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*We Were Taken on the Ride*¹. Leadership Traits Analysis in the Circumstances of International Crisis – the Decision of Aleksander Kwaśniewski in the Context of Intervention in Iraq

Abstract: The present paper examines the impact of personal characteristics of head of state on the foreign policy behaviour. The article is based on the assumption that during a crisis or war, compared to peaceful times, leaders are under a greater influence of their personal traits and cognitive determinants, including their biases and beliefs. The chosen method is the LTA coding system, as it allows obtaining measurable results showing which traits of the leaders are meaningful and how they determine leaders' actions in different situations (crisis and lack thereof). The aim of this paper is to analyse the personality-based decision-making determinants in foreign policy in the context of an international conflict based on the example of Aleksander Kwaśniewski's presidency (1995–2005). The analysis focuses on the president's decisions and their psychological background during over a year long period preceding the invasion of Iraq by the coalition forces (March, 2003) and his statements made between 1995 and 2001 with the objective of identifying potential differences in leadership style of an individual decision-maker in two different situations, one of which meets the definition of an international crisis. The research proves that in the conditions of a crisis, the president trends a higher belief to be able to control events, reduced conceptual complexity, and enhanced the need for power. Using available evidence on Polish decision-making, the paper shows how Kwaśniewski's personality and leadership style did indeed shape both the process and outcome of foreign policy toward the Iraq War. It allows identifying his leadership style in the period preceding the invasion of Iraq that started in March 2003.²

Keywords: foreign policy analysis, leadership traits analysis, leadership profiling, Profiler+

¹ Aleksander Kwaśniewski's reply to a question of an Australian journalist regarding the intervention of the coalition forces in Iraq (transcript 19/03/2004).

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Introduction

The paper aims to analyse the personality-based decision-making determinants in foreign policy in the context of an international conflict based on the example of Aleksander Kwaśniewski's presidency (1995–2005). The analysis focuses on the president's decisions and their psychological background during over a year-long period preceding the invasion of Iraq by the coalition forces (March, 2003) in comparison with the non-crisis time including the first six years of a presidential ship (1995 – August 2001).

The decision of Polish elites to support the United States and the engagement of Poland in the Iraq War is the subject of several studies (Lubecki, 2005; Doerer, 2013), but none of them discusses the psychological traits of the leaders involved in the decision-making process in this context. Hence the attempt to fill the gap in the foreign policy research on the level of a single decision-maker in an international conflict situation. The paper goes in line with the recently developing trend of analysis of traits of leaders involved in foreign policy decision-making processes who are not from western democracies (Çuhadar, Kaarbo, Kesgin, Özkeçeci-Taner, 2017; Rivas, Tarin, 2017; Brummer, 2020, p. 703).

The choice of Aleksander Kwaśniewski is due to several reasons. Firstly, the system of beliefs, motivations, and personality traits of a leader of a country the system of which meets the definition of a young democracy (Elgie, 2012). Therefore, an attempt to examine the psycho-cognitive determinants of an individual decision-maker – the head of a post-communist Central and Eastern European state during a crisis, which have not been studied, was made. Until recently, the research on personality traits of individual decision-makers has been dominated by the leaders of the so-called WEIRD (western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic) states, for example British prime ministers in different situations (Keller, Foster, 2012; Barber, 1972). Research on them also referred to the Iraq crisis, analysing traits of Prime Minister Tony Blair (Dyson, 2006), as well as President George W. Bush and the members of his administration³ (Keller, Shannon, 2007; Dyson, 2006).

Secondly, Kwaśniewski's leadership was related not only to becoming the head of the state, but also to his previous experiences of co-founding a social democratic party and leading it from its very beginning. He had considerable influence on decisions concerning domestic and foreign policy, which corresponds to one of the definitions, according to which "leadership entails having political ideas and projects for home or foreign affairs, having the passion of

³ These individuals are: President George W. Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State Colin Powell, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz.

power, having succeeded in creating or renewing a political party as a result of struggles within the party, having a discourse which is more or less technocratic or managerial, more or less populist, in order to mobilize voters to support them and their party” (Blondel, Thiébault, 2010, p. 32). Moreover, as president, Aleksander Kwaśniewski engaged in foreign policy, among others in the efforts to include Poland in the actions of the anti-terrorist coalition, as well as support of the USA administration actions aiming at military intervention. His contribution to the decision can be considered significant, as he took part in the talks and meetings with President George W. Bush and the U.S. administration representatives that led to the involvement of Poland in the actions in Iraq.

