



**Parahyangan Catholic University
Faculty of Social and Political Sciences
International Relations Study Program**

Accredited Excellent

SK BAN-PT No. 2579/SK/BAN-PT/AK-ISK/S/IV/2022

**The Idiosyncratic Factors of Donald Trump in Initiating
United States of America Trade War against China
(2018-2020)**

Thesis

Submitted for Undergraduate Examination

Department of International Relations

By

Vanessa Eustacia Jackson

6091901237

Bandung

2023



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Faculty of Social and Political Sciences
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I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own scientific writing and is not a work that has ever been submitted for an academic degree by another party. As for other works or opinions cited, they are written in accordance with the applicable scientific writing rules.

I make this statement with full responsibility and am willing to accept any consequences in accordance with applicable regulations if in the future it is discovered that this statement is not true.

Bandung, 19 June 2023



A QR code is positioned to the right of the handwritten signature. The QR code is square and contains a central logo of Garuda Pancasila, the national emblem of Indonesia, with the text 'METERAI ELEKTRONIK' and '10000' below it, indicating a 10,000 Rupiah digital stamp.

Vanessa Eustacia Jackson

ABSTRACT

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Thesis Title : The Idiosyncratic Factors of Donald Trump in Initiating United States of America Trade War against China (2018-2020)

From 1993 to 2015, the relationship between the United States and China was a mixture of cooperation and conflict, spanning multiple presidential administrations from Bill Clinton to Barack Obama. While conflicts arose during preceding presidencies, such as disputes over trade, they did not escalate to the level of a full-blown trade war before the Trump administration. However in 2018, under the leadership of President Donald Trump, the United States initiated a trade war with China. This study aims to address the research question “How does Donald Trump's idiosyncratic factors initiate the US Trade War against China?” Using Hermann’s Leadership Trait Analysis and Preston’s Typology of Leadership Styles, this paper specifically focuses on the leadership of Trump and his take on US’ foreign policy at the individual level that has impacted the US-China trade relations significantly. The findings of this study reveal that Trump's idiosyncratic factors, such as his conflicting and transactional worldview, have influenced trade war policies by consistently threatening and imposing punitive measures on China. Furthermore, Trump's personal political style, characterized by an inward-looking and nationalistic approach, has also exerted influence towards his decision-making process and leadership, establishing him as a *Director-Maverick*. This is evident where the outbreak of the Trade War itself has been driven by Trump’s need for power and control over China. It is worth noting that Trump's foreign policy repertoire is limited, and many of his decisions in foreign policy are influenced by his background as a businessman.

Key Words: Donald Trump, Idiosyncratic Factors, Trade War, US-China Relations, the United States, People’s Republic of China

ABSTRAK

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Thesis Title : Faktor Idiosinkratik Donald Trump dalam Menginisiasi Perang Dagang Amerika Serikat Melawan China (2018-2020)

Dari tahun 1993 hingga 2015, hubungan antara Amerika Serikat dan Tiongkok merupakan campuran kerja sama dan konflik, yang mencakup berbagai pemerintahan presiden dari Bill Clinton hingga Barack Obama. Meskipun konflik dan ketegangan muncul selama masa kepresidenan sebelumnya, seperti perselisihan perdagangan, konflik perdagangan tersebut tidak meningkat ke tingkat perang dagang besar-besaran sampai sebelum pemerintahan Trump. Namun pada tahun 2018, di bawah kepemimpinan Presiden Donald Trump, Amerika Serikat memulai perang dagang dengan Tiongkok. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian tentang “Bagaimana faktor idiosinkrasi Donald Trump memulai Perang Dagang AS melawan Tiongkok?” Dengan menggunakan *Hermann's Leadership Trait Analysis* dan *Preston's Typology of Leadership Styles*, tulisan ini secara khusus berfokus pada kepemimpinan Trump dan sikapnya terhadap kebijakan luar negeri AS di tingkat individu yang berdampak signifikan pada hubungan perdagangan AS-Tiongkok. Temuan penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa faktor-faktor istimewa Trump, seperti pandangan dunianya yang bertentangan dan transaksional, telah mempengaruhi kebijakan perang dagang dengan secara konsisten mengancam dan menerapkan tindakan hukuman terhadap Tiongkok. Selain itu, gaya politik pribadi Trump, yang ditandai dengan pendekatan berwawasan ke dalam dan nasionalistik, juga memberikan pengaruh terhadap proses pengambilan keputusan dan kepemimpinannya, menjadikannya sebagai *Director-Maverick*. Hal ini terbukti di mana pecahnya Perang Dagang itu sendiri didorong oleh kebutuhan Trump akan kekuasaan dan kendali atas Tiongkok. Perlu dicatat bahwa pengetahuan kebijakan luar negeri Trump terbatas, dan banyak keputusannya dalam kebijakan luar negeri dipengaruhi oleh latar belakangnya sebagai seorang pengusaha.

Kata Kunci: Donald Trump, Faktor Idiosinkrasi, Perang Dagang, Relasi AS-Tiongkok, Amerika Serikat, Republik Rakyat Tiongkok

FOREWORD

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GDP	: Gross Domestic Product
IP	: Intellectual Property
JCPOA	: Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
OCA	: Operational Code Approach
TPP	: Trans-Pacific Partnership
US	: United States
VICS	: Verbs in Context System
NYMA	: New York Military Academy
MAGA	: Make America Great Again
NAFTA	: North American Free Trade Agreement
NATO	: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Just like any other individuals, leaders or high level policy makers possess different personality traits and life experiences that are inherent towards their self-perception, thinking process and decision-making process. In today's integrated world, leaders or high level policy makers play a significant role in determining the course of interactions with or against other countries through foreign policies. This explains why a leader's beliefs, motives, decision style, and interpersonal style can highly affect how they formulate the content of foreign policies. Hence, foreign policy decisions from one leader to another may impact a country differently.

In the United States, a presidential candidate who is chosen by one of two existing political parties will also represent the same values that the party believes in, which could also affect the course of decision-making towards foreign policy. The political system of the United States itself is divided into two dominant political parties which are the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. Both parties have different ideologies, political, social and economic views to build a better country.¹ The Democratic Party is described to be more aligned towards liberal philosophies, where they believe that the government should be more involved in social and community responsibilities. Meanwhile, The Republican

¹ Laura Silver and Patrick van Kessel, "Both Republicans and Democrats Prioritize Family, but They Differ over Other Sources of Meaning in Life," Pew Research Center, November 22, 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/11/22/both-republicans-and-democrats-prioritize-family-but-they-differ-over-other-sources-of-meaning-in-life/>.

