'Explosive' leadership styles

The relationship between the leadership styles of Obama and Trump and the risk-propensity in their decision-making behaviour regarding JCPOA-policy

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Date: 17 May, 2019
Bachelor: Politicologie
Specialisation: Internationale Betrekkingen en Organisaties
Word count: 8.304 words

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Introduction

This bachelor thesis addresses the research question: *to what extent does the leadership style of political leaders influence their risk-propensity in IR-policy?* This question is based on psychology-oriented research that challenges the liberalist and realist assumption of individual rationality in decision-making in relation to risk-propensity in IR-policy. Risk-taking propensities are considered valuable for political behaviour since loss aversion e.g. may lead to individuals being prepared to take risks to prevent losses and thus explain perseverance in worsening situations (Jervis, 1992, p.192). The liberalist and realist assumption of individual rationality in decision-making inclines that individuals at all times will act in ways to secure their goals which are motivated by self-interest (Marsh & Stoker, 2010, p.42). If self-interest is the key motive behind behaviour for all individuals, actors will make equal cost-benefit analyses when finding themselves in similar situations (Monroe & Maher, 1995). This would mean that behaviouralistic factors separating individuals from each other, e.g. personality traits, do not affect the decision-making process. The belief that individuals act the same way under similar conditions therefore forms the base for the assumption that states operate as unitary agents in international politics (Kaarbo, 2015, p.191; Pellikaan, 2019, p.1). The assumption that decision-making is solely affected by the behaviour of states within structures leads to the notion that policy-decisions in IR should only be analysed on state-level. Hence, the liberalist and realist assumptions described above lead to the belief that individuals themselves are not of any influence when analysing the decision-making process behind IR-policy.

However, the belief that states dictate decision-making behaviour in IR does not seem to apply when it comes to risk-propensity. If the assumptions discussed above were to be true, decisions should be made along the lines of the expected utility model. The expected utility model assumes that all reasonable individuals adhere to rational choice if it comes to decision-making under risk (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979, p.263), implying that individuals at all times make the best possible move based on the given preferences (Pellikaan, 2019, p.3). Expected utility theory thus expects all individuals to make proper cost-benefit calculations focussed on the achievement of self-interest with a constant degree of risk-propensity. Hence, according to the unitary agent assumption and the assumption of individual rationality in decision-making, risk-propensity should be stable in policy-decisions in IR. Nonetheless, findings from Kahneman & Tversky (1979) prove otherwise: they show that risk in fact does affect the individual rationality and thus refute the assumption of individual rationality in decision-making (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). The assumption that individuals will take

rational decisions in IR regardless of the degree of risk rooted in the outcomes thus turns out to be false. Instead, it is assumed that attitudes of individuals deviate depending on whether outcomes are framed as relative gains or as relative losses: for losses individuals tend to be risk-prone in decision-making, while individuals are generally risk-averse if outcomes are framed as gains (Goldgeier & Tetlock, 2001). This phenomenon demonstrates the distortion from the expected utility model that is also known as the reflection effect (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). Prospect theory uses the reflection effect to explain the deviations from the expected utility model in decision-making under risk by individuals (Kahneman & Tetlock, 2001; Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.620; Linde & Vis, 2017, p.101). Nonetheless, also prospect theory fails to predict the behaviour of more than one third of the subjects in previously performed research. The notion of the reflection effect alone is thus not sufficient when explaining deviations in risk-propensity in decision-making (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.611). This means that there is still a missing link between decision-makers and the risk-propensity portrayed in their policy-decisions.
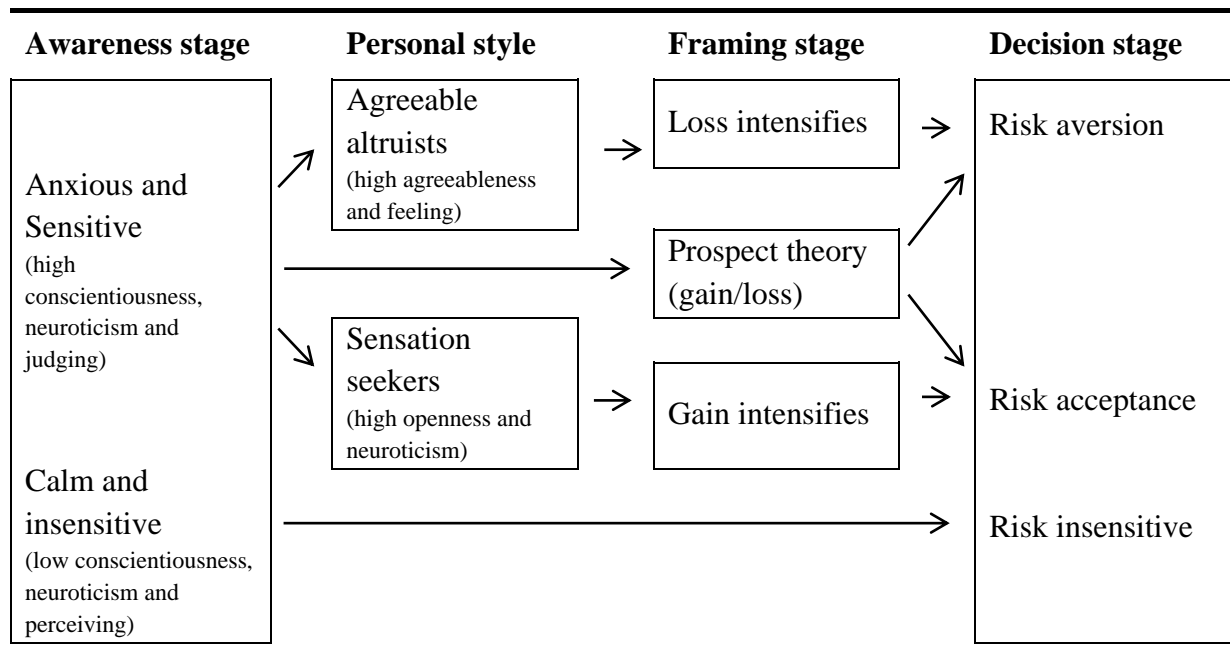
Görener & Ucal (2011) offer an alternative explanation for this missing link: their findings suggest that personal factors of individuals can entail a significant difference in policy-outcomes. Hence, they argue that variations in behavioural features of political decision-makers themselves are the reason for distortions from the expected utility model in IR-policy (Görener & Ucal, 2011, p.360). Kowert & Hermann (1997) make similar assumptions and introduce a new variable in their research to risk-propensity in decision-making: the individual differences between actors regarding their personality traits as displayed in their leadership styles (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.630). Since this perceived relationship has not been tested on the basis of policy-decisions in IR, this thesis will further examine the influence of the leadership styles of individuals on the risk-propensity in IR-policy. The findings of the quantitative research of Kowert & Hermann (1997) will be used as a thread in the literature research, after which an answer to the research question will be approached by performing a qualitative comparative case study. Firstly, present literature will be discussed to further specify the role of leadership styles in the risk-propensity of decision-making in IR. Secondly, the two political leaders will be introduced along with an outline of their behaviourialistic features essential for the theoretical expectations. Thirdly, the method of analysis for the dependent variable will be illustrated after which the results will be generated. Lastly, the interpretation of the results will be followed up by the discussion of its implications and the conclusion of the research.

