because others wanted them to become a president and come to power, so passive-negative presidents are obligated before them and do their job in order to fulfill their duties. They are people with low self-esteem and often have a feeling of helplessness, inadequacy and worthlessness when carrying out their activities. They do not enjoy politics and playing political games (Ahlers, 1980).

Barber believes that the typology of presidents developed by him can be used to evaluate the activities of different presidents and to predict their future actions (Qualls, 1977). According to Barber, an active-positive president fits in well with the modern political system. He also came to the conclusion that each type of president analyzed above shapes US foreign policy in its own way and has a major impact on the country's foreign policy course. Barber preferred an active-positive president because he believed that such a president was more flexible and made more rational decisions when developing a foreign policy course. However, Barber also focused on the shortcomings of an active-positive president. Such a president often loses his sense of moderation and does not shy away from taking on unnecessary burdens; He often tries to deal with a lot of problems simultaneously, and then experiences frustration when he is unable to solve them (Hastedt, 2005).

According to Barber, the main threat posed by active-negative presidents is their stubbornness to adhere to catastrophic foreign policy and not to deviate from the chosen political course. An example is the actions of Lyndon Johnson in Vietnam. His rigid foreign policy course further intensified the war in Vietnam, which ultimately damaged his reputation. According to Barber, George Walker Bush belongs to the category of passive-positive leader. Such a president is characterized by delegating authority to others, concentrating only on those issues that interests him, giving preference to binary black-and-white thinking, which allows him to make decisions without an in-depth study of the issue. We can take as an example Bush's decision to start a war in Afghanistan and Iraq, which, according to Bob Woodward, was taken very hastily (Hastedt, 2005).

Marguerite Herman devoted a great deal of time and energy to studying leadership style (Hermann,1984). She divided leaders into two categories: Goal-oriented leader and context-oriented leader. A Goal -oriented leader is focused on problem solving, i.e. such a leader has a specific task that he or she is trying to achieve at all costs. Such leaders never change their position or ideology. A Goal -oriented leader selects employees on the basis of loyalty and similarity of outlook. Goal-oriented leaders are less likely to require broad international or domestic coalitions before they take an action or carry out a political course. For example, President Bush decided to invade Iraq in 2003, even though he did not get permission from the United Nations. The UN did not support this mission. Congress and the American people were dissatisfied and did not want to start a war with Iraq. But despite the lack of support from the American people and Congress, Bush still made the decision to start a war (Mintz and DeRouen, 2010).

On the other side of the spectrum are leaders who are more cautious and adaptable according to the context of a current situation. Such leaders consult with others before making important decisions and act cautiously after much deliberation and discussion. Before making a decision, they adapt their behavior to fit particular situations and take into account other people's thoughts.

The main difference between these two types of leadership is the extent to which they are subject to political constraints. Goal-oriented leaders are not subject to political constraints, while context-oriented leaders obey the rules established in politics and try to protect them as much as possible. The attitude of the leader towards the political context in the decision-making process is of great importance, because from this we can conclude how much the political context limits the leader in the decision-making process. Goal-oriented leaders start wars more often than context-oriented ones. Marguerite Herman singles out the factors by which we can guess whether a leader will be more goal-oriented or context-oriented: (1) whether the leader accepts political constraints, (2) the leader's willingness to accept new information, and (3) whether the leader is problem-focused or relationship- focused (Mintz and DeRouen, 2010).

Leaders react differently to political constraints. Democratic leaders are more structurally constrained by legislatures than leaders inclined towards authoritarianism (Hermann, 1984). In democracies, there are a set of institutions (legislation, public opinion, opposition parties, the press, the media) that limit the power of the leader and force him or her to work within the confines of constraints. Authoritarian leaders dislike such political constraints and want to accumulate as much power as possible in their hands (Hermann, 1977)

A willingness to accept new information is also important at the individual level. Goal-oriented leaders take less information into account when making new decisions than context-oriented leaders. Goal-oriented leaders are more prone to group thinking and cognitive consistency than context-oriented leaders. Goal-oriented leaders purposefully filter information and gather information that supports their arguments (Mintz and DeRouen, 2010). We can take as an example George W. Bush and members of his administration who supported US intervention in Iraq and therefore, ignored UN resolutions and gathered information selectively in order to strengthen their argument that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction and posed a threat to international peace and stability.

## CONCLUSION

We do not need to have personal contact with a leader in order to assess his personal qualities, psychological characteristics and leadership style. It is quite possible to obtain information about the leader's personal characteristics by analyzing his or her speeches and conversations, as well as his or her actions. Personality Assessment-at-a-Distance helps us to gather information about leader's personality by using transcripts of the spontaneous interviews. However, certain rules have to be followed when using this method. We have to take into account the fact that leaders, because of the lack of time often do not write their speeches. High-ranking leaders often make speeches which are written by others. Therefore, priority has to be given to the analysis of spontaneous interviews. When an interview is conducted spontaneously, the leaders cannot appeal to others for help and have to express their own opinions. Therefore, spontaneous interviews are more useful in assessing leader's personal characteristics.

There are many different ways to classify leaders according to their personal qualities. Famous American political scientist, James David Barber devised a system of classification of leaders according to two criteria: 1. How much energy a president puts in his work and 2. How much satisfaction he gets from his work. These criteria allow us to analyze the personalities of various politicians and evaluate how effective they are in fulfilling their political activities. Personal qualities of a leader determine his leadership style.

Margaret Herman distinguished two types of leaders: Goal-oriented leaders and context-oriented leaders. She also described negative and positive sides of these leaders and identified factors that can help us to find out if a leader is goal-oriented or context-oriented.

The above-mentioned methods and classifications can be very useful in assessing the personal qualities of various politicians and can help us to evaluate leaders successfully.

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