Party is described as conservative and leaning more towards traditional ideologies, where they believe that the government should prioritize the idea of justice and rights of individuals.²

During a presidential election, traditionally, candidates running for office have been represented by either the Democratic or Republican party. Each party holds a national convention to select a final presidential nominee. State delegates from the primaries and caucuses selected to represent the people will ‘endorse’ their chosen candidates and the final presidential nominee will be announced at the end of the conventions.³ Subsequently, Americans will vote for electors in each state who represent either the Democratic or the Republican party and vote for the presidential candidates from respective parties; this is called The Electoral College. Meanwhile, the popular vote represents the aggregate of all voters in America.

In 2016, a billionaire businessman and renowned reality television showman known for his massive persona, Donald Trump, was selected to be a presidential candidate to represent the Republican party. Americans and the world had underestimated that he would have won the election, but Trump had won by 306 electoral votes to 272 electoral votes against Hillary Clinton; despite the fact that Clinton had won by popular vote. During his campaign, Donald Trump had openly stated his views regarding several issues, one of them being the bilateral relationship between the United States and China. The sentiment that sparked the

² Ibid.

³ United States House of Representatives, “Electoral College Fast Facts | US House of Representatives: History, Art & Archives,” US House History, 2004, <https://history.house.gov/Institution/Electoral-College/Electoral-College/>.

occurrence of a trade war between the US and China can be traced back when then-candidate of the President of the United States, Donald Trump, launched his presidential campaign in 2016. During his campaign, the consistent ideology that Trump referred to was that the US trade with China was a leading cause of manufacturing job losses in the US and source of intellectual property theft. He said China was responsible for "the largest theft in world history" and condemned the US trade deficit with China, which in 2016 has reached about \$346 billion.⁴ Trump also made accusations against trade activities unfairness and intellectual property theft of the US corporate information and technology against China which could cost the US up to 225 to 600 billion US dollars loss annually.⁵

Since before running for president, Trump has published his views on China through radio shows, speeches, and even tweets on Twitter, where in one of his tweets he stated that "China is neither an ally nor a friend."⁶ With this view, when he was successfully elected as President, it was very easy for him to accuse China for causing disruption in the US trade. The Trump administration has accused China of its injustice in trade practices which include dumping, discriminatory non-tariff barriers, forced technology transfer, overcapacity, and industrial subsidies.⁷ Trump has also accused China of intellectual property theft

⁴ Jeff Whittle, "To Tariff or Not to Tariff: China's Alleged Intellectual Property Theft from the United States," To tariff or not to tariff: China's alleged intellectual property the - Hogan Lovells Engage, 2018, <https://www.engage.hoganlovells.com/knowledgeservices/news/to-tariff-or-not-to-tariff-chinas-alleged-intellectual-property-theft-from-the-united-states>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Dorcas Wong and Alexander Koty, "The US-China Trade War: A Timeline," China Briefing News, September 14, 2020, <https://www.china-briefing.com/news/the-us-china-trade-war-a-timeline/>.

⁷ The White House, "President Donald J. Trump Is Confronting China's Unfair Trade Policies," The White House (The United States Government, May 2018), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-confronting-chinas-unfair-trade-policies/>.

against a turbine company in Massachusetts, several large chemical companies in the US, and one of the most notable intellectual property theft cases was against T-Mobile, Vodafone and AT&T which the Chinese telecommunication company, Huawei, is accused of stealing.⁸ According to the New York Times, Huawei managed to get IP information from a US company which was then leaked to the Chinese government.⁹ As a result of the allegations of IP theft, the US issued a report which places China on the 'priority watch list' because it is considered that China has exercised restrictions on foreign ownership, administrative review, and process licensing to force or suppress technology transfer from companies in America.¹⁰ Thus, this led to the US limiting business activities with the company because the US is afraid that China would have easier access to information technology infrastructure from the US.¹¹

Subsequently, When Donald Trump finally ascended as president, in July 2018 the US imposed 25% tariffs on 818 Chinese goods worth up to 34 billion US dollars.¹² This was the start of the Trade War. Additionally, In September 2018, Trump threatened to increase tariffs on imports by 267 billion US dollars, which means the total tariffs on Chinese imports to the US are 517 billion US dollars against imported Chinese goods alone.¹³ To date, the total tariffs that have been applied by the US to goods from China amounted to 550 billion dollars US, while

⁸ Neville Lahiru, "Did Huawei Really Steal?," Medium (The Startup, May 30, 2020), <https://medium.com/swlh/did-huawei-really-steal-16032a4c8eeb>.

⁹ Michael S. Schmidt, Keith Bradsher, and Christine Hauser, "U.S. Panel Cites Risks in Chinese Equipment," The New York Times (The New York Times, October 8, 2012), <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/09/us/us-panel-calls-huawei-and-zte-national-security-threat.html>.

¹⁰ 2019, p. 40. (Federal Report)

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

China imposed tariffs of 185 billion US dollars against goods from the US.¹⁴ With Trump's "Made American, Hire American" policy, Trump has also rejected trade interventions from many countries, one of the most prominent being China. According to Balaam and Dilman, tariffs are a tax imposition by increasing the price of goods unattractive to consumers. With the enactment of tariffs, the government can increase government revenue and can use tariffs as a means to protect domestic industries from foreign competition.¹⁵ The trade war caused economic losses on both parties and led to the diversion of trade flows away from China and the United States. According to Heather Long at the Washington Post, due to the Trade War US economic growth is slowing down, investment businesses froze, and companies weren't hiring very many people. across the land, many farmers went bankrupt, and the manufacturing and goods transportation sectors had reached a breaking point lowest not seen since the last recession. Trump's actions are one of the biggest tax hikes in years.¹⁶ During his campaign, Donald Trump implemented a campaign method that was unorthodox, and faced scandals during the campaign for stating racist and xenophobic statements. Despite this, he was able to gain support from the working class of the United States citizens by adapting populist views to become an elite that represented the voiceless majority.¹⁷

The Trade War between the US and China is undoubtedly very influential

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ David N Balaam and Bradford Dillman, *Introduction to International Political Economy* (London: Routledge, 2017).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Mirza, M, N., Babar, S. I., & Nizamani, F, Q. (2021). Leadership, Idiosyncrasies, and Political Behaviour: Personality Analyses of Presidents Donald Trump and Andrew Jackson. *Global Political Review*, VI(I), 12-23. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2021\(VI-I\).02](https://doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2021(VI-I).02)

and significant for global economic activity. In fact, before the trade war took place, the US and China were the world's largest trading partners in 2017. This bilateral relationship undoubtedly has created an impact on other peripheral countries that rely on its trade activities with the US or China. As a result, this has caused an increase in tensions on trade and increasing levels of uncertainty in the economy. The World Trade Organization has also warned that trade growth will experience a downside risk, whereby global economic growth was expected to fall 0.5 percent during the Trade War.¹⁸¹⁹ Hence, the effect of the Trade War is already predicted to have a lasting impact on the global economy that could trigger severe consequences to global politics and could impact the recovery time for global trade in years to come.

