

DECISION-MAKING MODELS

RATIONAL MODEL – decisions are the outcome of a process that is fully rational

Good as a simple way to consider state behavior.

Poor model of actual behavior. Think of all the ways your reasoning is bounded and, therefore, not rational. Moreover, look at the two models below where decisions are the outcome of interaction and relationships. These will not result in a “rational” outcome.

INSTITUTIONAL MODELS

Organizational Process Model -- decisions are the outcome of interaction among the involved government agencies, each with own behavior patterns (procedures), interests, and perceptions of the national interests and the best way ahead.

Bureaucratic Bargaining Model -- decisions are the outcome of bargaining among the involved government agencies, each with the ability to influence (power), interests, and perceptions of the national interests and best way ahead.

– These stress the significant role of bureaucratic organizations in decision-making and implementation. “Government agencies, departments, and individuals all have certain interests to preserve and promote. Those priorities, and the conflicts they sometimes spark, heavily influence the formulation and implementation of foreign policy.” Morton H. Halperin,

Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy

Good, if one is looking at how organizations influence the outcome.

Good, because it avoids over emphasis on “the” decision-maker

Poor as “the” model because it omits much else that is part of decision-making.

GOVERNMENTAL/POLITICAL – stresses the power relationship among all participants (individuals, groups, organizations) in determining decisions & implementation
Concerned about relative power and interests.

Close to my approach to power and goals.

A problem, it can **neglect causal factors** not included among the participants.

A problem, it can focus on behavior within a state or its government (hence the title) and **omit players not inside the state or the government.**

A problem, it can neglect the situation/context in which the decision is being made.

THEREFORE, I PREFER NOT A MODEL, BUT A DESCRIPTION AS THE BASIS TO CONSIDER DECISION-MAKING, USING ASPECTS OF ANY MODELS AS APPROPRIATE. THIS IS A FLEXIBLE APPROACH THAT ATTEMPTS TO CONSIDER ALL NECESSARY ASPECTS OF THE DECISION-MAKING SITUATION.