The analysis of the decision-making process in foreign policy on the level of an individual is a research field the interest in which seems not to fade (Hermann, Hagan, 1998; Kaarbo, 2015; Smith, 2019; Walker, Schafer, 2021). The reasons behind its development can be attributed to the foreign policy scholars’ conviction about the importance of domestic determinants (Kaarbo, 2017a). The key argument in favour of in-depth studies on decision-making in foreign policy on the level of a single decision-maker is the exploration of causal relationships between the leaders’ decisions and their personal characteristics or cognitive factors: beliefs, biases, and perceptions (Hudson, 2014, p. 38). The studies on individual in foreign policy have evolved across time, but they focus on an individual decision-maker – a leader (Hermann, Kaarbo, 2020, p. 72; Pugacewicz, 2017, p. 118; Kaarbo, 2017a, p. 21; Smith, 2019, p. 47; Lantis, Beasley, 2017, p. 35), whose personality traits affect their decisions in foreign policy. The present empirical study locates itself within studies of individual decision-makers in the Foreign Policy Analysis framework (Hudson, 2014, p. 34).

Moreover, the circumstances, fulfilling the prerequisites of a crisis situation, were considered. The situational context can be considered as a separate area in the reflection on the meaning of an individual leader in foreign policy processes, as well as on the level of team decision-making (Dougherty, Pfaltzgraff, 2001; Pugacewicz, 2017, p. 118 et seq.). Ascribing agency in carrying out tasks in foreign policy to an individual corresponds to a supposition considering foreign policy studies an actor-specific theory the core of which is treating human decision-makers as autonomous influencers of foreign policy decisions not unitary and rational actors invisible within the billiard ball of the state (Hudson, 2005).

The article is based on the assumption present among FPA scholars that during a crisis or war, compared to peaceful times, leaders are under a greater influence of their personal traits and cognitive determinants, including their biases and beliefs (Holsti, 1977 p. 30; Suedfeld, Tetlock, 1977; Hermann, 1980a; 1980b; 1984; Hermann, Hermann, 1989; Hermann, Preston, 1994; Kaarbo, Hermann, 1998; Hermann, Kaarbo, 2020). An attempt to verify the following hypotheses has been made in the paper. First, individual personality traits of the president of Poland had an impact on his decision to support the actions of the USA the

final result of which was the participation of the Polish contingent in the intervention in Iraq that started in March 2003. Second, the president's belief in his ability to control the events and his need of power played a crucial role in the decisions he made. With reference to the research on leadership style (Hermann, 2005a; Hermann, Hermann, 1989; Kaarbo, Hermann, 1998; Kaarbo, 2017a), one can point out that for leaders, the consequence of a strong belief in one's ability to control the events and high need for power was opposing potential limitations and pushing out boundaries of what is possible. From the perspective of the present paper, it boiled down to personal involvement in activities burdened with, for example, lack of international legitimisation for starting a military operation.

Third, leader's traits, beliefs, and motivations defining their leadership style may change depending on the environment, including a situation of an international crisis. Leaders who are sensitive to the situational context tend to show fluctuations of values of traits defining their leadership style. The hypothesis has been formulated based on existing research on the subject (Renshon, 2008; Walker, Schafer 2021; Hermann, 1980a). Analysing potential change of traits of a given leader corresponds to the postulate found in the subject literature to develop the Leadership Traits Analysis (LTA) approach using research strategy based on comparative study or focusing the research on one leader, but with reference to different periods of his activity (Kaarbo, Hermann, 1998; Hermann, Kaarbo, 2020).

The article consists of three parts. The first part discusses the psychological and cognitive approach in Foreign Policy Analysis, as well as selected methods, tools, and techniques pertaining to it. The second part lays out the specificity of the political and international circumstances of Aleksander Kwaśniewski's presidency and his direct involvement and support for George W. Bush's policy. The aim of this part of the article is to explain the circumstances, which fulfil the prerequisites of a crisis situation, in which Aleksander Kwaśniewski made his decisions. In the third part, using the Profiler+ software, Aleksander Kwaśniewski's leadership traits in the period preceding the intervention in Iraq were analysed, providing values of particular traits. Then, by juxtaposing the values of particular traits, an attempt of providing Aleksander Kwaśniewski's leadership profile was made. To verify the hypothesis that personality traits of a leader are subject to change, their values were generated based on his statements made between 1995 and 2001 with the objective of identifying potential differences in the leadership style of an individual decision-maker in two different situations, one of which meets the definition of an international crisis. In the conclusion, the verification of the formulated hypotheses is discussed.