Theoretical substantiation: literature review and theoretical framework

The assumption that personality traits offer an explanation for irregularities in risk-propensity in decision-making in IR (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.630) will form the starting point of the research. Kowert & Hermann (1997) recognise the effect of the reflection effect on the outcomes of decision-making under risk, but they reject the assumption of prospect theory that the perception of risk is fixed the authors stress that individuals differ in their acceptance of risk and that this may influence whether they frame problems as gains or losses (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.612). Since the difference between framing problems as gains or as losses may result in the display of a different degree of risk, a variety in risk-acceptance among individuals is expected to have an influence on risk-propensity in decision-making. Hence, Kowert & Hermann (1997) introduce *reference points* (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.630). Reference points are individually defined points that determine the degree of risk one experiences; implying that the degree of risk one defines as high, may be low for another. E.g. sensation seekers may consider decisions losses according to the effects of prospect theory, while those who are more sensitive may consider these decisions gains. Reference points thus influence the effect of the reflection effect and therefore also the risk-propensity in the decision-making of individuals (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, pp.631-632). Like utility, reference points cannot be explained by structural models, but are set exogenously (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.630). Kowert & Hermann (1997) suggest that individual differences in the form of personality traits influence the exogenous positioning of these reference points. Hence, they argue that personal styles affect the way risk is framed in decision-making (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, pp.616-619). Since the framing of risk determines the amount of risk-taken in decision-making, personal styles of political leaders are found to influence the their risk-propensity in policy-decisions in IR (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.628).

Kowert & Hermann (1997) visualise this perceived influence of personal styles on the framing of risk and thus also on the degree of risk in decision-making with a three-stage model presented in figure 1 (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.626). This three-stage model displays the awareness stage, the framing stage and the decision stage together with the influence of personal styles on the framing stage. If the framing stage is affected by the personal style of the individual, the outcome of the decision-stage may be altered as well. Hence, the model shows that the personal style affects the reference points for the framing stage and thus possibly also the risk-propensity in decision-making (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, pp.625-626).

Figure 1   Three-stage model of decision-making under risk (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.626)

Awareness stage	Personal style	Framing stage	Decision stage
Anxious and Sensitive (high conscientiousness, neuroticism and judging)	Agreeable altruists (high agreeableness and feeling) →	Loss intensifies →	Risk aversion
	Sensation seekers (high openness and neuroticism) →	Prospect theory (gain/loss)	
		Gain intensifies →	Risk acceptance
Calm and insensitive (low conscientiousness, neuroticism and perceiving)			Risk insensitive

The first stage, the awareness stage, makes a distinction between anxious and sensitive individuals and calm and insensitive individuals. Kowert & Hermann (1997) eliminate the possibility of influence of personal styles of individuals when they are calm and insensitive (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.625). This state of being is characterised by a low degree of conscientiousness, neuroticism and perception. Being calm and insensitive in the awareness stage eliminates the framing-stage from the decision-making process which causes individuals to be risk-insensitive in the decision stage (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.625). Individuals that are calm and insensitive to their environment will therefore deviate less from the expected utility model (Kowert & Hermann, pp.625-626).

Being anxious and insensitive, on the other hand, does allow personal styles to influence the framing stage: a high degree of agreeableness and feeling will intensify the perception of loss, while a high degree of openness and neuroticism intensifies the perception of gain (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, pp.626-627). The reference points of the individuals therefore shift if the personal styles alter, making the possible outcomes of deals either less attractive or more attractive. Important to note is that Kowert & Hermann (1997) do not acknowledge the influence of prospect theory on decision-making when individuals score either high or low on the traits underlying the personal styles (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.625). Intensified gains are in this case thus associated with risk-acceptance and losses with risk-aversion. Since being agreeable intensifies the loss, individuals will be more risk-averse

in the decision-stage (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.626). Conversely, being open to information will intensify the gain and the advantage of winning the deal thus increases. Hence, adopting the personal style of sensation seekers entails a higher acceptance of risk in decision-making (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.626). When individuals do not portray strong features of these personal styles, prospect theory will enact: individuals will be risk-averse if outcomes are framed as gains and risk-accepting if outcomes are framed as losses (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, pp.625-627).

The three-stage model of Kowert & Hermann (1997) makes it plausible that personal styles influence risk-propensity in decision-making. However, to make further connections between the behaviour of individuals in decision-making under risk and personal styles, it is necessary to be able to deduct these personal styles. Hermann (1999) introduces the *Leadership Trait Analysis*[1] as a way to derive personal styles of political leaders, also known as *leadership styles* (Hermann, 1999; Hermann, 2005). The LTA maps leadership styles by analysing verbal behaviour and translating it to a personality profile. By performing content analyses on spontaneous spoken material of individuals, scores for seven different personality traits are generated: belief in the ability to control events, need for power, self-confidence, conceptual complexity, task focus, in-group bias and distrust of others. The scores of individuals for these seven traits are representative for the attitude of individuals on three different dimensions: (1) the responsiveness towards political constraints, (2) the motives for seeking a position and preserving it and (3) the degree of openness to incoming information (Hermann, 2005, p.180). The perception of these three dimensions by individuals determine what leadership style they have (Hermann, 1999; Hermann, 2005). Table 1 describes the seven different personality traits and their relationship to the responsiveness to constraints, the openness to information and the motive for seeking office (Hermann, 2005, pp.184-185) and table 2 sets forth the eight different profiles of leadership styles as a function the three different concepts (Hermann, 1999, p.9).

Table 1   The seven traits of the LTA (Hermann, 2005, pp.184-185)

Concept	Personality	Description
Responsiveness to constraints	Belief in the ability to control events (BACE)	The assumed extent to which the examined individuals can control the (political) world
	Need for power (PWR)	The need for power and influence in developing, keeping or regaining power
Openness to	Self-confidence (SC)	Level of self-confidence; the level of awareness

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[1] Further referred to as LTA

contextual information		individuals have concerning their capacities in the (political) environment
	Conceptual complexity (CC)	The level of differentiation individuals implement in describing people, places, policy, ideas or business
Motive: problems or relationships	Task focus (TASK)	Having a problem-solving orientation at the expense of maintaining and building good relationships
Motive: towards world	In-group bias (IGB)	The degree to which individuals believe that the group they belong to is the centre of the (political) world
	Distrust of others (DIS)	General distrust or suspiciousness towards others

Table 2   **Leadership style as a function of responsiveness to constraints, openness to information and motive for seeking office (Hermann, 1999, p.9)**

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

It is important to note that the eight different leadership styles (Hermann, 1999, p.9) cannot be applied to the three-stage model (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.626) directly. This is a consequence of the difference between the typology of the personal styles by Kowert & Hermann (1997) and the leadership styles by Hermann (1999, p.9). It is unclear how the eight leadership styles are related to 'agreeable altruists' and 'sensation seekers' and it is therefore not possible yet to make predictions about the influence of the difference in leadership styles as described by Hermann (1999) and Hermann (2005) on the framing stage of decision-making under risk. Because the effects of leadership styles on the framing stage determine the outcome of the decision-stage, the differences in leadership styles are also decisive for the degree of risk present in decision-making behaviour. Hence, it is unclear whether and how the leadership styles described by Hermann (1999) affect the degree of risk in decision-making in IR. To fill this gap in theory, the following section will focus on the relationship between openness to information, attitude towards constraints and motives to seeking office, and the personal styles discussed in the research of Kowert & Hermann (1997).

