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Political leadership analysis - the case of Isabel Díaz Ayuso

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Abstract

Political leaders, in Spain and globally, are under constant public scrutiny, both in their daily activities and during election campaigns. This study explores leadership theories—such as trait, behavioral, contingency, and situational theories—as applied to the political sphere. In the methodology section, we highlight key theoretical aspects of perception and leadership. This leads us to analyze the case of Isabel Díaz Ayuso, President of the Community of Madrid. To substantiate these concepts, we examine relevant tools, including electoral surveys and leader evaluation polls. The study's conclusions address the research questions posed. It is confirmed that one of the primary characteristics of the Madrilenian leader is her credibility, and that her support is based on her authenticity. Furthermore, we determine that, among the various existing leadership types, Ayuso can be classified within contingency models and trait theory. The period analyzed covers the time immediately preceding the last elections in the Community of Madrid, held on May 28, 2023.

Keywords: leadership; perception; Díaz Ayuso; Madrid; surveys.

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Análisis del liderazgo político: el caso de Isabel Díaz Ayuso

Resumen

Los líderes políticos, en España y en todo el mundo, están bajo el escrutinio constante de la opinión pública, tanto en su día a día como al presentarse a elecciones. Este estudio explora teorías del liderazgo —como las de rasgos, conductual, contingente y situacional— aplicadas al ámbito político. En la sección metodológica, destacamos los aspectos teóricos clave de la percepción y el liderazgo. Esto nos lleva a analizar el caso de Isabel Díaz Ayuso, presidenta de la Comunidad de Madrid. Para fundamentar estos conceptos, examinamos herramientas relevantes, incluyendo encuestas electorales y de evaluación de líderes. Las conclusiones del estudio responden a las preguntas de investigación planteadas. Se confirma que una de las características principales de la líder madrileña es su credibilidad, y que su apoyo se sustenta en su autenticidad. Asimismo, determinamos que, entre los diversos tipos de liderazgo existentes, Ayuso puede ser clasificada dentro de los modelos contingentes y la teoría de los rasgos. El periodo analizado abarca el tiempo inmediatamente previo a las últimas elecciones de la Comunidad de Madrid, celebradas el 28 de mayo de 2023.

Palabras clave: liderazgo; percepción; Díaz Ayuso; Madrid; encuestas.

1. Introduction

This research examines the concept of political leadership and its perception by voters through a specific case study. Perception serves as a common thread, influencing how voters evaluate leaders beyond their external appearance or communication style, extending to their perceived ability to deliver on electoral promises. This concept of perception, encompassing derivatives like credibility and attractiveness, is intrinsically linked to leadership—a quality voters actively seek in candidates. This paper analyzes various leadership theories—including trait, behavioral, contingent, and situational—exploring their relevance and applicability to political leaders.

While Spain boasts numerous political figures, Isabel Díaz Ayuso, the

President of the Community of Madrid, has emerged as particularly prominent in recent years. Her influence isn't limited to her region; she's increasingly become a significant figure in Spanish politics through her arguments, public appearances, and actions. This article will analyze Isabel Díaz Ayuso's performance in the regional elections of May 28, 2023, the most recent to date. Notably, in every election she has contested as a candidate, she has consistently improved upon her previous results.

While this study focuses on a single case—a limitation to acknowledge—the analysis of such a prominent figure in Spanish politics offers significant insights. Despite this inherent limitation, the conclusions drawn may inform future, broader studies involving multiple leaders

across various countries. Our analysis not only indicates that Isabel Díaz Ayuso is perceived as a credible leader but also that her leadership style aligns with both contingent models and trait theory.

This study seeks to address two primary research questions: Given public evaluations of Isabel Díaz Ayuso, which concepts related to leader perception—specifically credibility, attractiveness, or power—demonstrate the strongest correlation with the Madrilenian politician?; Among the various leadership theories explored in this work, including trait, behavioral, contingent, and situational models, which best characterizes Isabel Díaz Ayuso's leadership style, and what are the underlying reasons for this classification?

The figure of the Madrilenian leader, Isabel Díaz Ayuso, consistently draws the interest of researchers in this field. This is due not only to her individual political profile but also to the significant role and influence of the Community of Madrid within Spain.

The chosen methodology emphasizes key theoretical aspects of both perception and leadership, leading to a focused case study on Isabel Díaz Ayuso, President of the Community of Madrid. Ayuso has, in recent years, solidified her position as a highly relevant figure in the Spanish political landscape through her decisive actions and compelling arguments.