1. Psychological and cognitive approach in FPA

The area of research on individuals in foreign policy decision-making includes approaches concerned with how people attend to, process, store, and recall information (Simon, 1985, p. 295). Analyses in this field are often based on the theory of bounded rationality (Mintz, Geva, 1997), as also suggested by Simon (1985) while recognising personality determinants (Johnson, 1977), individual traits (Hermann, 1980a), decision-makers' perceptions and ideas (Jervis, 1976) as crucial in the process of decision-making in foreign policy.

The psychological and cognitive approach can be derived from the development of leadership studies (Laswell, 1929). The works of Margaret and Harold Sprout (1956), as well as the proposals of scholars focusing on cognitive determinants in which decision-makers' cognitive systems were to play a key role contributed significantly to the establishment of this approach in FPA. Cognitive and personality determinants were also taken into consideration in studies of the group-level and bureaucratic process (Bruck, Snyder, Sapin, 1962; Allison, 1969), as the authors point out that leaders' personality traits, motivations, and beliefs may affect the decisions made in organisational structures. The psychological and cognitive approaches form a research programme seeking answers to the following questions: 1) what attributes of leaders' personality, perception, beliefs, and motivations affect individual and group decisions; 2) how does the leader process information (leaders' cognitive abilities are emphasised); 3) under what circumstances do leaders tend to make decisions based on their personality.

According to Brulé, Mintz, DeRouen (2014) development of research on personality approach in FPA has evolved into two research agendas. The first explores the impact of leadership styles on foreign policy decision-making (e.g. Hermann, 2001). This approach argues that leadership style influences decisions via delegation-management arrangements. Leaders who tend to delegate and take the advice seriously can be expected to have less of an impact on the decision than "micro-managers". Contemporary research on individual unit conceptualizes leadership as interaction between what the leader is like and the nature of the context. The second research agenda is the operational code approach implemented to foreign policy studies by Alexander George and reconfigured several times later on (Walker, 1990; Holsti, 1977; Levy, 1994; Tetlock, 1991; Walker, Schafer, 2021). The pillar of the operational code of a political decision-maker are their philosophical beliefs that may be determined by answering five questions on the nature of politics. The code also includes instrumental beliefs the content of which can be determined the same way as in the case of philosophical beliefs – through questions, but this time concerning forms and ways of carrying out said philosophical beliefs (George, 1969; Holsti, 1977). The present paper assumes that operational code analysis is a classic approach to foreign policy

and international relations within the general cognitivist research program in world politics.

In the general understanding, the psychological approach to the study of political executives examines executives as individuals and leaders, observing their subjective interpretations of their political environments and exploring how these interpretations are influenced by their personal characteristics and experiences and can shape government policy-making and executive action (Hermann, Kaarbo, 2020). Margaret Hermann's proposition (Hermann, 1980b, pp. 7–46; 1998, pp. 293–298) that, combining the tools proper for political leadership theory, explains decision-makers' actions in foreign policy using the Leadership Traits Analysis (LTA), falls within the framework of this approach.

LTA falls within at-a-distance assessment and research objective. It means that analysis is conducted without direct contact between its subject and the researcher and does not focus on selected aspects of anomalies in human behaviours, unlike psychobiography (Barber, 1972 Post, 2005; Greenstein, 2000, chapter 3).

This complex and multi-factorial approach allows determining the beliefs and traits of a leader, providing a bigger picture than approaches focusing on a single trait or beliefs (Kaarbo, 2018, p. 5). LTA focuses on a leader's individual personality traits in order to draw inferences about their leadership style (Hermann, 2005a, p. 183). The goal of the approach is to identify traits that differentiate political leaders from one another in kind or degree. These traits include (1) the belief that one can influence or control what happens, (2) the need for power and influence, (3) conceptual complexity (the ability to differentiate things and people in one's environment), (4) self-confidence, (5) task focus – the tendency to focus on problem-solving and accomplishing something versus maintenance of the group and dealing with others' ideas and sensitivities, (6) general distrust or suspiciousness of others, and (7) the intensity with which a person holds an in-group bias (Hermann, 2005a, p. 184).