Responsiveness to constraints
The responsiveness to constraints is determined by the degree to which individuals belief they can control events around them and the need for keeping or regaining power (Hermann, 2005, pp.184-185). Individuals that score low on both traits work within the given parameters towards goals and emphasise the importance of compromise and consensus building (Hermann, 1999, p.13). Hence, individuals that respect the constraints from their (political) environment are more focussed on consensus building and thus more agreeable in their personal style. High levels of agreeableness are associated with decision-making behaviour influenced by emotion rather than ratio (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.616). This causes individuals to be cautious of the possible harm risks can bring along (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, pp.624-625). Additionally, individuals who display high levels of agreeableness do not portray the reflection effect (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.622). Individuals that respect constraints are therefore assumed to be risk-averse in their decision-making.

In contrast to individuals with high levels of agreeableness, individuals that challenge political constraints tend to push the borders of the structures wherein they work (Hermann, 2005, p.182). Based on the promise of *bounded rationality*[2] (Janis, 1982) pushing the borders of what is possible will enlarge the amount of options individuals base their decision-making

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[2] Actors will choose for the supposedly best option depending on the range of possibilities they have access to (Janis, 1982)

on. Pushing the borders of the political constraints therefore leads to a lower display of impulsiveness. Being impulsive intensifies the losses and leads to risk-aversion in the decision-stage (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.624). It is thus assumed that displaying impulsiveness to a lesser extent reverses this effect and decreases the framing of loss. A decrease in the framing of loss without intensifying the gain expects individuals to behave according to the lines of prospect-theory in the decision-stage (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.625).

Openness towards contextual information

According to Kowert & Hermann (1997), the degree of openness of individuals determines the extent to which the personal style 'sensation seekers' is present: sensation seekers tend to be individuals that are more open and base their decision-making on intuition rather than logic (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.623). The amount of information individuals take upon them affects their perception of the world (Kahneman & Renshon, 2007) and thus plays a role in the framing stage of the three-stage model of Kowert & Hermann (1997, p.626). In general, the open and intuitive nature of sensation seekers attracts them to risk under the gain frame: gain scenarios emphasise potential future actions and therefore hold a promise of novelty and new opportunities in return for risk; contrary to loss scenarios, which focus on prior actions and therefore influence the framing stage of sensation seekers to a lesser extent (Kowert & Hermann, p.623). Hence, it is suggested that individuals who are open to information are more risk-accepting than individuals who are closed.

Nonetheless, there seems to be a difference in the definition of 'openness' by Kowert & Hermann (1997) described above, and Hermann (2005). Hermann (2005) operationalises the concept of 'openness towards information' on the base of 'self-other orientation' (Hermann, 2005, p.187). The self-other orientation of individuals is dependent on the consciousness of their own capacities on the one hand and the understanding of their surroundings on the other (Hermann, 2005, p.183). The first is also known as *self-confidence*, the latter as *conceptual complexity* (Hermann, 2005, pp.184-185; table 1). The ratio between these two personality traits determines ones openness towards contextual information: if individuals score lower on conceptual complexity than on self-confidence or if both traits are low, individuals tend to be closed; if conceptual complexity exceeds self-confidence or if both traits are high, individuals tend to be open towards contextual information (Hermann, 1999, p.20).

If levels of conceptual complexity are low and / or fall short of self-confidence, individuals are assumed to have an underdeveloped understanding of their surroundings and / or more faith in their own capacities than in their environment (Hermann, 2005). Such individuals will be inclined to generate solely the information that confirms their expectations resulting in a false perception of the issue, also known as *misperception* (Jervis, 1976). Individuals that experience high levels of misperception tend to be display a stronger version of the reflection effect (Linde & Vis, 2017, p.101). Hence, being closed to contextual information is associated with a strong presence of prospect theory in the framing stage.

If levels of conceptual complexity are high and / or exceed self-confidence, individuals are inclined to be more responsive to their political environment causing them to act more according to the lines of the general opinion (Hermann, 2005, p.187). Individuals that adjust their decision-making behaviour to the general opinion tend to do this to keep the hypothetical *sunk costs*[3] low (Sheffer et al., 2017, pp.316-317). Focussing on avoiding high hypothetical costs at all times is assumed to result in a lesser deviation from the expected utility model (Linde & Vis, 2017, p.113). Hence, these individuals are expected not to be affected by prospect theory in their framing stage. By excluding the influence of prospect theory, the assumption of Kowert & Hermann (1997) that individuals with a high degree of openness tend to be more risk-accepting seems to be valid (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.623).

Motive for seeking office
The motive for seeking office is a dichotomous concept, defined along the scores of three different personality traits: task-focus, in-group bias and distrust (Hermann, 2005, pp.184-185). These variables indicate whether individuals have a problem-focus, directing themselves towards the solving of problems, or a relationship-focus, being sensitive to the wishes of others and mostly busy with trying to fulfil these (Hermann, 2005, p.189). The latter seems to have a lot in common with the characteristics of altruistic individuals, whose behaviour is mainly focussed on the selfless concern for the well-being of others (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.623). Individuals with a relationship-focus thus seem to have a leadership style comparable to the personal style of *agreeable altruists*. Agreeable altruists tend not to be influenced by prospect theory, but are "particularly anxious to avoid risks when facing a loss" (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.623). This intensifies the loss and individuals with a relationship-focus are therefore expected to be more risk-averse in the decision-stage.

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[3] Costs that have been made and which can no longer be recovered
(https://www.accountingtools.com/articles/what-is-a-sunk-cost.html)

Individuals with a high task-focus and thus a problem-focus, on the other hand, tend to focus on achieving a certain goal instead of on establishing and maintaining relationships (Hermann, 2005, p.189). Besides task-focus, in-group bias and distrust also define the motives of individuals for seeking office (Hermann, 2005, pp.192). Individuals experiencing a high level of in-group bias will perceive the world as one in which their own group forms the centre. This leads to a bipolar view of the world in which individuals will position their own group opposite of the rest and blame all problems on the other party (Hermann, 2005, p.191). Combined with a high level of distrust, individuals will have a strong 'us versus them' perception of the world (Hermann, 1999, p.28; Hermann, 2005, p.192). Hermann (2005) argues that such a bipolar view of the world will lead to individuals interpreting gains and losses as a zero-sum game (Hermann, 2005, p.192). When playing zero-sum games, absolute gains do not matter since the goal is to maximize relative gains; policy-decisions that lead to an absolute improvement may still be a relative loss if the advantage of the other party is larger (Pellikaan, 2019, pp.1-2). The chances that policy-outcomes are framed as potential losses are therefore larger if individuals view the political environment as a zero-sum game. Since prospect theory does affect the decision-stage if individuals do not adopt the personal styles of 'sensation seekers' or 'agreeable altruists', the intensification of the framing of losses is expected to lead to risk-prone behaviour. Hence, individuals with a problem-focus are assumed to be risk-accepting in their decision-making behaviour.