To supplement this theoretical framework, we will analyze data from essential tools: electoral surveys and political leader evaluation surveys. These are conducted by specialized research firms and subsequently published by various media outlets, providing crucial insights into voter perceptions of leaders. For this study, we

have selected data from three prominent research companies with both regional and national experience. The media outlets chosen for data collection include a national television channel, a national print newspaper, and a national digital newspaper.

The analysis focuses on the period immediately preceding the most recent elections in the Community of Madrid, which took place on May 28, 2023.

2. Methodological approach

This study aims to analyze the perception of political leadership through the specific case of Isabel Díaz Ayuso, President of the Community of Madrid, rather than political leaders in a general sense. The analysis begins by highlighting the most relevant theoretical aspects of both perception and leadership, which then frame our specific case study. These foundational ideas are further refined by identifying the most significant existing models in this regard, derived from a thorough bibliographic review.

Beyond the design of this research, we meticulously collect data from both electoral and opinion polls, categorizing them into elements such as the evolution of voting intentions and leader evaluations. Subsequently, applying the technique of content analysis (Krippendorff, 1990), these variables are used to either support or refute the aforementioned concepts and their subsequent application to the specific case of Isabel Díaz Ayuso.

The period selected for this analysis encompasses the months leading up to the Madrid regional elections on May 28, 2023. This timeframe was chosen to ensure the relevance and validity of the data, given its close proximity to the

election date.

We analyze surveys conducted by experienced national and regional firms, including SigmaDos, GAD3, and Data10. These surveys, published by various media outlets, provide insights into public perceptions of Díaz Ayuso's leadership. The chosen media outlets represent three distinct formats: Antena 3, a generalist television channel with significant national viewership; ABC, a national newspaper with wide circulation; and Okdiario, a national digital newspaper, albeit one established more recently.

3. Theoretical framework

In developing our theoretical framework, we will focus on analyzing perception theories, the concept of leadership, and its various styles.

3.1. Theories of Perception

Among the key elements of political communication, the perception of a political leader stands out as particularly relevant for this study. This perception must consider not only the politician themselves but also the role of the media and, as Andrew Leigh (2002) observed, communication consultants. Leigh highlighted their significant role, particularly in the United States during the 1980s and 1990s, in maintaining the media's focus on political strategy and tactics. This phenomenon has since adapted to the Spanish context and, in recent years, has contributed to the notion of political disaffection.

In Spain, the perception of politicians consistently emerges as a significant concern for citizens. The primary institution responsible for conducting surveys on this matter is the

Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS), which, as it states, "aims at the scientific study of Spanish society" (CIS, 2023). In its May 2023 barometer—the same month as the elections under study—the question posed was: "What do you consider to be the main problem currently existing in Spain? And the second? And the third?" Among the top ten concerns, citizens cited political issues on three occasions (3rd, 5th, and 8th place). Notably, the perception of political leaders (categorized as "Government and individual parties or politicians") ranked eighth among these concerns.

In the realm of political communication, one crucial concept intertwined with perception is credibility. Indeed, a leader's perceived credibility significantly shapes how potential voters view them. As early as Hovland et al. (1953) noted, credibility is largely determined by the audience's perception of the source. This means audience members attribute credibility based on the expert knowledge and trustworthiness they perceive in the source.

According to Professor Arceo (1993, p. 18), the credibility we refer to is composed of three sub-factors:

- **Competence or Capacity:** This encompasses updated aptitude, expertise, or authority on the matter in question.
- **Ethical Reliability:** This refers to the idea of honesty and integrity.
- **Dynamism and Social Effectiveness:** This denotes positive effectiveness within the relevant domain (in this case, politics).

When analyzing a politician's perception, some authors, such as Fernández-Vázquez and Somer-Topcu (2019), specifically examine the figure of the party leader. This approach is

particularly relevant to our study of Isabel Díaz Ayuso within the Community of Madrid, Spain.

Another significant concept influencing voter perception and subsequent decision-making is attractiveness. Lawson, Lenz, Baker, and Myers (2010, p. 562) observed that “candidate appearance matters more when elections focus on individual candidates, rather than parties, and when the costs of acquiring information about candidates are high.” This leader-voter influence manifests when the public positively regards a leader’s gestures, voice, physical appearance, or personal demeanor, among other aspects.