In spite of the underlying circumstances of the Trade War, what particularly sparked the author to explore this topic further is the fact that Donald Trump, a public figure infamous for his blunt and bold personality, had successfully taken office as the 45th president of the United States. In addition to that and most importantly, Donald Trump has established many controversial foreign policy decisions, one of them being the initiation of Trade War against one of the great power countries in the world today, China. The author finds a critical point of interest in understanding Donald Trump as a high policy maker through the psychological underpinnings of psychological behavior to provide a much

¹⁸ Dan Steinbock, "U.S.-China Trade War and Its Global Impacts," *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies* 04, no. 04 (January 2018): 515–42, <https://doi.org/10.1142/s2377740018500318>.

¹⁹ Larisa Kapustina et al., "US-China Trade War: Causes and Outcomes," ed. J. Horák, J. Vrbka, and Z. Rowland, *SHS Web of Conferences* 73 (2020): 01012, <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/20207301012>.

more complex explanation of foreign policy making and decision-making processes of a leader. In the discipline of international relations, United State's initiation of Trade War against China will heavily influence the course of international political economy for years and even change the course of global politics permanently. What is crucial is that this decision was initiated and formulated from an individual's idiosyncratic factors, which contradicts the usual view of traditional foreign policy studies that rely on state level analysis; which proves that this topic is to be observed on an individual level through the lens of Donald Trump as a president. In fact, Donald Trump's presidency has been mainly colored by his personality and characteristics to base his decision-making processes. Through political psychology, the author is able to establish a different understanding of foreign policy analysis on an individual level by delving into their personality elements and their characteristics that influence the course of a country's policies.

1.2 Problem Identification

Prior to Donald Trump's presidency, the relationship between the US and China has never reached a height of tension to the point where a trade war was heavily necessary or needed. However, how has the phenomenon of the Trade War commenced? Does Donald Trump play a significant role in responding to the treatment from China resulting in an outbreak of a trade war? Substantially, a leader's personality, their childhood, life experiences, and their personal traits have directly impacted their leadership styles. During his presidency, Donald

Trump has shown a distinctive method of decision-making and intervening in foreign policies. Donald Trump represented a non-traditional behavior, a desire to limit the US in the international system and international interventions by developing an inward vision with his *American First* principle. Not only did he fail to defend democracy, a free market economy, and a commitment towards U.S alliances, Trump also criticized foreign policy elites to have pursued their own interests and agendas and hurt the welfare of Americans. Hence, his presidential campaign in 2016 was not a contest between two candidates but rather of two versions of the United States' idealism; an nationalist-isolationist America vs. an internationalist-globalist-liberal that looks outward and prioritizes international exposure.

In reality, Trump was an alien to the political elites of Washington – he did not have a career in politics, nor was he experienced in the military. Donald Trump's decision to establish a trade war between the United States and China have never been conducted by presidents before him. Although, as a matter of fact, it could be said that tension between the United States and China have existed long before Trump had taken office.²⁰ When delving into Bill Clinton's presidency, Clinton had taken a different approach to level the US-China competition by forming what was called a *comprehensive agreement* through increasing the frequency of US visits to China and the exchange of visits by high-ranking officials of the two countries, as well as establishing contact between

²⁰ Karmakar, A.K. and Jana, S.K. (2021), "Trade War in the Twenty-First Century: A Historical Perspective", Das, R.C. (Ed.) *Global Tariff War: Economic, Political and Social Implications*, Emerald Publishing Limited, Bingley, pp. 3-14.

the military in 1993. Thus, in November 1993, Clinton met with Jiang Zemin on a constructive strategic partnership with China. This was able to take place because there is the influence of Clinton's idiosyncratic factors, where Clinton has a high understanding of complex concepts, is willing to listen and can receive new information, so that he is able to replace the direction of US foreign policy which previously used trade barriers as a consequence of violations of human rights in China.²¹

Meanwhile, US-China foreign policy in the presidency of George W. Bush did not share Clinton's views. Bush stated that the US views China as a strategic competitor. In this case, Bush's idiosyncratic factors which tend to mix his personal relations into decision making made him see more opportunities to bring US-Japan bilateral relations closer than US-China. However, with the events of 9/11 in 2001, Bush was forced to partner with China to rebalance its power as the aftermath of the terrorism in comparison to China's growing power in the early 2000s.²² After Bush's regime, under Obama's presidency the US-China relationship continued to see a mutual and strategic approach. Obama addresses China as a partner, despite the fact that China has become a rising power in Asia, which increased the tension between US and China in terms of economy and trade. However, instead of openly addressing the tension with China, Obama launched an initiative called Pivot to Asia that acted as a strategy to intensify cooperation with countries in the Asia-Pacific region; when in reality it was solely

²¹ Yi Edward Yang, "Leaders conceptual complexity and foreign policy change: Comparing the Bill Clinton and George W. Bush foreign policies towards China," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3, no.4 (2010): 426, doi: 10.1093/cjip/poq015, accessed on 8 May 2023.

²² Ibid.

a rebalancing strategy against China.²³ Subsequently, Obama also established the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) as a way to regulate the competition between the US and China. The TPP was billed as an “open architecture” document written to endorse adoption by additional Asian nations, and to provide a potential template to other initiatives underway, like the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. TPP became the largest regional trade agreements in history, with countries such as Mexico, Japan, Canada, Vietnam, Singapore, Australia and a few others joining the deal to bind Pacific nations closer through lower tariffs while also serving as a buttress against China’s growing regional influence.²⁴ Obama’s idiosyncratic factors played a key role in counteracting China’s influence through his diplomatic approach and his pragmatic way of thinking towards creating strategies seen in Pivot to Asia and TPP.

Contrast to Obama, Donald Trump approached the US-China relationship with a number of controversial and aggressive trade protectionism plans. Trump stated that, “China's accession to the World Trade Organization has enabled the biggest job theft in history” and “our trillions of dollars and millions of our jobs are flowing overseas as a result.” However, in the history of the United States, the US-China have never been involved in a trade war until Donald Trump finally took office. The imposition of tariffs of up to 25% on approximately 800 Chinese

²³ Robert D. Blackwill, “The U.S. Pivot to Asia and American Grand Strategy,” Council on Foreign Relations, 2012, <https://www.cfr.org/project/us-pivot-asia-and-american-grand-strategy>.