The effect of leadership styles on the framing stage

As described by Kowert & Hermann (1997), individuals can have different ways of responding to risk: being insensitive to it, framing it according the lines of prospect theory or take risks or avert them based on their personal styles (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.616). The effects of different attitudes towards the three different dimensions discussed above and their expected implications for the framing stage are presented in table 3. Linking the different dimensions to the framing stage provides a fundament to integrate leadership styles (Hermann, 1999; Hermann, 2005) in the three-stage model of Kowert & Hermann (1997).

Table 3   **Influence of attitude towards concepts underlying leadership styles (Hermann, 1999) on the decision-stage of decision-making under risk**

	Prospect theory	Risk-accepting	Risk-averse
Responsiveness to constraints	Challenging	-	Respecting
Openness to information	Closed	Open	-
Motive for seeking office	-	Problem-focus	Relationship-focus

The assumed implications of the different attitudes towards the dimensions displayed in table 3 can be returned to the eight different leadership styles presented in table 2. Individuals that challenge constraints from their political environment and are closed to incoming information, have an *expansionistic* or *evangelistic* leadership style (Hermann, 1999, p.9). Leaders with such a leadership style are thus expected to behave according to the predictions of prospect theory.
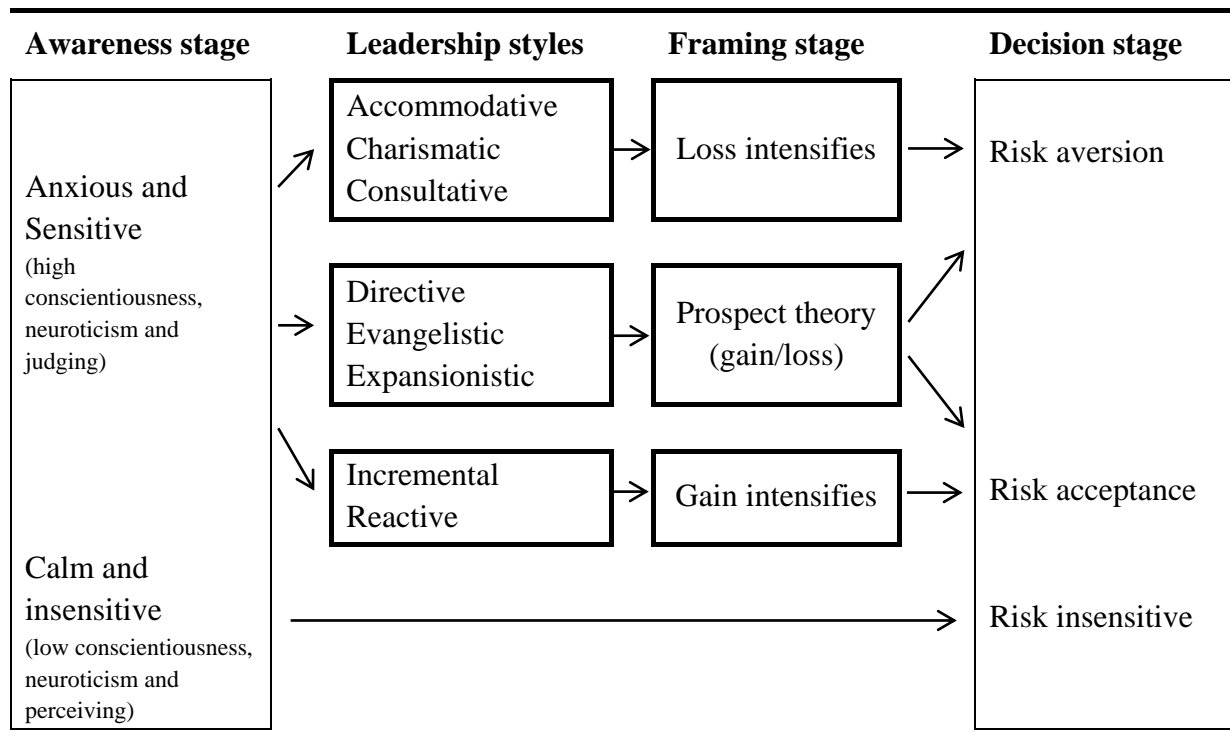
Individuals that tend to intensify their gains and be more risk-accepting in their decision-making behaviour are assumed to be open to information and to have a problem-focus. Such individuals either have an *incremental* or a *reactive* leadership style (Hermann, 1999, p.9).

Thirdly, individuals that end up being more risk-averse in the decision-stage are associated with a respective attitude towards constraints and a relationship-focus. The leadership styles that accompany these traits are *consultative* and *accommodative*.

The two leadership styles that remain are *charismatic* and *directive*. Charismatic leadership styles are characterised by a challenge to constraints, openness to information and a relationship-focus (Hermann, 1999, p.9). A challenge to constraints is expected to put the effects of prospect theory into motion, but this is refuted by the assumption of being insensitive to prospect theory if individuals are open. Hence, the risk-averseness of having a relationship-focus is expected to be determinant for the behaviour in the decision-stage. The directive leadership style is adopted by leaders who respect constraints, are closed to information and have a problem-focus (Hermann, 1999, p.9). Respecting constraints is associated with intensifying losses, but having a problem-focus with intensifying gains. This mutual exclusion leads to the expectation that individuals will frame their problems according to the lines of prospect theory, in line with the expectations of being closed to information.

The assumed influences of the different leadership styles have been adapted to the three-stage model of Kowert & Hermann (1997, p.626). This version of the process of decision-making under risk is presented in figure 2. This figure forms the fundament for the examination of the relationship between leadership styles and the risk-propensity visible in IR-policy. The following section will introduce the case, establish the leadership styles of the individuals used for the cross-leader analysis and formulate the expectations for the risk-propensity based on the found leadership styles.

Figure 2   Three-stage model of decision-making under risk based on findings from Hermann (1999), Hermann (1999) and Kowert & Hermann (1997)

Awareness stage	Leadership styles	Framing stage	Decision stage
	Accommodative Charismatic Consultative	Loss intensifies	Risk aversion
Anxious and Sensitive (high conscientiousness, neuroticism and judging)	Directive Evangelistic Expansionistic	Prospect theory (gain/loss)	
	Incremental Reactive	Gain intensifies	Risk acceptance
Calm and insensitive (low conscientiousness, neuroticism and perceiving)			Risk insensitive

Method of research and operationalisation: leadership styles

To examine the relationship between leadership styles of political leaders and the risk-propensity in their foreign policy-decisions, this thesis will compare the decision-making behaviour visible in the IR-policy of two leaders with different leadership styles on the base of a qualitative analysis.