With reference to the short characteristic of traits, one can point out that the belief in one's ability to control events (BASE) measures an individual leader's perception of the degree of control they believe they have over the situations they deal with. Leaders with a high level of this trait tend to be more interested in foreign policy and increased activity levels in the decision-making process. Moreover, they do not delegate power to other entities, show initiative and do not wait passively for others to decide. On the other hand, leaders with low BASE levels are typically reactive, as they are likely to "wait and see" before taking action. Leaders with low BASE levels also tend to blame others for mistakes and failures and delegate power to others.

Need for power (PWR), simply put, indicates a concern for establishing, maintaining, or restoring one's power or, in other words, the desire to control, influence, or have an impact on other persons or groups. Relations observed in

research processes show that leaders with high need for power are less involved in multilateral or interdependent activities (Hermann, 1980a)⁴, while leaders with high distrust levels had a tendency to more aggressive foreign policy behaviours (Keller, Foster, 2012, p. 218).

Conceptual complexity (CC) assesses an individual's ability to approach other people, places, policies, or ideas, etc. from multiple perspectives. According to Margaret Hermann, "Political leaders who are high in conceptual complexity attend to a wider array of stimuli from their environment than do those who are low. Indeed, they have a sense that issues are more gray than black or white and seek a variety of perspectives through which to organize the situation in which they find themselves. These leaders remain highly attuned to contextual information since they do not necessarily trust their first response to an event" (Hermann, 2005a).

Self-confidence (SC) refers to the sense of self-importance, an individual's image of his or her ability "to cope adequately with objects and persons in the environment" (Hermann, 2005a, p. 194). The leaders with high self-confidence score are more immune to incoming from the environment than those with low self-confidence. They are more generally satisfied with who they are and are not searching for more material on which to evaluate themselves and their behaviour.

Task focus (TASK) illustrates that leaders have been recognized as performing two distinct functions in groups, that of moving the group toward completion of a task (solving problems) and that of maintaining group spirit and morale (building relationships). For leaders who emphasize the problem, moving the group (nation, government, ethnic group, religious group, union, etc.) forward toward a goal is their principal purpose for assuming leadership. For leaders focused on maintaining the group and forming relationships, the main functions of leadership are maintaining voters' loyalty and high morale. To explain this trait, one may use the notion of a continuum with one extreme representing an emphasis on getting the task done and the other extreme an emphasis on group maintenance (Hermann, 2005a, p. 197). Analyses conducted so far show that charismatic leaders are usually in the middle of the continuum, which means they sensed on which function to focus at a given moment (Hermann, Kogan, 1968). The below table presents an overview illustrating the rules of assessment of a given leadership trait.

⁴ Leaders who were high in their need for power, for example, were less likely to engage in multilateral or interdependent behaviours.

Table 1. Rules for assessing motivation for seeking office

Score on Task	Focus Motivation for Seeking Office
High	Problem
Medium	Both Problem and Relationship (depend on the context)
Low	Relationship

Source: Quoted after Hermann, 2005a, p. 197.

Distrust or suspiciousness (DIS) of others shows the way motivations and actions of other subjects are perceived. Highly distrusting leaders are likely to be suspicious towards those who compete for the same position or base their stance on a different ideology. They also tend to seek hidden motivations in other people's behaviour. They prefer acting independently and do not want to rely on others when making decisions. On the other hand, "leaders with low DIS scores, on the other hand, are capable of evaluating things based on their past experiences with the people they are dealing with and the nature of circumstances" (Hermann, 2005a, p. 194).

The last trait, namely the in-group bias (IGB) assesses the individual's view of the centrality of their own group (social, political, ethnic, etc.) to the world or, in other words, is a view of the world in which one's own group (social, political, ethnic, etc.) holds centre stage (Hermann, 2005a, p. 195). Leaders high in in-group bias are strongly emotionally attached to their in-groups, consider them superior and emphasise the importance of maintaining in-group culture and status. They become very protective of their in-group and consider other groups enemies, whereas leaders low in in-group bias tend not to have such a polarised perception of the world.

Enumerating and describing the traits alone does not allow to determine the leadership style, which may be defined as "the ways in which leaders relate to those around them – whether constituents, advisers, or other leaders – and how they structure interactions and the norms, rules and principles they use to guide such interactions" (Hermann, 2005a). In order to do this, one should compare particular traits in the way that allows answering the following questions:

Does Leader Respect or Challenge Constraints?

Is Leader Open or Closed to Contextual Information?

Is Leader Motivated by Problems or Relationships?