²⁴ Kevin Graville, “What Is TPP? Behind the Trade Deal That Died,” *The New York Times*, August 20, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/business/tpp-explained-what-is-trans-pacific-partnership.html>.

products entering the US is certainly an anomaly from the way Donald Trump responds to US foreign policy in the trade sector.²⁵

In fact, a September 2019 study by Moody's Analytics found that the trade war has cost the US economy nearly 300,000 jobs and an estimated 0.3% of real GDP.²⁶ Another study puts the loss to the US' GDP at around 0.7%. Not only that, a 2019 report from Bloomberg Economics estimated that the trade war would cost the US economy \$316 billion by the end of 2020, while more recent research from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and Columbia University found that US companies lost at least \$1.7 trillion in their share price as a result of the US tariffs imposed on imports from China.²⁷ Additionally, a number of studies have found that US companies primarily pay US tariffs, at an estimated cost of nearly \$46 billion. Tariffs force American companies to accept lower profit margins, cut wages and jobs for US workers, delay potential wage increases or expansions, and raise prices for American consumers or companies. An American Bureau of Agriculture spokesperson stated that “farmers have lost a large part of what was once a \$24 billion market in China” as a result of China's retaliatory actions.²⁸

With very large and long-term losses, ideally, Donald Trump should have not maintained this foreign policy so as not to exacerbate the economic conditions

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Mark Zandi and Maria Cosma, “Trade War Chicken: The Tariffs and the Damage Done,” 2019, <https://www.moodyanalytics.com/-/media/article/2019/trade-war-chicken.pdf>.

²⁷ Shawn Donnan and Reade Pickett, “Trump’s China Buying Spree Unlikely to Cover Trade War’s Costs,” Bloomberg.com, 2019, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-12-18/trump-s-china-buying-spree-unlikely-to-cover-trade-war-s-costs>.

²⁸ United States Census Bureau, “Foreign Trade - U.S. Trade with China,” Census.gov, 2021, <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c5700.html>.

of the United States due to the impact of the trade war. As a former businessman, Donald Trump had witnessed and experienced the downfall of his businesses and retrieved ways to recover. Why had he conducted such coercive actions against China that would hurt his own country's economy? Donald Trump continued to openly express his opposition towards China that escalated into a trade war just in the matter of two years. Hence, with the drastically different approach Donald Trump has taken compared to previous US presidents in responding to the US-China relationship, his foreign policy decisions had become an anomaly that could be studied based on Trump's background, experience, even emotions and beliefs, attitudes, values, experiences, emotions, traits, styles, memories, national, and self-concept.²⁹

1.2.1 Research Focus

This research will focus on specific problem windows with research limitations. The discussion will focus on Donald Trump's idiosyncratic factors as a decision-maker in a foreign policy; setting Donald Trump as an individual in the context of unit of analysis. Trump's idiosyncratic factor will also be delved into his family background and his life before he became president (childhood, adolescence, early career). Furthermore, the author will focus on the effects of the Trade War under Trump's presidency towards the U.S economy; and how his idiosyncratic factors have based his decision-making processes that led to the outbreak of Trade War. Lastly, the time frame that will be taken in this study will

²⁹ Hudson, Valerie M., and Christopher S. Vore. "Foreign Policy Analysis Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow." *Mershon International Studies Review* 39, no. 2 (1995): 209–38. <https://doi.org/10.2307/222751>.

range from the start of the Trade War in July 2018, to what was stated as the end of Trade War by the US and China in January 2020.

1.2.2 Research Question

Departing from the description of the problem above, the author has reached the core of the problem which is then formulated into research questions as follows, **“How does Donald Trump's idiosyncratic factors initiate the US Trade War against China?”**

1.3 Objectives and Practical Usage of Research

1.3.1 Objective of Research

This study aims to analyze and explain how the idiosyncratic factors of a leader like Donald Trump can influence US foreign policy towards bilateral relationships with other countries such as China. This study aims to show that in essence, international politics is heavily influenced by its leaders who act as decision makers. Therefore, when researching the international relations phenomenon, it is important to know the internal and external factors that actually influence foreign policy. Foreign policy can be analyzed by different methods, in which there are no rigid criterias to define where foreign policy is formulated from, therefore analyzing foreign policy making through the thinking process of its leader can be valid and proven by political psychology.

1.3.2 Usage of Research

This research was conducted as one of the requirements for graduating from the undergraduate level of International Relations, with the hope that this

research can be of academic benefit towards future studies regarding this topic. Furthermore, the author hopes that the paper could provide a better understanding about leaders' power over determining foreign policy and the course of global politics. Lastly, it is the hope of researchers through this research that it can become study material for policy makers, researchers, and academia.

1.4 Literature Review

Donald Trump's characteristics have also been assessed by many scholars using several of his foreign policy decisions as a method to analyze Donald Trump and his idiosyncratic factors that affected said foreign policy. In *Donald Trump's Personality and the Future of Iranian Nuclear*, a journal published by Rahman et. al, the study explained how the US has failed to sign the JCPOA agreement between Iran and a few other western countries under Trump's administration, as well as how Trump's idiosyncratic factors affect his foreign policy decisions. Whereas before Trump took office, in 2015, Iran and P5+1 countries have conducted efforts to regulate nuclear development programs that have created tensions between Iran and several world power countries such as China, Germany, France, Russia, and the United Kingdom. Rahman et. al argues that Donald Trump's personality definitely plays a vital role in changing the bilateral relationship between the US and Iran. The journal primarily explains how US-Iran bilateral relationship was quite close during the Cold War Era, where the US had taken part in the modernisation of Iran's economic policies and pro-Western external policies, as well as an established cooperation in the military field to eradicate communism against Russia. However, the Iranian revolution has caused

the US-Iran bilateral relationship to deteriorate, especially when the US decided to support Iran when Iraq and Iran went to war in the 1980s. Not only that, the US has stated for Iran to stop its nuclear development programs. This became the most prominent issue between the US and Iran, especially when the US lobbied the UNSC to impose sanctions against Iran for developing nuclears that could potentially be utilized as weapons and military purposes. The longstanding tension about Iran's nuclear development had toned down when P5+1 and Iran had finally established an agreement to regulate Iran's activities with nuclear and uranium development through Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Hence, Iran and the US signed on the agreement in October 2015 and was willing to provide a transparent route regarding their findings and nuclear utilization.

Unfortunately, when Trump had become president, years of negotiation and hard work were neglected when he withdrew from the agreement in 2017. Rahman et. al showed that Trump's main focus in foreign policy was to prioritize US interests, aligning with his campaign slogan of restoring US respect on the international political stage. He advocated for an "America First" approach, which emphasized prioritizing the security and interests of American citizens in every foreign policy decision. Trump strongly opposed the misuse of nuclear weapons for violence and expressed his commitment to preventing such scenarios. However, it was surprising when he made a statement suggesting that Japan and South Korea should develop their own nuclear power. On October 13, 2017, Trump refused to ratify the Iranian nuclear agreement, which required the president's endorsement every three months. He criticized the agreement, calling it

one of the worst and most one-sided deals the United States had ever entered into. Trump then gave Congress the authority to decide whether to impose new sanctions on Iran, setting a two-month deadline. He threatened to withdraw from the deal entirely if Congress failed to agree on stricter conditions against Iran. This decision drew reactions from world leaders and opposition, especially European countries that were signatories to the JCPOA agreement. Despite opposition and disappointment from his allies, Trump remained firm in his conservative stance and persisted with his decisions. On May 8, 2018, he officially announced the US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, which was regretted by the P5+1 member states.