In the past decade, many controversial leaders have made their entrance to the world stage, followed by controversial decision-making in foreign affairs. An example is current president of the United States of America: Donald J. Trump. Even before the start of his reign in 2017, President Trump has been known for his debatable and risky behaviour which has even led to his own fellow republicans trying to seek distance from their party's president[4]. The controversy of the behaviour of President Trump in foreign policy makes him an interesting sample to examine. According to the lines of *Most Similar Systems Design*[5], a second individual embracing the same powers and structures is necessary for the pursue of a proper multiple-case study. To minimise the influence of time-difference on the situation, it is also key to keep the interval between the ruling terms of the two individuals as small as

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[4] https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/vulnerable-republicans-seek-distance-trump-new-congress-n954946
[5] Further referred to as: MSSD

possible. These motives lead us to the selection of President Barack H. Obama. Interesting about the content of the presidential terms of these two presidents is that they both implemented policies with regard to the *Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action*[6] on behalf of the United States of America: Obama sealed a deal with the Iranian government in 2015, while Trump bailed out three years later in 2018 and again imposed economic sanctions on Iran. This means both presidents changed the status quo in foreign policy with the same powers within the same structures and only three and-a-half years apart. The decision of Trump, however, has been accused of embodying a higher risk for the international community than the decision of Obama (Hurlburt, 2019). This assumption indicates varying outcomes in risk-propensity between the two cases, allowing the use of a MSSD. Nonetheless, before applying this design to the examination it is important to determine whether the two presidents indeed have different leadership styles.

In order to ascertain this, LTA schemes for both presidents must be retrieved. Backhaus & Stahl (2015) provide the LTA scores for President Obama, but the personality profile of Trump will be compiled manually with *ProfilerPlus*[7] (Young & Levine, 2014). This software compiles the scores for every trait by performing a content analysis on a document with threads of multiple transcripts. ProfilerPlus calculates the frequency of words or phrases and their synonyms in all of their forms used in interviews to determine the level of their relevance for the personality of the leaders who spoke them (Young & Levine, 2014, p.1). Each analysis requires an input of at least fifty different fragments of a minimum of 100 words in order to present a reliable output. Since this thesis discusses foreign policy-behaviour, the fragments should be related to foreign policy (Hermann, 2005, p.193). Additionally, the material used for analysis should cover a wide range of topics to ensure the stability of the leadership style (Hermann, 1999, p.35; Hermann, 2005, p.192). Ideally, the material used for the content analysis is spontaneous because the individual must answer quickly which excludes the influence of e.g. speechwriters (Hermann, 2005, p.178). The output of the LTA is designed to display the ratio between the frequency of words indicating a certain trait and the total amount of words. This means individuals can attain scores between 0 and 1 (Young & Levine, 2014, p.2). The first column of table 4 lists the seven traits; the second column presents for each of these traits the average score with the corresponding standard deviation based on a cross-leader analysis of 284 samples (Cuhadar et al., 2017, p.47); the third column displays the LTA scores of Obama retrieved from the research of

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[6] Further referred to as: JCPOA or Iran nuclear deal
[7] See: https://profilerplus.org/

Backhaus & Stahl (2015); and the fifth column presents the outcome of the LTA of Trump based on interview responses on fifty different topics conducted between August 2017 and May 2019. When the individuals score lower than the mean minus the standard deviation they display a significant lesser presence of a certain trait, while scores higher than the mean plus the standard deviation indicate the opposite (Cuhadar et al., 2017, p. 47). These verdicts are presented in the fourth and sixth column of table 4.

Table 4   The LTA scores of President Obama (Backhaus & Stahl, 2015) and President Trump per trait in comparison to world leaders (Cuhadar et al., 2017)

Traits	Avg. world leaders n = 284 (SD)	President Barack Obama		President Donald Trump	
		Score	*Verdict*	*Score*	*Verdict*
BACE	0,35 (0,05)	0,4	Average	0,41	High
PWR	0,26 (0,05)	0,23	Average	0,28	Average
SC	0,36 (0,10)	0,54	High	0,45	Average
CC	0,59 (0,06)	0,62	Average	0,61	Average
TASK	0,63 (0,07)	0,61	Average	0,5	Low
IGB	0,15 (0,05)	0,16	Average	0,13	Average
DIS	0,13 (0,06)	0,08	Average	0,39	High

Leadership style of Obama

Obama scores average on both traits underlying the responsiveness towards constraints (*BACE* and *PWR*). Moderate scores on both traits are an indicator for a general sense of respect towards constraints from the political environment, with exception of the constraints that the individual may find speculative or inappropriate (Hermann, 2005, p.197). It is necessary to put the individual in the context of decision-making when individuals score moderate on both traits. Hermann (2005) states that individuals respecting constraints value consensus and the accommodation of the interests of other involved parties (Hermann, 2005, p.197). These characteristics are applicable on the case of Obama in his foreign policy-behaviour, which indicates a respect towards constraints.

Obama does discern himself in respect to his openness to information: he scores high on self-confidence (*SC*). A high score on self-confidence implies that his behaviour in IR is stable and not easily affected by events or incentives from the (political) environment (Hermann, 1999, p.21). Even though Obama's score on conceptual complexity (*CC*) is moderate in comparison to the average of world leaders (Cuhadar et al., 2017), it still exceeds

his score on self-confidence. Hence, he is regarded open to contextual information (Hermann, 1999, p.20).

Obama also scores average for the traits underlying his motive for seeking office (*TASK, IGB* and *DIS*). A moderate score on task focus indicates that the leader is charismatic and capable of switching between directing their attention to the problem and building relationships, dependent on what is relevant for the context (Hermann, 1999, p.25; Hermann, 2005, p.198). Hermann (2005) states that a relatively low score on distrust indicates that the leader regards politics cooperative rather than conflictual (Hermann, 2005, p.199). Based on findings from Hermann (1999), the combination of moderately low scores on both distrust and in-group bias assumes the leader to take advantage of opportunities within the constraints of the political environment and at the same time to establish and maintain relationships (Hermann, 1999, p.28). Obama's motive for seeking office therefore seems to vary between a relationship-focus and a problem-focus, dependent on the context of the decision-making process. In the case of the JCPOA, Obama lowered his demands in the negotiation process to ensure an outcome and prevent the relationship Iran and the U.S. from collapsing (Landau, 2017). Hence, Obama is assumed to have had a relationship-focus rather than a problem-focus in the decision-making process behind the policy concerning the Iran nuclear deal.

The combination of having respect towards constraints, being open towards contextual information and having a relationship-focus assigns Obama with an *accommodative* leadership style (table 2). According to the assumptions presented in figure 2, an accommodative leadership style makes Obama intangible for the effects of prospect theory and sensitive to the intensification of losses. As a result of intensifying losses, Obama is expected to portray risk-averse behaviour in the JCPOA-policy.

Leaderships style of Trump

Trump's high score on belief in the ability to control events indicates a perception that individuals and governments can influence what happens (Hermann, 1999, pp.13-14). Regardless of individuals' scores on need for power, leaders are challenging towards constraints if belief in the ability to control events is high (Hermann, 1999, p.13).

In contrast to the high score of Obama, Trump's self-confidence is regarded moderate. Hence, he is expected to be more sensitive to events and incentives from the (political) environment (Hermann, 1999, p.21). However, this is not determinant for a different stance regarding openness to incoming information between the two leaders: in both cases conceptual complexity exceeds self-confidence. If CC > SC, individuals are expected to be

open to information (Hermann, 1999, p.20). The scores of Obama and Trump therefore indicates an openness towards contextual information on behalf of both leaders.