1. Another concept contributing to the public image and, consequently, the perception of a political candidate is power. According to Arceo (1993), this term comprises several elements:
2. **Control and Administration of Rewards and Punishments:** This refers to the audience’s assessment of the source’s ability to carry out such activities.
3. **Interest in the Receiver’s Opinion:** This involves the audience’s judgment of whether their agreement or disagreement is of interest to the source.
4. **Control of Deviations:** This pertains to the public’s assessment of how likely it is that the source can observe whether or not the advocated position is adopted by the receiver.

3.2. Leadership

The academic literature offers numerous definitions of leadership. Stogdill (1950) defined it as a process aimed at influencing a specific group

of people to achieve an established objective. Later, Garner (1990) posited that, through persuasion, an individual or group can induce others to commit to objectives championed and shared by the leader. This definition aligns well with political leadership, where persuasion is a key tool for politicians to reach their potential audience. What is clear from these various concepts is that “there is no one definition or particular leadership approach that is considered universal and efforts continue in trying to identify what makes an effective leader” (Benmira and Agboola, 2021, p. 3).

It’s also important to note that “political leadership is dynamic, and the same leader may adopt different leadership styles throughout the various phases of their political career” (Calignano and Nilsen, 2024, p. 482).

In essence, leadership is fundamentally based on the influence a leader exerts over their followers to achieve individual or group objectives. This dynamic is particularly evident in politics, where this process “entails a dependency relationship where followers surrender the authority or power to define and interpret reality to their leaders” (Liden, Wang and Wang, 2025, p. 2).

3.3. Leadership styles

Regarding the different types of leadership, we will examine in this section the most relevant theories concerning the object of this work.

• Trait Theory

Trait theory posits that leaders possess inherent personality characteristics that enable their effectiveness. Prominent authors like Stogdill and Ghiselli assert that leaders

are born with certain traits “that allow them to face issues of urgency, and the prompt and adequate management of processes and unforeseen events” (Escandón and Hurtado, 2016, p.139). These include intelligence, intuition, capacity, foresight, and integrity. The theory suggests that such innate qualities facilitate a leader’s work, enabling them to maximize their team’s potential through delegation, trust, active listening, and thoughtful questioning—dynamics equally applicable to political leaders and their teams. Alcázar (2020, p. 93) further emphasizes that “the trait theory states that leaders are differentiated from non-leaders by their personal characteristics.” Early studies struggled with the sheer number of identifiable traits, making concrete evaluation difficult. However, later theorists, such as Goldberg, simplified this by focusing on the “Big Five” personality factors: extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experience, which offer a more manageable framework for understanding a leader’s characteristic traits.

• Behavioral Theories

Among behavioral leadership models, research from Ohio and Michigan Universities is particularly noteworthy. Ohio University studies identified two key variables in leader behavior. According to Torres (2020, p. 69), these are, firstly, **consideration**, referring to behaviors aimed at maintaining or improving relationships between the leader and followers. Secondly, **structure**, which encompasses behaviors oriented towards task achievement. Stanca (2021, p. 3) notes that these studies proposed different leadership styles,

driven by the expectation of finding a reliable alternative to purely task-oriented or purely people-oriented leadership.

Research conducted at the University of Michigan focused on both work and results-focused and employee-focused behaviors. The significance of these studies lies in their emphasis on the leader’s observable conduct. Stanca highlights that Michigan’s studies revealed that leaders adopting a production-centered style emphasized close supervision, legitimate and coercive power, routine, and performance. Conversely, leaders employing an employee-centered style were characterized by a greater concern for their subordinates as individuals, recognizing their needs such as well-being, advancement, and growth.

Also within behavioral theories is Mouton and Blake’s Managerial Grid, developed from 1964, which separates two major management dimensions: concern for personnel and concern for production. As Morandi and Cicchetti (2023, p. 185) state, “The grid model provides a fundamental snapshot of individuals’ leadership styles, which is worthy of recognition.” They propose five distinct leadership styles based on the degree of concern for people versus concern for the task: Country Club, Team Leader, Middle-of-the-Road, Impoverished, and Produce or Perish.

• Contingent and Situational Theories

Contingent theories emerged due to the difficulty in consistently identifying universal traits and behaviors characteristic of effective leadership. These models propose that leaders achieve success by understanding their own leadership style, accurately

diagnosing specific situations, and skillfully modifying both situations and/or styles to ensure optimal fit. Contingent leadership theory differentiates between task-oriented leaders and relationship-oriented leaders. The former primarily focuses on ensuring that necessary tasks are completed effectively and on schedule to achieve objectives. The latter, as Shonk (2023) highlights, prioritizes building strong, lasting relationships with their team members and fostering a healthy work culture.