Rahman et. al also show that Trump's actions demonstrated his conservative personality, even though they disappointed his allies. On January 12, 2018, Trump chose to maintain the 2015 nuclear accord with Iran by waiving economic sanctions, but he imposed new sanctions on individuals and entities involved in Iran's ballistic missile programs and cracked down on government protesters. He also issued an ultimatum to European allies, demanding that they address the perceived flaws in the Iran nuclear deal within a few months, or else the US would withdraw. Trump's conservative, populist, and controversial nature was evident in several other instances. He withdrew the US from the TPP agreement and announced the country's departure from UNESCO effective December 2018. He implemented Executive Order 13769, popularly known as the Muslim ban or Travel ban, which restricted entry into the US for individuals from six predominantly Muslim countries. These actions showcased Trump's populist

approach, distinguishing him from his more moderate and diplomatic predecessor, Barack Obama. Trump's refusal to endorse the Iran nuclear agreements angered Iranian leaders, with Ayatollah Ali Khamenei expressing dissatisfaction and threatening retaliation. General Mohammad Ali Jafari, Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, even warned of potential attacks on US interests in the Middle East if new sanctions were imposed on Iran.³⁰

Meanwhile, in a journal published by Dr. Muhammad Nadeem Mirza titled *The Role Of Leadership And Idiosyncrasy In Us Foreign Policy Towards Pakistan* explains idiosyncratic factors of several U.S presidents in formulating different versions of foreign policy towards Pakistan. Mirza used the *poliheuristic* theory to explain theory of foreign policy decision-making aims to clarify the different behavior of leaders by suggesting that when analyzing a situation, leaders do not always choose the option that is solely in the best interest of the state. Instead, they also consider options that align with their personal self-interests and pose less risk to their political careers. As a result, decision-makers often reject policy options using a non-compensatory principle.³¹ Mirza also referenced the research conducted by Margaret G. Hermann revealed a strong causal relationship between personality factors and the decision-making process in foreign policy. In the case of Pakistan, personalities of former US presidents played a significant role. For example, President Eisenhower, with his military background, prioritized building alliances to contain the Soviet Union. Consequently, defense contracts were

³⁰ Riki Rahman, Harliana Halim, and Muhaymin Abdullah, "Donald Trump's Personality and the Future of Iranian Nuclear," *Res Militaris* 13, no. 1 (2023): 3779–87.

³¹ Muhammad Nadeem Mirza, "The Role of Leadership and Idiosyncrasy in US Foreign Policy towards Pakistan," *Journal of Contemporary Studies* 7, no. 2 (2018).

signed, and Pakistan received substantial military aid for modernization. However, during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, weapons supply to Pakistan decreased and eventually stopped. Similarly, President George W. Bush, being the son of a former president and coming from an aristocratic background, had a foreign policy orientation influenced by hawks in his administration. The interplay of personality traits and the geopolitical context reshaped the US foreign policy towards Pakistan, leading to a renewed and uninterrupted flow of assistance. President Trump, a billionaire business tycoon with conservative leanings, a brash attitude, and a chauvinistic and xenophobic outlook, has shown more inclination towards India. He believes in India's claims of being a victim of terrorism and sees it as a significant economic opportunity due to its large market. Factors such as the Afghan war, access to Central Asian resources, containing China, and aligning with India shape the Trump administration's decision-making regarding Pakistan. Covert operations against assumed terrorists in various foreign regions have become a norm in US foreign policy behavior. Such operations are usually authorized without considering Congress' views or public opinion. In 2017, President Trump withheld Coalition Support Fund payments to Pakistan, refusing to certify that it was doing enough against terrorist groups like the Haqqani Network. This pressure tactic using economic and military incentives and sanctions began under President Bush and continued under President Obama. Pakistan, which had slipped off the US foreign policy radar after the killing of Osama bin Laden and the announcement of withdrawal plans, came back into focus with President Trump's South Asia strategy. The role of US leaders in

decision-making regarding Pakistan has become more significant as it has become part of a high-risk security situation. The study suggests that Pakistan-US relations will experience a downward trajectory in the coming years, but the continuity of their relationship will witness several ups and downs influenced by US leadership under Donald Trump and the geopolitical environment.³²

In a journal article titled *Profiling The President: Explaining Donald Trump's Nationalistic Foreign Policy Decisions Using Leadership Trait Analysis And Operational Code Analysis* written by Abigail White, the author explains Trump's "America First" foreign policy through Leadership Trait Analysis and Operational Code Analysis.³³ In this article, White utilized Leadership Trait Analysis as an aim to establish a connection between beliefs, values, attitudes, and deeply ingrained patterns that have significant predictive implications for foreign policy outcomes. Simply put, the core of a leader's personality defines their range of beliefs, opinions, motivations, and information processing. It plays a decisive role in shaping relationships within their group, including the selection of individuals to be a part of it. Personality traits impact a leader's goals and motivations, as well as their responses to cues, symbols, and stimuli, and their interpretation of information. Moreover, a leader's personality influences their determination, risk inclination, perception, and the way they manage emotions, all of which exert significant influence on decision-making.

³² Ibid.

³³ Abigail White, "Profiling the President: Explaining Donald Trump's Nationalistic Foreign Policy Decisions Using Leadership Trait Analysis and Operational Code Analysis," *Contemporary Voices: Profiling the President* 1, no. 1 (2018).

Meanwhile, she also combines Operational Code Analysis which explains how leaders utilize their beliefs as a filter to process incoming information and maintain consistency in their decision-making. When it comes to political decision-making, leaders respond not to an objective reality, but rather to their own subjective perception of reality, which is shaped by their belief system. The significance of belief systems in explaining foreign policy is often overlooked by other structural theories. Cognitive theories, particularly the Operational Code Approach (OCA), recognize that beliefs play an active role in guiding decision-makers by shaping their motivations, perceptions, and biases, rather than merely reflecting the external reality. The impact of beliefs on foreign policy-making becomes particularly prominent in uncertain environments, when new information challenges pre-existing beliefs, or when strong emotions such as hatred, unease, or anger come into play. Beliefs can mirror external information, which can shape decision-makers' strategies for conflict management, trade wars, economic sanctions, institutional reforms, and support for or opposition to international agreement. The effectiveness and reliability of the OCA have been enhanced by the development of automated coding systems such as the Verbs in Context System (VICS) to calculate and formulate the operational code of a subject that is analyzed. In the case of Donald Trump, White argues that Donald Trump exhibits characteristics of being closed to information, challenging constraints, and being either task- or relationship-focused depending on the situation. These three traits indicate that his leadership style can vary between expansionism and evangelistic approaches. Expansionists focus on increasing