Hermann's differentiation taking into account the dynamics of two traits of individual leaders, namely the need for power and belief in being able to control the events are crucial to establish leader's reaction to constraints. Leaders who are high in these two traits are skilful in both direct and indirect influence; they know what they want and take charge to see it happen. On the other hand,

low scores of these two values may be indicative of high importance of compromise and consensus building (Hermann, 2005a). High belief in control events score combined with a low need for power score indicates that a given leader may challenge constraints, but be less successful in doing so, because they use power too openly and directly. They may also find it more difficult to manipulate people and set behind the scenes to get what they want. The opposite combination also means that a given leader may challenge constraints, but they are more comfortable doing so indirectly, as they are good at being “power behind the throne”. In other words, knowledge about the degree to which leaders believe that they can influence what happens and their need for power suggests whether they will challenge or respect the constraints that they perceive in any setting in which they find themselves.

Leader’s degree of openness to contextual information based on their levels of self-confidence and conceptual complexity helps us determine how open they will be to information (Hermann, 1984; Snyder, 1987; Hermann, Hermann, 1989; Tetlock, 1991). However, the importance of conceptual complexity is worth emphasising. Higher complexity is associated with a desire to learn as much as possible on a given subject before making a decision, and a desire to monitor the environment carefully to see how the initial decision affected it. Lower complexity is linked with basing one’s decisions upon limited information, and the possibility of a failure to perceive or consider the feedback should the results be negative. The diagram below shows the relation between the two traits and the leader’s openness or closeness to information.

Table 2. Interrelation of leader's traits

Scores on Conceptual Complexity & Self-Confidence	Openness to Contextual Information
Conceptual Complexity > Self-Confidence	open
Self-Confidence > Conceptual Complexity	closed
Conceptual Complexity Self-Confidence (both high)	open
Conceptual Complexity Self-Confidence (both low)	closed

Source: Quoted after Hermann, 2005a, p. 192.

The indication of the motivations of leaders' actions results from the findings on the reasons behind a given leader's decision to run for office and their need to preserve and secure the group they are leading (and, in turn, their position), as well as how said leader perceives their position in the group and their level of distrust. Thus, three traits used to measure two types of motivation are the following: task focus, in-group bias, and distrust of others. While task focus directly determines the motivations of leaders when it comes to motivation for seeking the office, motivation toward the world (expressing leaders' perception of political reality) requires comparing the remaining two traits. Leaders with low levels of in-group bias and distrust of others do not perceive the world as a threatening place, but rather focus on making use of the possibilities it offers and building relationships. On the contrary, leaders with high values of these traits seek to confront their opponents who represent a different moral imperative. In this case, leaders show the tendency to act aggressively. Low in-group bias combined with high distrust of others favours taking advantage of opportunities and building relationships while remaining vigilant. A reverse combination means that the political reality is considered a zero-sum game and supports focusing on threats and problems instead of seeking opportunities.

The juxtapositions resulting from the analyses allow answering the posed questions and thus determine the leadership style out of the eight proposed by Margaret Hermann: expansionistic, evangelistic, incremental, charismatic, consultative, reactive, and accommodative. Without going into details about them here, it is worth emphasising that each of them is a function of three variables: responsiveness of constraints, openness to information, and motivation.

LTA is based on The Profiler+ software used currently for this purpose allows shortening research procedures/operationalisation. Verbs coded in the software allow quickly obtaining the values of particular traits, and constructing the leadership style (Levine, Young, 2014). Material selection requires the researcher to be careful in order to eliminate errors due to ghost writing or variation of contents depending on the target audience (e.g. domestic and foreign audience). It is recommended to collect in particular materials containing spontaneous statements, for example from interviews (Hermann, 2005a; Kaarbo, Hermann, 1998), while edited or incomplete statements cited in the media only in part should be avoided. Moreover, the importance of faithful translation to the language the Profiler+ (or researcher) uses is emphasised (Brummer, Young, Özdamar, 2020).