In contrast, situational theories emphasize the importance of understanding the specific context a leader faces, thereby dictating the necessary leadership capacity to apply. Therefore, situational leadership is viewed as a theory that merges both **directive** and **supportive** dimensions, requiring the correct application of each in a given situation. Leaders operating under this theory “have to assess their employees through evaluating their commitment to accomplish a certain task” (Ghazzawi et al., 2017, p. 103).

Among these theories, Fiedler’s contingency model is particularly prominent. Fiedler (1964, p. 153) defined a leader as “an individual in the group, who directs and coordinates task-relevant group activities, or who, in the absence of a designated leader, automatically performs these functions in the group.” A core tenet of his model is that a person’s leadership style is relatively fixed. Consequently, if a leader’s style is deemed unsuitable for a specific situation, transferring them to another area is considered the most appropriate solution (López, 2023, p. 3).

The Hersey-Blanchard situational leadership model also stands out, postulating a flexible leadership style. This model emphasizes that various

workplace factors, including the leader’s relationship with their employees, must be considered to adapt the leadership approach.

Following this analysis of leadership theories, we can now delineate the main features of Isabel Díaz Ayuso’s personality. The Madrilenian leader is characterized by her direct and often confrontational tone, particularly towards her political adversaries, offering forceful responses to criticism. Through simple and direct language, she projects an image of accessibility and closeness. Her discourse consistently reinforces Madrid’s identity as a symbol of modernity and growth. Furthermore, her resistance to political correctness often generates highly polarized opinions. These traits can serve as a valuable starting point for defining the characteristics of other political leaders in diverse contexts.

4. Political leadership: discussion and Results

This section examines electoral and opinion polls, the media outlets through which they were disseminated, and an analysis of their findings and broader media impact.

4.1. Electoral and Opinion Polls

As Porter (2022, p. 92) notes, “in contemporary democratic societies, the use of opinion polls is very common, since opportunity and convenience are very relevant criteria at the time of decision making in the implementation, execution or change in the public policies of governments.”

López Pintor, drawing on Berelson and Janowitz (1953) in his work on opinion polls in Spain, highlights:

The main contribution of surveys to the study of opinion formation lies in the accumulation of data over time. Once a body of responses to standardized opinion questions is available, it becomes possible to establish trends in the development of opinions and relate them to external events, political or military. Unfortunately, the number of such longitudinal data sets is limited, since opinion survey organizations have generally not taken on such a task. Moreover, opinion trend data have to be conducted and evaluated within a certain analytical framework (López, 2020, p. 157).

However, the insights provided by these studies are not always accurate. As López Paz (2022, p. 1) points out, polls sometimes fail, creating a “knowledge gap” in the information voters expect, which can be viewed as a form of disinformation.

Here are the polling firms included in this study:

1. *Sigma Dos*: Established in 1982, Sigma Dos is a leading market research and opinion polling company both in Spain and internationally. Its affiliation with Eurostar Mediagroup ensures it remains at the forefront of innovation across technology, methodology, and research domains (Sigma Dos, 2024).

2. *GAD3*: This social research and communications consultancy offers comprehensive services to companies and organizations by integrating expertise in consulting, research, and communication. They bring 20 years of experience in data analysis and interpretation, along with the necessary tools for fostering business development across various sectors (GAD3, 2023).

3. *Data10, Electomanía*: Founded in 2013, *Electomanía* aims to bridge the gap between citizens and political news by analyzing survey data. It is committed to maintaining informational integrity from

a neutral stance, aspiring to become a benchmark for political news. With a robust base of 10,000 unique daily users and an average of over 100,000 monthly users, it has established itself as one of the most significant independent user communities for national political news (Electomanía, 2023).