their own or their country's power and influence, which is intriguing considering Trump stating his beliefs openly that the US should not expand its influence into other nations, but rather concentrate on job growth and stricter borders. However, this aligns with Trump's past actions of signing executive orders that are deemed unconstitutional and attempting to expand his personal authority. On the other hand, evangelists focus on persuading others to embrace their message and join their cause, which could explain Trump's inclination to address large crowds and emphasize their own popularity. The discrepancy between these two styles can be attributed to the different interactions Trump has had with various audiences in the analyzed speech acts. For instance, Donald Trump primarily directs his tweets to his supporters, emphasizing the need to enhance America's global power and status. Conversely, during spontaneous interviews with the press, Trump's message is directed towards his main adversaries, such as "fake news" reporters and Democrats, urging the public to back them. Trump's tendency to be closed to information suggests that he is an ideologue who interprets the environment based on their own worldview. According to Hermann, evangelists typically do not fare well in popularity contests, which could explain why Donald Trump lost the popular vote in the 2016 election and consistently received approval ratings below 50% according to Gallup Polls. Another aspect of Trump's leadership is the record-breaking turnover rate within their administration. Consistent with his personality profile, Donald Trump fired individuals like Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Chief Strategist Steve Bannon, FBI Director James Comey, and National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster when they opposed their foreign

policies. Trump also replaced them with more hawkish advisors who shared their perspectives.

From the three articles above, it could be concluded that many scholars have analyzed Trump's characteristics through several frameworks such as Poliheuristic Theory, Leadership Trait Analysis, and Operational Code Analysis. However, many observations have referred more to Donald Trump's foreign policy towards security issues such as the Iranian nuclear deal and US-Pakistan relations. There are only a few observations that have covered Donald Trump's idiosyncratic factors on issues regarding bilateral trade or international political economy. Despite this, the author also aims to continue on existing academic papers that have conducted studies on Donald Trump's idiosyncratic factors in response to the Trade War with China that utilizes *Personality as a Factor in Foreign Policy Making*. Therefore, this paper will utilize the *Leadership Trait Analysis* to explain how Donald Trump's idiosyncratic factors have defined tendencies and patterns in making certain decisions as a leader towards the emergence of Trade War with China as it has never been delved into before.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

Foreign policy is the core of international politics that determines the course of actions from one country to another. Referencing Valerie Hudson, in *Foreign Policy Analysis Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*, classic foreign policy analysis refers to group decision-making that is done by leaders and his

administration or international organizations.³⁴ However, in contemporary foreign policy analysis, state has not become the main subject for its level of analysis. As we approach international politics post-Cold War era, foreign policy analysis shifts to view how decisions were made by a singular actor as the level of analysis. The use of actor-specific and actor-general theory has become a new way to understand an individual's point of view and its correlation to foreign policy making, particularly focusing on five aspects of psychosocial context of foreign policy in substantial research which are: (1) individual characteristics, (2) perceptions, (3) society and culture, (4) the polity, and (5) the international system.³⁵ The level of analysis that is going to be used in this research is the role of an individual as the decision-maker and his decision-making process. Therefore, to further investigate the level of analysis, the concept of political psychology is going to be the foundation of the theoretical framework. Cottam et. al defines political psychology as the concept to explain what people do, by adapting psychological concepts so that they are useful and relevant to politics, and then applying it to the analysis of an issue.³⁶ Cottam also argues that Political psychology has emerged as a significant discipline in both political science and psychology, providing insights into various aspects of political behavior. One of its key objectives is to establish general principles that can explain and predict events occurring in diverse situations. To understand and forecast behavior,

³⁴ Hudson, Valerie M., and Christopher S. Vore. "Foreign Policy Analysis Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow." *Mershon International Studies Review* 39, no. 2 (1995): 209–38. <https://doi.org/10.2307/222751>.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 226.

³⁶ Martha L. Cottam, et. al., *Introduction to Political Psychology* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2016.), 8

political psychologists adopt a scientific method that follows a cyclic process consisting of four steps. The first step involves systematic and unsystematic observations of behavior and events. Based on these observations, researchers develop initial hypotheses regarding the factors or variables influencing the observed behavior. The second step entails formulating tentative explanations or hypotheses, making predictions about the relationship between variables. In the third step, further observations and experiments are conducted to test the validity of the hypothesis. Finally, in the fourth step, researchers refine and retest their explanations by reformulating their hypothesis based on the observations made in the previous step. This may involve exploring the boundaries of the phenomenon, investigating causal relationships, or expanding on the discovered connections. Undoubtedly, employing the scientific method necessitates a substantial amount of time dedicated to careful observations.³⁷ Additionally, the research will also utilize psychobiography as a way to learn about an individual's sociological development of three patterns of personality which are character, world view, and style; starting from their early lives and tracing them to their crucial initial successes in independent politics. It is during this early success that a template for effective action and positive feedback is established, shaping the leader's subsequent career as they seek to emulate and reproduce that successful pattern.³⁸

Cottam's concept of Political Being will act as the vessel of the supporting theoretical frameworks utilized in this paper. The Political Being refers to psychological aspects that affect an individual's political behavior. Cottam

³⁷ Ibid., 4.

³⁸ Ibid., 6.

identified five aspects that compose a political being which are personality, values, identity, attitudes, cognition and emotion.³⁹ Personality sits at the core of our political thinking, influencing other aspects of our thoughts and being influenced by life experiences. Hence, it explains why personality plays a central role in shaping our political behavior. It is an individual's unique psychological characteristic, although there are certain traits that are commonly shared among people. While individuals may have similarities in traits such as thinking complexity and desire for power and achievement, the specific combination of these traits varies, making each person unique. Although personalities are generally resistant to change, they have a constant and ongoing impact on our behavior and predispositions. Interestingly, personality also operates at a subconscious level, as individuals rarely consciously consider how their personalities influence their political preferences. Instead, personality drives behavioral predispositions without requiring conscious reflection on their origins. Therefore, personality is a fundamental component of our political thoughts and emotions. Within the field of political psychology, much of the focus on personality revolves around the traits of political leaders and how specific combinations of these traits impact their leadership styles.