2. Situational context of decisions of the head of state regarding the involvement of Poland in the Iraq War

Crisis in international relations and foreign policy may be analysed from different perspectives (Stern, 2005). It corresponds to Charles Hermann's proposition (Hermann, 1969, p. 360) to distinguish three levels of crisis situation analysis: systemic, actor confrontation, and decision-making approaches. In *systemic crisis studies*, the focus is on the stability of the international order. In this context, international crisis can be defined as "a set of rapidly unfolding events which raises the impact of destabilizing forces in the general system or any of its subsystems substantially above 'normal' levels and increases the likelihood of violence occurring in the system" (Young, 1967, p. 10). Actor-confrontation studies examine two or more actors engaged in conflictual communication and crisis bargaining (Snyder, Diesing, 1977; George, 1969), while research on decision-making during crisis focuses on the predicament (and determinants) of those acting in the name of the state in a critical situation. A decision-making crisis equals a situation, deriving from a change in the external or internal environment of a collectivity, characterized by three necessary and sufficient perceptions on the part of the responsible decision-makers: 1. A threat to basic values; 2. Urgency; 3. Uncertainty (Hermann, Brady, 1972, pp. 3–6; Boin, Hart, Stern, Sundelius, 2005 p. 72). Here, urgency does not refer to short, time-limited situations, but rather to situations perceived by the leaders in terms of emergency. A threat to basic values may refer to a threat to certain norms, risk of losing tangible or political goods or even a type of resources (Stern, 2005, p. 188). Uncertainty is related with lack of access to information on one hand and selective absorbing of information on the other. In the last perspective, also psychological traits of the decision-makers, including how they determine their decisions, can be studied.

Considering the above typology of crises, the definitions of crisis in international relations and in the decision-making process in foreign policy, it is worth presenting the context of Poland's support for the United States, first in the war against terrorism and actions taken against Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, and second, in the actions taken on the international arena leading to the military intervention in Iraq, ending with the coalition forces entering Iraq on 20 March 2003. It is assumed that the situation fulfils the prerequisites of a crisis situation. The Iraq crisis (2002–2003) that eventually ended with a military intervention forced through by the United States affected also decisive crises in foreign policy of the US as well as other countries, including Poland. Thus, the situation in which Polish decision-makers, in particular the president, made the decision to support the intervention in Iraq and to send the Polish contingent there fulfils the prerequisites of a crisis in the decision-making process in foreign policy.

3. Case study – Aleksander Kwaśniewski's LTA in the context of the decision to enter the Iraq War based on the Profiler+ software analysis

3.1. Data and method

For hypotheses verification in the article, automated at-a-distance content analysis was used. The chosen method was the LTA coding system, as it allows obtaining measurable results showing which traits of the leaders are meaningful and how they determine leader's actions in different situations (crisis and lack thereof).

In the present study, different types of statements by Aleksander Kwaśniewski were analysed. To measure his traits (psychological indicators), I collected and analysed his responses to journalists' questions, public speeches, media interviews focused upon foreign policy available through websites, transcripts of interviews and appearances in the international forum. The statements are taken from various sources, which means differences due to different target audiences (public audience, politicians, journalists) could not have been eliminated (Schaffer, Walker, 2006; Hermann, 2005a). The postulate has not been fulfilled due to a limited amount of data from a single source, so otherwise conducting the research would not be possible. However, in relation to many types of material, some statements are quite spontaneous, reducing the risk of thoroughly prepared (and thus impression managed) answers, composed by an aide or speechwriter. However, his official statements given in English, prepared in advance (e.g. lecture at the University of Washington, speeches during official visits or at international organisations) bear this risk. In the context of obtaining the source material, it is worth pointing out that in some interviews, some questions remained unanswered or, during Kwaśniewski's visit in Washington in 2003, only the president of the United States answered the question about the "legality of actions of the coalition forces". The statements (declarations, interviews, and letters) were divided into two sets. The first set, crucial for the present article, is from an over a year-long period between 2002 and 2003 (the beginning of the Iraq War). It allows analysing Kwaśniewski's statements in accordance with the discussed traits of a leader in a crisis situation. The second set consists of statements made by the president between 1995 and 2001 (August, 2001⁵). The result of this president's output is that the profile of Kwaśniewski's personality which forms the basis for this study rests upon 15,000 p words spoken by the president. Fastly more than the 5,000 words suggested minimum. However, to date, the LTA coding

⁵ Statements concerning the 9/11 attacks were not taken into consideration, as the situation related with them was an international crisis.

scheme contained in Profiler Plus can only analyse data, in the form of leaders’ verbal statements, that exist in English, Turkish and Spanish. Hence, 24 presidents’ statements required translation from Polish to English, that undertaken by the native speaker. Only a few responses were formulated in English (7).

3.2. President Kwaśniewski personality

LTA results generated using the Profiler+ software are presented in the table illustrating traits of the head of state in comparison with traits of 51 political leaders (Young, quoted after Dyson, 2006). This comparison allows examining the traits with regards to mean values generated for the group of leaders, so that particular traits can be assessed for an individual decision-maker. The indicators value is between 0 and 1.