4.2. Media

The media outlets that published the aforementioned poll data are as follows:

1. *Antena 3*: This national television channel, part of the Atresmedia group, broadcast the survey conducted by *Sigma Dos*. *Antena 3* led the 2023-2024 season with an average audience share of 12.9% (Atresmedia, 2023). It reached an average of 11.7 million unique daily viewers and consistently topped prime time for the fourth consecutive season, in addition to leading morning, afternoon, and evening slots (Méndez, 2024).
2. *ABC*: The newspaper ABC published a survey conducted by GAD3. ABC, the oldest national daily newspaper in Spain and part of the Vocento Group, remains deeply rooted in its founding values while continually evolving to adapt to technological innovations and societal shifts, aiming to provide the best news coverage (ABC, 2024). According to the second wave of data from the General Media Study (EGM), available in 2024, ABC accumulated a total of 343,000 daily readers (AIMC, 2024).
3. *Okdiario*: The digital newspaper Okdiario published a survey conducted by Data10. Founded in 2015, this national digital newspaper

achieved over 18.7 million unique browsers, more than 64.8 million visits, and over 103 million page views in July 2024, according to data from the Office of Justification of Diffusion (OJD, 2024).

4.3. Analysis

Before delving into the polling data, it is important to establish the ideological positioning of the political parties

included. From left to right, the order is as follows: Podemos, Más Madrid, Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE), Ciudadanos, Partido Popular (PP), and Vox.

The Sigma Dos poll, conducted two weeks prior to the May 28th elections (illustration 1), indicated that among the heads of the different party lists, Isabel Díaz Ayuso (PP) was the highest-rated, with a score of 5.2.

Illustration 1
Sigma Dos poll two weeks before the election



Source: Adapted from the graph broadcasted by Antena 3.

On the day the Sigma Dos survey was released on Antena 3, its general director, Rosa Díez, highlighted that Isabel Díaz Ayuso was the only political leader to achieve a passing grade, scoring 5.2 overall. Significantly, Ayuso also recorded the highest rating among her own voters, a 7, a mark unmatched by any other PP leader (Antena 3, 2023a).

Several authors attribute this high valuation of Díaz Ayuso to her **charisma**. Escanciano (2021) suggests that her charisma “reveals authenticity, from an original communicative aspect, in which her naturalness and conscious incorrectness

prevail.” This perceived authenticity, often cited in voter testimonies from various interviews, stems from the idea that Díaz Ayuso “seems real.” According to Ortega (2022, p. 38), this statement from voters conveys three key perceptions: a) she is knowable, allowing access to both the person and the candidate; b) she is brave, unafraid to express her thoughts, thereby projecting sincerity and honesty; and c) she is relatable, enabling voters to identify with her.

Based on the survey data and the aforementioned concepts of perception—credibility, attractiveness, and power—it can be inferred that voters perceive her as **credible**. An overall score of 5.2 is

particularly noteworthy given the current widespread political disaffection in Spain. Furthermore, 47.4% of Madrilenians considered the President of Madrid's management to be either good or very good. The most favorable view of her administration was observed among the population over 65 years of age, with 57.3% of this demographic holding a positive assessment (Antena 3, 2023b).

Taking into account both the percentage of support and the age demographic that viewed her management positively, we can classify Díaz Ayuso within the contingency models of leadership in the context of this survey. This leadership style necessitates adaptation to the specific

situation. In this instance, we refer to the Madrid government's management of the COVID-19 pandemic. This unprecedented crisis demanded a significant shift in how public affairs were managed, requiring Díaz Ayuso to adapt to a new and rapidly evolving scenario with all its consequences.

The GAD3 poll, published in the ABC newspaper on April 17th, was based on one thousand interviews conducted between the 11th and 12th of the same month. In this particular survey (illustration 2), Isabel Díaz Ayuso received a rating of 5.4, with evaluations ranging from 0 (very bad) to 10 (very good).

Illustration 2
The GAD3 poll before the election



Source: Adapted from the graph published by ABC

Isabel Díaz Ayuso employs an argumentative strategy that significantly enhances her positive perception. This argumentation frequently utilizes the technique of repetition, ensuring that certain words resonate with voters after repeated exposure in the media. Concepts such as “Spain,” “freedom,” “equality,” or “communism,” among many others, are consistently reiterated in her speeches, and “she has built her identity

based on these concepts” (Macías, 2022, p. 36).

This strategy leads voters to perceive her as a credible leader, contributing to her consistently high ratings. Many of her constituents believe that her arguments align with her actions. Consequently, some experts highlight the authenticity of the President of the Community of Madrid as one of her principal strengths. David

Álvaro, Director of Analysis, Studies, and Communication at Acento Public Affairs, noted in a report that:

The traditional error in political leaders is to try to copy or resemble previous success stories, but Ayuso sets her own profile, she shows herself to be natural and does not try to follow socially established patterns or models of behavior... this allows her to achieve a symbiosis and identification of herself with the citizens and of the citizens with her leadership (Magariños, 2021).