Trump scores low on task focus. According to Hermann (1999), low scores on task focus are an indicator for a relationship-focus rather than a problem-focus in the policy-behaviour of individuals (Hermann, 1999, p.25). Leaders with such a relationship-focus regard the building and maintaining relationships the principal goal of their leadership and value the loyalty of the involved parties as well as the moral (Hermann, 1999, p.25; Hermann, 2005, p.188). At the same time, however, Trump portrays a high level of distrust. Individuals with a high level of distrust are wary of the motives of others and will, in combination with a moderately low level of in-group bias, regard the world as conflict-prone (Hermann, 1999, p.28; Hermann, 2005, p.190). This causes the leader to be flexible in their response; by being alert to the opportunities created by the constraints of other states, leaders can both benefit advantages on behalf of his own interests and establish relationships (Hermann, 1999, p.28). These perceptions are indicators that Trump switches between a relationship-focus and a problem-focus. The leadership style of Trump is thus dependent on the context of the JCPOA. According to Khan (2018), Trump has ignored calls from other parties engaged in the decision-making process to serve his own interests (Khan, 2018, p.3). President Trump is therefore assumed to have adopted a problem-focus in the case of the JCPOA.

The combination of a challenging attitude towards constraints from the political environment, being open to contextual information and a problem-focus makes Trump an *incremental* leader (table 2). According to the assumptions presented in figure 2, incremental leaders are insensitive to the effects of prospect theory and tend to intensify their gains. Hence, Trump is expected to be risk-accepting in his policy-behaviour regarding the JCPOA.

Method of research and operationalisation: the Iran nuclear deal

The section above proves that President Obama and President Trump have adopted different leadership styles in their presidential term. Hence, a MSSD can be applied for the examination of the research question. Decisions whether a theory does or does not hold obtain more validity if the influence of other variables are ruled out (Bryman, 2016, p.67; Hague & Harrop, 2013, p.368) and it is thus important to adhere to keep all variables but the independent and the dependent constant. This condition, also known as *ceteris paribus*, is necessary to rule out external influence on the outcome of the research. Table 4 shows the with the MSSD used to examine the relationship between varying leadership styles and the

degree of risk in foreign policy in this thesis, including other variables that might be of influence on the dependent variable.

Table 4   **MSSD for the qualitative examination of the relationship between the leadership styles of Obama and Trump and the risk-propensity in their decision-making regarding the JCPOA**

	Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump
Country	United States	United States
Presidential term	2008-2016	2017-now
Gender	Male	Male
Political party	Democrats	Republicans
Leadership style	Accommodative	Incremental
JCPOA-policy	Signed	Bailed out

Conditions surrounding the independent and dependent variable are: country, presidential term, gender and political party. Both leaders were presidents of the U.S. in subsequent terms. This means that they were surrounded by the same political structures and limitations from the environment. Reigning over the same country and keeping the presidential terms as close to each other as possible thus eliminates the assumption that variation in decision-making behaviour is caused by changing structures (Monroe & Maher, 1995).

Thirdly, gender has been taken as a circumstantial factor. Gender has been found to influence the decision-stage independently of the framing stage: male subjects are more likely to be risk-prone than female subjects (Kowert & Hermann, 1997, p.623). Hence, the examination of the independent and dependent variable acquires more validity by using two individuals of the same gender.

Noteworthy is that besides 'leadership style' and 'JCPOA-policy', 'political party' also varies between the two individuals. Nevertheless, this variable is not expected to affect the outcome of the research. The qualitative analysis will omit the difference in party ideology of the two leaders since both the Democratic and the Republican party are regarded 'empty vessels': they cannot control the policy-behaviour of their members or impose requirements upon them (Katz & Kolodny, 1994, p.23). This implies that this research will not regard political parties as influential on the decision-making behaviour of President Obama and President Trump. The variable of parties is therefore expected not to be obstructive for the qualitative analysis of the risk-propensity in the JCPOA-policy of the leaders.

Press statements of *The White House* (2018) and *The Obama White House* (2016), U.K. governmental press-statements (Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 2018), articles of Beauchamp (2018), Bort (2018), Kahn (2018), Landau (2017) and Litwak (2018), and presidential remarks concerning their JCPOA-policy (The Obama White House, 2018; CNBC, 2018) will be analysed in order to establish whether Obama and Trump vary in their decision-making behaviour on the base of risk. The risk-propensity is defined on the base of the trade-off between the advantages of the policy-decisions and the chances of encountering consequences more negative than the status quo. Approaching the relationship between the variation in the dimensions underlying the leadership styles and the degree of risk helps determine whether the leadership styles affect risk-propensity in policy-behaviour. The following section will interpret of the results of the schematic analyses (appendix B).

Interpretation of results

Dimension Responsiveness to constraints

<u>Obama</u>

Obama's accommodative leadership style is characterised by a focus on consensus-building and compromise, mutual gain and a sense of accountability in the process of attaining this (Hermann, 1999, p.9). Leaders with such a leadership style respect constraints and are thus expected to accept the perceived environmental constraints and work within the given parameters to attain their goal (Hermann, 2005, p.182). These characteristics are visible in Obama's policy-behaviour regarding the JCPOA. According to Obama, disciplined diplomacy was the reason an accord was reached: the benefits for the engaged parties could only be served if everyone complied to the costs of the deal which indicates consensus-building and compromise (The Obama White House, 2016). The compromise of lifting the economic sanctions on Iran awarded the U.S. with a broad and tight inspection regime which created ensured Iran complied to the conditions of the JCPOA (The Obama White House, 2018). The characteristic of working within the given parameters on the base of consensus-building to ensure a certain outcome is thus visible in Obama's policy-behaviour.

Additionally, the transparency created by the strict monitoring in combination with the conditions of the JCPOA refutes the assumption of Landau (2018) that the Iranian regime was able to develop its nuclear program despite the constraints of the nuclear deal. Hence, the only negative consequence of lifting the economic sanctions is the possibility that Iran invests the released money in support for the Syrian regimes and other U.S. enemies (The White House, 2018). However, the nuclear deal was never designed to target or punish this kind of

behaviour of the Iranian regime; it was designed to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and secure national and international security (The White House, 2016). This leads to the suggestion that Obama's willingness to compromise in order to negotiate a deal with policy-advantages for all engaged parties resulted in a minimisation of negative consequences. Hence, the dimension of responsiveness to constraints of Obama's accommodative leadership style is expected to entail a low degree of risk in policy-behaviour.

Trump

Incremental leadership styles emphasise the maintenance of the manoeuvrability and flexibility of individuals in their policy-choices (Hermann, 1999, p.9). Constraints from the political environment may be regarded obstacles that impair manoeuvrability and flexibility and incremental leaders will thus challenge these constraints when they limit their capabilities of achieving their goal (Hermann, 2005, p.182). This is visible in Trump his policy-behaviour concerning the JCPOA: he neglects the U.S. obligations to the accord because they do not serve his own interests (The White House, 2018). It therefore seems that he challenged constraints to maintain his own manoeuvrability and flexibility. This elucidates that Trumps challenging attitude towards constraints is visible in his policy-behaviour. However, it is necessary to outline the policy advantages and possible negative consequences before it can be concluded whether there is a relationship between this attitude and the degree of risk.

Trump provides as main reason to move out of the deal that it failed to protect America's national security interests (The White House, 2018). By re-imposing the sanctions, the Iranian regime has less resources it can invest in regimes like Syria and other allies that challenge the U.S. position in the Middle-East (The White House, 2018). This assumes that the U.S. security increases by re-imposing the sanctions. At the same time, however, neglecting the JCPOA results in the disappearance of transparency and allows the Iranian regime to proceed the development of their nuclear capabilities impairing U.S. security (Bort, 2018). This implies that the assumed policy-advantage of gaining security is not justified.