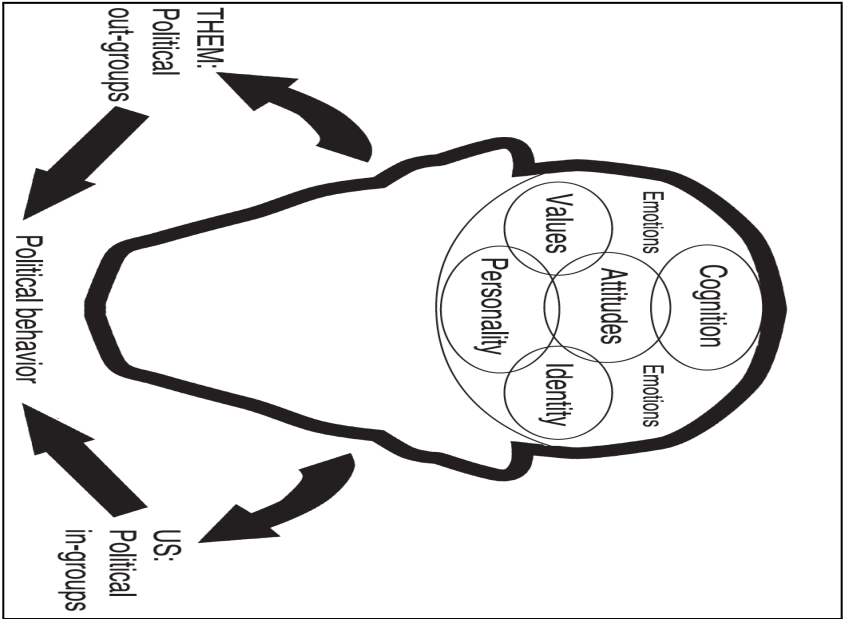
The following aspects of a Political Being are values and identity.⁴⁰ Values often carry a significant emotional weight, evoking strong feelings and attachment. Our beliefs and goals related to ourselves, our loved ones, and political principles can elicit intense emotions. For instance, someone who

³⁹ Martha Cottam et. al, Op-cit., 11.

⁴⁰ Martha Cottam et. al, Op-cit., 9.

strongly values non-violence may be politically inclined to oppose war, refuse military service, and even be willing to face imprisonment to uphold that value. Meanwhile, personal identity is closely intertwined with our self-descriptions and is often shaped by enduring personal relationships. In the case of someone with a strong opposition to violence, their identity may be closely tied to a religious affiliation, and being religious becomes a significant part of their sense of self.

Image 1.1 Cottam’s Concept of Political Being



Source: Introduction to Political Psychology⁴¹.

Values, emotions, and identities are deeply ingrained and relatively stable aspects of Cottam’s concept, which is why it is also at the core of our Political Being's mind. Next, the concept of political being has attitudes. Attitudes are defined as units of thought composed of knowledge and emotional response. For example, a

⁴¹ Martha Cottam et. al, Op-cit., 10.

high-policy maker with a political attitude towards funding towards public health as a good thing will increase his or her spending on public health. In the diagram of Political Being, it is located on top of the mind because it is related to an individual's cognition to information, and is subject to change when an individual receives new socialization or information (see Image 1.1).⁴²

Next, the aspect of emotion is defined as an aspect that invades all other aspects in the Political Being, because emotions interact (affects and is affected) within the other aspects of the concept. Cottam describes politics as an emotion-evoking arena of life, hence it can be found in other aspects such as values, identity and attitudes. Lastly, the aspect of cognition of cognitive processes. Cognition is defined as the channel where the mind and environment connects and facilitates the process of receiving information, interpreting an individual's environment, as well as responding to it. Furthermore, the cognitive system in an individual's brain also allows humans to break down information from our surroundings into understandable and recognizable units and utilize said information towards further interactions. Cottam also explained the external factors of psychological aspects of political behavior within the interactions of an individual and its political environment. Important social units (groups) that share the same values as the political being are referred to as 'us' or in-groups, while the opposition social units are referred to as 'them' or out-groups. An individual is able to identify an in-group or out-group based on their social identity that is derived from their national, gender, age, race, ethnicity, occupation, and other

⁴² Martha Cottam et. al, Op-cit., 11.

kinds of group memberships.⁴³ However, social identity is not only restricted to group dynamics, where in fact people may be influenced by groups, but can also be personally driven to support groups that could go as far as sacrificing something for the sake of the group. Another aspect of the political environment that the Political Being interacts with is the presence of other groups that they do not belong to but must engage with in politics. Just as people organize their social environment, they also organize the political environment including their enemies and allies. Some of these actors may pose a threat to the deeply held values and groups that the Political Being strongly identifies with, such as an enemy. On the other hand, allies offer opportunities to achieve important goals that align with the individual's interests and the groups they associate with. All these psychological elements interact and contribute to the patterns of behavior that will be examined through other theoretical frameworks in the thesis. However, it's important to note that not all of these factors are active at all times. For instance, one's attitudes towards political candidates may not have a direct impact on political preferences on a daily basis, but they become influential during elections. Similarly, the significance of nationalism may only come into play when a nation is threatened or there is an opportunity for its advancement. Moreover, the relative importance of these factors can vary at different points in time. Personality, for example, can become particularly significant when a President is facing a major crisis. Perceptions of another country as an enemy may also be crucial during such a crisis. On the other hand, the President's social identity with their ethnic group may not play a role during the crisis but could be relevant when advocating for

⁴³ Ibid., 12

specific legislation. The concept of Political Being will also be further discussed through theoretical frameworks of Margaret Hermann and Thomas Preston that explore idiosyncratic factors of a leader as a high-policy maker.

The conceptual scheme of idiosyncrasy developed by Margaret G. Herman is going to be used to perform an analysis on Donald Trump's idiosyncratic factors by dissecting Donald Trump's early childhood to his early career before he became a presidential candidate. Hermann's idiosyncrasy conceptual scheme consists of *beliefs, motives, view of the world, decision style, interpersonal style, and personal political style*. Hermann argues that these six characteristics have suggested an impact on how leaders make political decisions.⁴⁴ Beliefs refer to a political leader's assumption about the world, how a leader perceives human interactions, conflicts, maintenance of national sovereignty and superiority as an objective of a nation's interest are subjective to each individual. Meanwhile, motives explain how a leader's personal goals, ambitions, and values attribute to how he or she strategizes a foreign policy and interprets interaction with other countries. Next, decision style refers to how leaders determine the methods and step-by-step process to make a decision. Leaders possess different styles of approaches to an opportunity for cooperation or to respond towards a threat; in which Hermann argues to have correlated to each individual's way of thinking to assess risks, the complexity of structuring, and processing information.⁴⁵ Lastly, interpersonal style defines the characteristic ways in which leaders deal with other

⁴⁴ Hermann, Margaret G. "Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior Using the Personal Characteristics of Political Leaders." *International Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (1980): 7–46.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2600126>.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

high policy makers. There are two interpersonal characteristics that are often found in leaders, namely paranoia (excessive distrust) and Machiavellianism (casuistic and manipulative behavior).

