

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/dominant-personality-and-politically-inexperienced-presidents-challenge-term-limits/>

This video discusses a research project which investigates the behavior of Latin American presidents, focusing particularly on the tendency of some leaders to attempt to overstay their terms in office by relaxing constitutional term limits. The researcher conducted interviews with 24 presidents across nine Latin American countries, exploring how individual characteristics, governance contexts, and relationships with constitutions influence presidential actions.

The research reveals that dominant personality traits, such as a desire for control and a tendency to impose their will, correlate with attempts to relax term limits. The study also suggests that politically inexperienced leaders are more likely to pursue such changes due to their naivete about the challenges involved and the backlash they may face.

After surveying over 1,000 experts to evaluate the psychometric characteristics of presidents from 1945 to 2021, the findings indicate that leaders with high dominance scores are significantly more likely to attempt to change term limits. Additionally, the study highlights that weak enforcement of constitutional rules makes it easier for leaders to violate them, undermining democratic norms and institutions.

The consequences of these actions often include the erosion of democracy, as seen in countries like Argentina, Honduras, Peru, and Venezuela, which transitioned from semi-democracies to authoritarian regimes under such leaders. The researcher emphasizes the need for further studies to understand the psychological profiles of leaders that correlate with these detrimental behaviors, suggesting that insights from differential psychology could improve our understanding of how leadership characteristics influence political outcomes. Ultimately, the goal of the research is to identify the factors that lead presidents to become overreaching leaders and the impact they have on democratic governance.