At the same time, challenging the constraints of the JCPOA makes the U.S. an untrustworthy partner in nuclear deals in the eyes of the international community endangering the negotiations with North-Korea (Litwak, 2018). Additionally, it brings along economic disadvantages because U.S. enterprises will have to back out of Iranian partnerships on the long run (Khan, 2018). Hence, the policy advantages do not seem to outweigh the negative consequences of backing out of the JCPOA. This suggests that the challenging attitude of

Trump towards the constraints of the JCPOA resulted in risk-acceptance in his policy-behaviour.

Dimension Motive for seeking office

<u>Obama</u>

Leaders with a relationship-focus think group-maintenance is key and emphasise the preservation of loyalty and moral in their leadership style (Hermann, 2005, p.188). This emphasis on group-maintenance and moral is visible in Obama's behaviour in his policy-choices regarding the JCPOA. Obama states that not working together with Iran did not serve U.S. interests, while directly engaging with the Iranian government can possibly do so (The Obama White House, 2016). He attributes the achievement of the goals to the collaboration between the two parties and emphasises that it is successful because it serves interests on behalf of the entire international community (The Obama White House, 2016). This implies that Obama's appreciation for group-maintenance influences his policy-choices. Hence, Obama's relationship-focus seems to influence his decision-making behaviour regarding the JCPOA-policy.

Obama's relationship-focus highlights that he values moral and displays a low level of distrust. This causes him to trust the Iranian government in complying to the conditions of the JCPOA. The monitoring process of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has proven to be solid and tight so there is indeed no need to be wary of Iran's behaviour (The White House, 2016). Obama's trust made him have more faith in the constructs provided by other actors in the international community resulting in an avoidance of basing policy-choices on a false perception of risk. This intensified Obama's perception of loss if he were not to accept the deal. Hence, accepting the negotiated deal displays a relationship between Obama's relationship-focus and a low risk-propensity in his decision-making behaviour regarding the JCPOA-policy.

<u>Trump</u>

Incremental leadership style are accompanied by a problem-focus (Hermann, 1999, p.9). A problem-focus is associated with a desire to move the nation forward toward the achievement of the goal (Hermann, 2005, p.188). Trump reflects this personality style in his behaviour since he bases his policy-choice to opt out on the extent to which the JCPOA satisfies U.S. interests. The JCPOA is not regarded sufficient since it allows the Iranian regime to have a short breakout time (CNBC, 2018) and re-imposing sanctions is believed to encourage Iran to

stop supporting U.S. enemies and thus increase U.S. security (The White House, 2018). Hence, his problem-focus seems to have influenced his policy-choice to back out of the JCPOA.

At the same time, his high level of distrust makes him wary of the construct from the IAEA that was designed to monitor Iran's nuclear program and secure U.S. interests. This wariness causes him to perceive Iran not complying to the terms and conditions as a risk (The White House, 2018). This risk made it more attractive to back out of the JCPOA and thus influenced Trumps choice to do so. Nonetheless, this risk is regarded to be unfounded because of the monitoring constructs by the IAEA (The Obama White House, 2016). Trump is therefore expected to have taken unnecessary risk as a result of his high level of distrust. Hence, Trumps problem-focus intensified the gains of opting out of the JCPOA and thus influenced his risk-propensity in his JCPOA-policy.

Conclusion and implications

In the cases of both Obama and Trump, the dimensions of *responsiveness towards constraints* and *motive for seeking office* seem to have influenced their decision-making behaviour regarding JCPOA-policy. Obama's respecting attitude towards constraints and relationship-focus intensified the losses of not complying to the deal, making it less attractive to not comply to the JCPOA. It is therefore suggested that his accommodative leadership style results in a display of risk-averse behaviour in the decision-stage. Trump, on the other hand, has a challenging attitude towards constraints and a problem-focus. This caused him to intensify the gains of opting out. As a result, he took unnecessary risks and as a result his incremental leadership style is suggested to have affected his risk-propensity by making him more risk-accepting.

This provides an answer to the research question *to what extent does the leadership style of political leaders influence their risk-propensity in IR?* The responsiveness towards constraints and the motives for seeking office have been proven to affect decision-making behaviour of political leaders on the base of risk-propensity. Hence, leadership styles varying on these dimension are expected to result in different degrees of risk: respective attitudes and relationship-focusses entail risk-averseness, while challenging attitudes and problem-focusses are expected to result in risk-acceptance.

The conclusions above imply that the risk-perception of individuals varies along with their leadership style. The expected utility model is not sufficient to predict the behaviour of political leaders in international policy (Sheffer et al., 2017, p.317) and the concluded

influence of leadership styles therefore provides a fundament to improve the explanations of decision-making behaviour under risk. Nonetheless, it is necessary to further examine the effects of the different leadership styles in future research since this thesis tests the effects of just two leadership styles on the base of empirical evidence.

Additionally, it is important to be aware of Trumps 'off the record' moments in the full transcript used for LTA scores. The material therefore lacked spontaneous material, which may have resulted in an inaccurate leadership profile. For future research it might therefore of significant worth to base the examination of leadership profiles on individuals that provide fully spontaneous material.

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Appendix A. LTA Trump

Table A1 **ProfilerPlus LTA Scheme based on interviews (9.760 words) with President Donald Trump**

HD	LD	DIS	HT	LT	TASK	IC	EC	BACE	HB
42	66	0,3889	74	74	0,5	174	259	0,4018	28

LB	IGB	HS	LS	SC	HC	LC	CC	HP	LP	PWR
186	0,1308	126	153	0,4516	319	201	0,6135	109	277	0,2824

Data for ProfilerPlus

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1. About American troops in Afghanistan
2. About 'the wall'
3. About his scepticism concerning a report from the government on climate change
4. About shutting down power plants
5. About sanctions for Saudi Arabia for the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi
6. About Putin's aggression towards Ukraine

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7. About shutting down the government because of the illegal immigrants
8. About bringing home American troops despite risks in Syria and Iraq
9. About bringing troops back to Iraq and Syria in case of risk
10. About telegraphing military moves
11. About keeping military bases in Iraq to monitor Iran
12. About trusting U.S. intelligence in Iran
13. About handling race issues in the U.S.