Thus, the first theoretical framework that will be utilized to explain Donald Trump's characteristics and tendencies specifically towards the case study of the emergence of the Trade War with China is the *Leadership Trait Analysis* by Margaret Hermann. Seven traits have been identified as useful for assessing leadership style: (1) the belief in one's ability to influence or control outcomes, (2) the desire for power and influence, (3) the ability to understand and differentiate things and people in the environment, (4) self-confidence, (5) a preference for problem-solving and achieving goals rather than focusing on group maintenance and considering others' ideas and sensitivities, (6) a general distrust or suspicion of others, and (7) the intensity of favoring one's own group over others. Evaluating a leader's conceptual complexity and self-confidence helps determine their openness to information, while examining their ingroup bias, distrust of others, and preference for problem-solving provides insight into their motivations. This theory will help explain how each trait can be assessed through analyzing leaders' interview responses, and discuss the implications of different outcomes on these traits for leadership styles.⁴⁶

Finally, the theoretical framework developed by Thomas Preston that explains an individual's leadership style by categorizing them into typologies that

⁴⁶ Margaret Hermann, *ASSESSING LEADERSHIP STYLE: A TRAIT ANALYSIS* (Social Science Automation, Inc., 1999).

are defined by two main dimensions: 1) the leader's need for control and involvement of a president over policy-making processes; and 2) the leader's need for information and general sensitivity to context.⁴⁷ Using Margaret Herman's Leadership Trait Analysis Technique, Preston explains that a leader's need for power and prior experience or policy expertise in a certain policy domain will define how much involvement the amount of control that a president will have in the policy-making process. Hence, this framework proves how different individuals have different levels of desire for control over their surroundings (see Table 1.1).⁴⁸

Table 1.1 Preston's Model on Presidential Need for Control and Involvement in Policy Process

		<i>Prior Policy Experience or Expertise in Policy Area (General Interest Level of Desire for Involvement in Policy)</i>	
		High	Low
		Director	Magistrate
High Need for Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Decision making centralized in inner circle; ● Preference for direct control and involvement throughout policy process; ● Advocate own policy views, frame issues, and set specific policy guidelines; ● Leader relies upon own policy judgments more than those of expert advisers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Decision making centralized in inner circle; ● Preference for direct control over decisions but limited need for involvement throughout policy process; ● Sets general policy guidelines, but delegates policy formulation and implementation; ● Leader relies more upon the views of expert advisers than 	

⁴⁷ Martha Cottam et.al, Op-cit., 130.

⁴⁸ Martha Cottam et. al, Op-cit., 132.

	own.	
	Administrator	Delegator
Low Need for Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making is less centralized and more collegial. Leader requires less direct control over policy process and subordinates; • Enhanced roles of subordinates; • Actively advocates own views, frames issues, and sets specific policy guidelines; • Leader relies more on own judgments than those of expert advisers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making is less centralized and more collegial. Leader requires little/no direct control/ involvement in policy process; • Enhanced roles of subordinates; • Delegates policy formulation and implementation for subordinates; • Tendency to rely upon (and adopt) views of expert advisers in final policy decisions.

Source: Introduction to Political Psychology⁴⁹

Additionally, Preston also uses cognitive complexity and prior experiences of a leader to indicate a president's general sensitivity to context; which defines an individual's need for information, attentiveness, and sensitivity to his or her surrounding policy environment and worldview. Without a doubt, each individual is differentiated significantly in their general need for information towards their decision-making process; some prefer having a broad and deepened understanding about an issue before making decisions while others rely on their existing knowledge and experiences.

⁴⁹ Loc-Cit.

Table 1.2 Preston’s Model on Leaders’ Sensitivity to Context (Including Policy Environment, Institutional Constraints, Views of Subordinates)

		<i>Prior Policy Experience or Expertise in Policy Area</i>	
		High	Low
High Cognitive Complexity	Navigator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High general need for information & interest in foreign policy (FP); ● Active collector of information from policy environments; ● Greater sensitivity to constraints & enhanced search for information and advice from outside actors; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High general need for information, but limited personal interest in FP. ● Interested in information on policy specifics, but heavily dependent on expert advice. ● Reduced sensitivity to constraints on policy & less awareness of (search for) information & advice from outside actors.
	Sentinel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High personal interest in FP, but low need for information; ● Greater sensitivity to constraints & advice from outside actors; ● Seeks to guide policy along a path consistent with own personal principles, views, or past experience; ● Avoids broad search for policy information beyond that deemed relevant given past experience or existing personal views; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Low need for information & limited personal interest in FP; ● Avoids broad collection of general information—decisions driven by own idiosyncratic policy views & principles; ● Reduced sensitivity to constraints on policy & less awareness of (search for) information & advice from outside actors;
Low Cognitive Complexity	Maverick		

Source: Introduction to Political Psychology⁵⁰

The models that Preston generated have utilized empirical testing between leaders' characteristics and their foreign policy decision-making, by referencing the uses of their advisory system in the presidential library archives. This typology proves the dimensions of leadership across different policy domains and allows researchers to understand a leader's need for control and involvement, as well as sensitivity to policy information and context in policy-making (see Table 1.2).⁵¹ Hence, this theory will be used to analyze Donald Trump's leadership style in a more contingent notion based on his statements, publications, official documents, and supporting statements from his administration or advisory teams. It is hoped that through this theoretical framework, Donald Trump's leadership style towards US' foreign policy is able to be identified comprehensively.

1.6 Research and Data Collecting Method

1.6.1 Research Method

The research method that will be used in this paper will be descriptive analysis through qualitative research, specifically focusing on Donald Trump's psychobiography to discuss the reconstruction of events or phenomena that underlie the formation of a leader's thinking which becomes a decision maker or foreign policy. The author will set Donald Trump as an individual in the unit of analysis, in which the study will be longitudinal to provide a timeline of the

⁵⁰ Martha L. Cottam, *Op-cit.*, 133.

⁵¹ Martha Cottam et. al, *Op-cit.*, 134.

individual being studied. This will be done by collecting, evaluating, and verifying to synthesize evidence for analysis and strong conclusions.

1.6.2 Data Collecting Method

The data collection instrument will use qualitative observation through several media such as, but not limited to: writing, audio and videos released publicly, Donald Trump's presidential speeches in different settings, personal social media statements and/or writing released by Donald Trump or his administration, and official publications from scholars, academia, or the US government. These data will become the primary source to formulate arguments and analysis through the use of the Internet.

1.7 Research Structure

The discussion of the research will be divided into 4 parts. The first part will discuss the background of the research, problem identification, research focus, research question, objectives and practical usage of the research, literature review, theoretical framework of the research, and the research and data collection method. The second part will discuss Donald Trump's life story, starting from his childhood to his adolescence, his career timeline, and his personality traits (belief, motives, global perspectives, decision-making style, interpersonal style, and political style). The third part will specifically discuss how Donald Trump's idiosyncratic factors affect the course of the US foreign policy, especially in the Trade War against China and how he has responded to his environment, global politics agendas, and his interests towards international relations. Lastly, the final part will conclude the argument and the findings that this research has covered.