The characteristics described by Stogdill and Ghiselli in trait theory appear to be present in this case. Díaz Ayuso's impressive 8.4 vote recall rating suggests that her followers acknowledge these qualities and positively perceive her persistence throughout her tenure leading the Government of the Community of Madrid.

The Data10 poll, published on February 20th and based on 1,500 interviews conducted between the 8th and 16th of the same month, also positioned Isabel Díaz Ayuso as the best-rated leader and the only candidate to achieve a passing mark, with a score of 5.5. The Popular Party candidate garnered significant support among her party's voters, who rated her 8.1, and also secured notable support from Vox voters, with a rating of 6.3.

The data from this poll further underscores the credibility of the Madrilenian leader, as she consistently achieves the highest score among voters. Núñez (2022), a member of her cabinet, attributes Isabel Díaz Ayuso's high voter approval to her magnetism, which "responds to a disconcerting naturalness, an uncommon quality in a political leader." He emphasizes her straightforward style that "makes her credible, not because it is plain but

because it is true, and gives her direct access to people who lived with their backs to politics." He concludes that "her figure overflows the classical ideological boundaries and embodies a genuine and popular political phenomenon." As in the previous analysis, these observations suggest her alignment with trait theory, given her 8.1 vote recall rating, which indicates the enduring nature of her characteristics. Furthermore, based on these comments, Díaz Ayuso could also be classified within Mouton and Blake's managerial grid model, specifically in the team management quadrant, signifying a leader who demonstrates high commitment to both results and people.

In summary, the table 1 below highlights the main qualities that, according to experts, voters, and sociologists, have contributed to Díaz Ayuso's leadership. Among these, credibility stands out as the most defining characteristic of the President of Madrid.

Table 1
Main qualities of Isabel Díaz Ayuso

	Qualities
Sigma Dos	Authenticity Credibility Good management
GAD 3	Identity Credibility Persistence
Data 10	Credibility Naturalness Popular

5. Conclusion

Analyzing which of the attributes associated with leadership perception—credibility, attractiveness, or power—most aligns with Isabel Díaz Ayuso's profile requires close attention to the patterns

emerging from the various measurement instruments used. Consistently, the results indicate that the Madrilenian leader is predominantly perceived as a credible figure, with this quality understood as a subjective construct rooted in the collective perception of her competence, experience, and reliability.

Both the indicators derived from her consistently superior poll evaluations against adversaries and her demonstrated electoral successes strongly suggest that credibility forms a central pillar of her symbolic capital. In a socio-political climate marked by increasing skepticism toward political elites, the regional president stands out for her ability to project authenticity. This strengthens her bond with the electorate and carves out a distinct position for her in the contemporary political landscape.

Regarding the theoretical classification of Isabel Díaz Ayuso's leadership style, her profile can be simultaneously ascribed to the interpretative frameworks of the contingent model and trait theory. From a contingent perspective, her capacity to mobilize support across diverse contexts and her adaptability in strategic responses to evolving scenarios demonstrate a high degree of contextual flexibility. In a dynamic region like Madrid, highly sensitive to social, economic, and political transformations, Díaz Ayuso exhibits remarkable aptitude for interpreting the environment, redefining priorities, and adjusting her behavior to emerging demands.

Simultaneously, the consistency of her public positioning and her sustained levels of support in opinion polls also align her with the trait paradigm, which emphasizes the relevance of stable personal dispositions in shaping leadership. Traits such as extroversion,

strategic intuition, openness to experience, and high self-confidence are attributes that not only contribute to her effectiveness as a leader but also enable her to exercise a delegative and trust-based leadership approach with her collaborators.

Taken together, the convergence of these two theoretical approaches allows us to interpret Díaz Ayuso's leadership as a synthesis between individual disposition and adaptive capacity. This synthesis significantly contributes to her sustained relevance and influence within the political ecosystem over time.

Looking to the future, we believe this work can serve as a valuable foundation for new research avenues. The combination of leadership and perception offers a robust framework for analyzing the cases of numerous political leaders, facilitating even comparative analyses. The use of homogeneous electoral and opinion polls further provides practical tools for connecting these two concepts with citizen opinions. While this study's limitations include focusing on a single leader and only three polls, these very limitations present an opportunity for more extensive future research, not only within Spain but also through comparative studies with other countries in our environment.

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