Table 3. Aleksander Kwaśniewski personality and one comparison group

Individual Characteristic	51 Political Leaders	Standard Deviation	Aleksander Kwaśniewski Iraq crisis
Belief in ability to control events	0.35	0.04	0.43 (high)
Conceptual complexity	0.57	0.04	0.52 (low)
Distrust of others	0.12	0.04	0.12 (average)
In-group bias	0.09	0.02	0.11 (average)
Need for power	0.24	0.03	0.34 (high)
Self-confidence	0.41	0.08	0.44 (average)
Task orientation	0.63	0.06	0.60 (average)

Source: Data on 51 world political leaders provided by Young (quoted after Dyson, 2006), and research on Aleksander Kwaśniewski LTA 17/06/2021.

Analysing the values, one can indicate that in a crisis situation, the level of Aleksander Kwaśniewski’s belief in ability in control events was high. Therefore, a proactive policy would be expected from Kwaśniewski. His involvement in the process of carrying out foreign policy showed largely in his direct participation in meetings with the president of the United States, representatives of the US administration, as well as with the remaining supporters of Bush’s policy. His diplomatic activity and engagement can be a proof of his tendency to make decisions independently and unwillingness to delegate tasks to other entities.

The value of conceptual complexity, which indicates the degree of differentiation an individual shows in describing the environment within which they operate: people, places, actors, and things (Hermann, 1980a, p. 21), can be considered low. Leaders who are lower in this trait operate with a more black and white view of events and actors, are comfortable with relatively straightforward binary classification schemes (i.e. “good and evil”, “them and us”), and make decisions based on a more restricted calculus of significant factors. The president’s statements concerning the participation of Poland in the alliance and perception of threats confirm this.

We strongly oppose all forms of terrorism; we see no justification for such actions. We are aware that terrorism claimed many victims and today, we expressed our bond with the families of these victims. We expressed our condolences both for the victims of the recent attacks in the United States and for all those who died anywhere in the world as a result of terrorist actions. We are convinced that the fight against terrorism must be of strong and definite nature, it must take proper forms of military activity (Kwaśniewski, 2001).

Distrust in others or, in other words, wariness about others or the degree of the leader’s inclination to suspect the motives and actions of others in case of Aleksander Kwaśniewski was within the average. It may indicate a tendency to withdraw from competing with potential rivals, but also to make decisions independently, without considering the opinion of others.

In-group bias is the tendency for humans to be more helpful and positive towards members of their own group. Aleksander Kwaśniewski’s level of in-group bias can be classified as high, which may indicate a propensity to “protect the allies” and seeing reality in “us vs. them” categories.

Finally, high the need for power and influence indicator is worth noticing. As mentioned above, it is the crucial indicator for leaders’ behaviours in terms of setting boundaries and overcoming limitations. For Aleksander Kwaśniewski, the value of this indicator is 0.34, so his need of power is high. According to Preston, the need for power is a central determinant of decision-making processes, in particular shaping the nexus between leaders and advisory groups, which means that leaders with high levels of this trait tend to concentrate debate and decision within tight “inner circles” of advisers who do not necessarily occupy positions of formal authority, but are of like mind and personally dependent upon the leader (Preston, 2001). This may also confirm the president’s tendency to surround himself with advisers and not allowing people outside this close circle to be included in the decision-making process observed in the period preceding the intervention in Iraq. The fact that Kwaśniewski did not take into consideration the opinions of members of academia and politicians not related with him directly or even decisions of international bodies when making the decision that Poland should engage in the Iraq War may corroborate that. Moreover, high

need of power is also proven by personal and emotional engagement of the president in making this decision, as well as excluding authorised entities that took a different stance of the matter from the decision-making process. It seems that not only crisis prompted Kwaśniewski to modify his language. The endorsement of Polish political elites for the direction of foreign policy might be a crucial factor that motivated Kwaśniewski's higher belief to be able to control events.

Self-confidence is the leader's sense of self-importance. In the case of Aleksander Kwaśniewski, the level of this trait is average, exceeding the average score for the 51 leaders. The fact that it was his second term could have affected it significantly. His experience and skills he had gained determined his a little bit higher than average sense of self-importance, which was reflected by the fact that his decision was determined by personal indicators.

The last value refers to task orientation. Compared with the remaining traits, it is the lowest, even though still within the average, which may suggest that the president tended to adjust his actions to situational context.