14. About sealing a deal with Kim Jong Un
15. About compromising in a trade deal with China in return for help with North-Korea
16. About sealing a deal with President Xi

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17. About the economy based on international trade
18. About a potential meeting with Putin
19. About the involvement of the U.S. in the prevention of a terroristic attack in St. Petersburg
20. About Germany's relationship with Russia

CNBC (2018, October 18). Read the transcript of AP's interview with President Trump. *CNBC*. Retrieved on May 1 2019, from: https://www.cnbc.com/2018/10/17/read-the-transcript-of-aps-interview-with-president-trump.html

21. About his conversation with Prince Mohammad Bin Salman concerning the disappearance of journalist Jamal Khashoggi
22. About his two first years of presidency
23. About climate change
24. About bringing American troops home and the America First policy
25. About the situation in Syria
26. About Russian hackers
27. About running for a second term

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28. About the healthcare act
29. About his greatest achievements in the first six months of his presidential term

30. About his disappointments in the first six months of his presidential term

31. About the main goals of the tax reform

32. About a trade-deal with the UK

33. About deals with the European Union

34. About steel-tariffs

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35. About Jerry Nadler calling Trump a dictator

36. About what is necessary to close a deal with China

37. About the situation in Venezuela

38. About sanctioning Russia

39. About the elections of 2020

40. About the opinion of the Democrats regarding China

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41. About criticism on his presidency

42. About fair media

43. About the relationship with North-Korea

The New York Times (2019, February 1). Excerpts from Trump's Interview With The New York Times. *The New York Times*. Retrieved on June 6 2019, from: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/01/us/politics/trump-interview-transcripts.html

44. About Trump's relationship with President Xi of China

45. About sealing a deal with China

46. About the southern border

47. About Iran and Isis

48. About possibly being in business with Russian figures at the same time as running for office
49. About a military option in Venezuela
50. About building a wall

Appendix B. Schematic analysis of policy-decisions

Table B1   Overview of the perceived advantages of the policy-choices

Obama (The Obama White House, 2016)	Trump (The White House, 2018)
Break-out time of Iran: 12 months or more	The JCPOA failed to protect America's national security interests
Provide the *International Atomic Energy Agency* (IAEA) with the tools necessary for unprecedented monitoring and access so sanctions can be reinstalled if Iran fails to commit	The JCPOA enriched the Iranian regime and enabled its malign behaviour, while at best delaying its ability to pursue nuclear weapons and allowing it to preserve nuclear research and development
Iran has: - Shipped 25,000 pounds of enriched Uranium out of the country - Dismantled and removed two-thirds of its centrifuges - Removed the calandria from its heavy water reactor and filled it with concrete - Provided unprecedented access to its nuclear facilities and supply chain	Sanctions may be re-imposed; directly targeting critical sectors of Iran's economy, such as energy, petrochemical and financial sectors
	U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA will pressure the Iranian regime to alter its course of malign activities and ensure that Iranian bad acts are nog longer rewarded. As a result, bot Iran and its regional proxies will be put on notice. As importantly, this step will help ensure global funds stop flowing towards illicit terrorist and nuclear activities

Table B2   Overview of the possible negative consequences of the policy-choices

Obama	Trump
The money that has been granted by sanction-relief could possibly be invested in support for the Syrian regime and other allies the U.S. and the U.N., challenging the position of the U.S. in the Middle-East (The White house, 2018)	The deal can theoretically uphold without the support of the U.S., but experts have seen the chances of failing increased significantly (Beauchamp, 2018)
	If the deal collapses, the IAEA loses the ability to monitor Iran's weapon development, resulting in the disappearance of transparency and freedom to renew their

	nuclear program on behalf of Iran (Bort, 2018)
If monitoring does not happen properly, Iran is granted space for developing its nuclear program outside the terms and conditions of the JCPOA (Landau, 2017)	Not complying to the deal makes the U.S. an untrustworthy partner in nuclear deals in the eyes of the international community; making it even harder to negotiate a deal with North-Korea that is appealing to both parties and at embraces more advantages for the U.S. than the JCPOA at the same time (Litwak, 2018)
	Economic disadvantages caused by the constraints put on U.S. enterprises doing business with Iranian partners (Khan, 2018)

Table B3   Remarks of the Presidents regarding their policy-choices, dimension *responsiveness towards constraints*

Obama: respecting constraints	**Trump: challenging constraints**
"…what is possible with strong American diplomacy" (The Obama White House, 2016)	"At the heart of the Iran deal was a giant fiction that a murderous regime desired only a peaceful nuclear energy program" (CNBC, 2018)
"Ensuring the security of the U.S. and our people demands a smart, patient and disciplined approach to the world" (The Obama White House, 2016)	"The agreement was so poorly negotiated that even if Iran fully complies, the regime can still be on the verge of a nuclear breakout in just a short period of time" (CNBC, 2018)
"We've achieved this historic progress through diplomacy without resorting to another war in the Middle-East" (The Obama White House, 2016)	"U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA will pressure the Iranian regime to alter its course of malign activities and ensure that Iranian bad acts are no longer rewarded" (The White House, 2018)
An international framework to monitor Iranian behaviour and create transparency is launched (The Obama White House, 2016)	U.S. sanctions will be re-imposed while the other engaged parties remain in the JCPOA (The White House, 2018)
Long-term, sustainable accord (The Obama	The accord was eliminated since it did not

	serve U.S. interests (The White House, 2018)
"Iran has now fulfilled key commitments under the nuclear deal" (The Obama White House, 2016)	No accord at the moment, a new improved deal will be negotiated (The White House, 2018)
"Iran is being subjected to the most comprehensive, intrusive inspection regime ever negotiated to monitor a nuclear program" (The Obama White House, 2016)	

Table B4 **Remarks of the Presidents regarding their policy-choices, dimension** *motive for seeking office*

Obama: relationship-focus	Trump: problem-focus
Accord as a result of strong American diplomacy (The Obama White House, 2016)	Decision is based on efforts to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon (The White House, 2018)
"Ensuring the security of the U.S. and our people demands a smart, patient and disciplined approach to the world. That includes our diplomacy with the Islamic Republic of Iran" (The Obama White House, 2016)	"The Iranian regime is the leading state sponsor of terror: it exports dangerous missiles, fuels conflicts across the Middle East and supports terrorist proxies and militias such as Hezbollah, Hamas, Taliban and Al-Qaeda" (CNBC, 2018)
"Not speaking with the Iranian government did not advance America's interests" (The Obama White House, 2016)	"The deal allowed Iran to continue enriching uranium and overtime reach the brink of a nuclear breakout" (CNBC, 2018)
National security could be advanced by direct engagement with the Iranian government (The Obama White House, 2016)	Iran is granted economic benefits in return for only weak limits on its nuclear activity and no limits at all on its other malign behaviour regarding the sponsor of terrorism (The White House, 2018)
"We've seen the results: Iran will not get its hand on a nuclear bomb" (The Obama White House, 2016)	"It didn't bring calm, it didn't bring peace, and it never will" (CNBC, 2018)
Perceived increase in national and	The promise that the Iranian regime only

international security (The Obama White House, 2016)	wanted a peaceful nuclear energy program was a lie (The White House, 2018)
"Engaging directly with the Iranian government on a sustained basis for the first time in decades, has created a unique opportunity – a window – to try to resolve important issues" (The Obama White House, 2016)	The accord allowed the Iranian regime to be on the verge of a nuclear breakout on the short-term and it therefore does not solve the problem (The White House, 2018)
"We've achieved this historic progress through diplomacy without resorting to another war in the Middle-East" (The Obama White House, 2016)	"An embarrassment for me and all the citizens of the U.S." (CNBC, 2018)
Mutual interests are advanced by maintaining the relationship between Iran and the U.S. (The Obama White House, 2016)	Potential losers of bailing out are Iran, the EU and India (Khan, 2018)
A deal on behalf of the interests of the entire international community (The Obama White House, 2016)	U.S. interests exceed the importance of the opinion of government representatives of the U.K., France and Germany (Foreign & Commonwealth Office et al., 2018)

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