When juxtaposing the generated values of particular traits of Aleksander Kwaśniewski, it is easy to notice that the value of the need for power is close to the value of the belief of ability to control events. Both values determine leader's reaction to constraints, which in both cases suggest that this particular leader challenges constraints, is skilful in both direct and indirect influence; knows what he wants and takes charge to see it happen (Hermann, 2005a, p. 201). Moreover, leaders who are predisposed to challenge constraints are more intent on meeting a situation head-on, achieving quick resolution to an issue, being decisive, and dealing forcefully with the problem of the moment (Hermann, 1984; Tetlock, 1991). Comparing CC and SC is meant to determine leader's openness to information. Assuming predominance of self-confidence over conceptual complexity, in accordance with the adopted Hermann's model, Kwaśniewski's attitude was considered "closed" to information. Thus, low complexity can prove making decisions based upon limited information, and the possibility of a failure to perceive, or a propensity to discount, information which is indicative of a failing course of action.

Leaders' motivations are determined by three traits. TASK has been characterised above, but for *Motivation toward World*, distrust of others, and in-group bias have to be compared. Kwaśniewski's level was close to the average value, which could determine his moderate tendency to engage in activities that may be considered confrontational, but it did not stop him from joining an ally, giving moral obligation to fight the evil (enemy) a reason.

LTA is an approach in which relative stability of traits is indicated (Hermann, 2005a). The specificity of crisis situation seems crucial for value fluctuation, as shown in the table below that presents the values assigned by the software to particular traits of Kwaśniewski during the Iraq crisis and in a normal situation.

Table 4. President Kwaśniewski's traits in two types of situation

	Iraq crisis	“Normal situation”
Belief in ability to control events	0.43 (high)	0.33 (average)
Conceptual complexity	0.52 (low)	0.7 (high)
Distrust of others	0.12 (average)	0.07 (low)
In-group bias	0.11 (average)	0.09 (average)
Need for power	0.34 (high)	0.27 (average)
Self-confidence	0.44 (average)	0.39 (average)
Task orientation	0.60 (average)	0.53 (low)

Source: Data on Aleksander Kwaśniewski LTA 17/06/2021, 25/07/2021, 12/08/2021.

Thus, fluctuation of the indicators may depend on situational context and leader's access to information. In case of the Polish president, the ultimately confirmed information on the lack of bases to undertake an intervention (no proof of Saddam Hussein's collaboration with Al-Qaeda or the existence of weapons of mass destruction has been found) could have played a role.

Conclusion

Studying belief systems of political leaders allows, to some extent, identifying their psychological determinants and thus contribute to understanding and explaining their motivations in foreign policy decision-making process.

The present article is an attempt to determine leadership traits of Aleksander Kwaśniewski and his inclinations and orientations in regards to building alliances and playing the main role in shaping foreign policy of the state. It allowed identifying his leadership style in the period preceding the invasion of Iraq that started in March 2003.

Research results obtained in the process of operationalisation allowed positively verifying the hypotheses formulated in the introduction. Firstly, Aleksander Kwaśniewski's individual traits affected his decisions. The justification of this hypothesis seems to be the specificity of the situation, meeting the criteria of a crisis, that made him show a tendency, probably higher than under different circumstances, to base his decision on personal mechanisms, including beliefs and in particular personality traits that play the key role in leadership style. An additional implication for this tendency could be the so-called uncertainty of situation due to selective absorption of information. His statements made as soon as a year after the intervention in Iraq seem to indicate that the information on which the decision was made were incomplete: “We were convinced that

taking action in Iraq was necessary, the Washington administration misled us” (Kwaśniewski, 2004). It is worth mentioning that one day before the intervention, the president of Poland did not show any doubts in terms of neither its legal bases nor its merits.

Secondly, the analysis showed that Aleksander Kwaśniewski had a high need of power and high belief in ability to control events. It was also related with the challenge to constraints in his circumstances and to push the limits of what is possible. Kwaśniewski was highly engaged in the decision-making process in foreign policy, as evidenced by his decision of 17 March 2003 on incorporation of the Polish contingent into the coalition forces intervening in Iraq. Verification of the hypothesis on the possibility of changes in leader’s personality traits faced some difficulties. The attempt of analysis required consulting source material from different periods. The obtained results and their juxtaposition may indicate fluctuations of values determining the leadership style. However, the analysis of president’s statements of the reasons behind the intervention in Iraq do not give this certainty. His multiple mentions of lack of access to complete information (stated for the first time in March 2004) may indicate genuine lack of knowledge or be a way of purportedly diminishing his responsibility for the decision.

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