



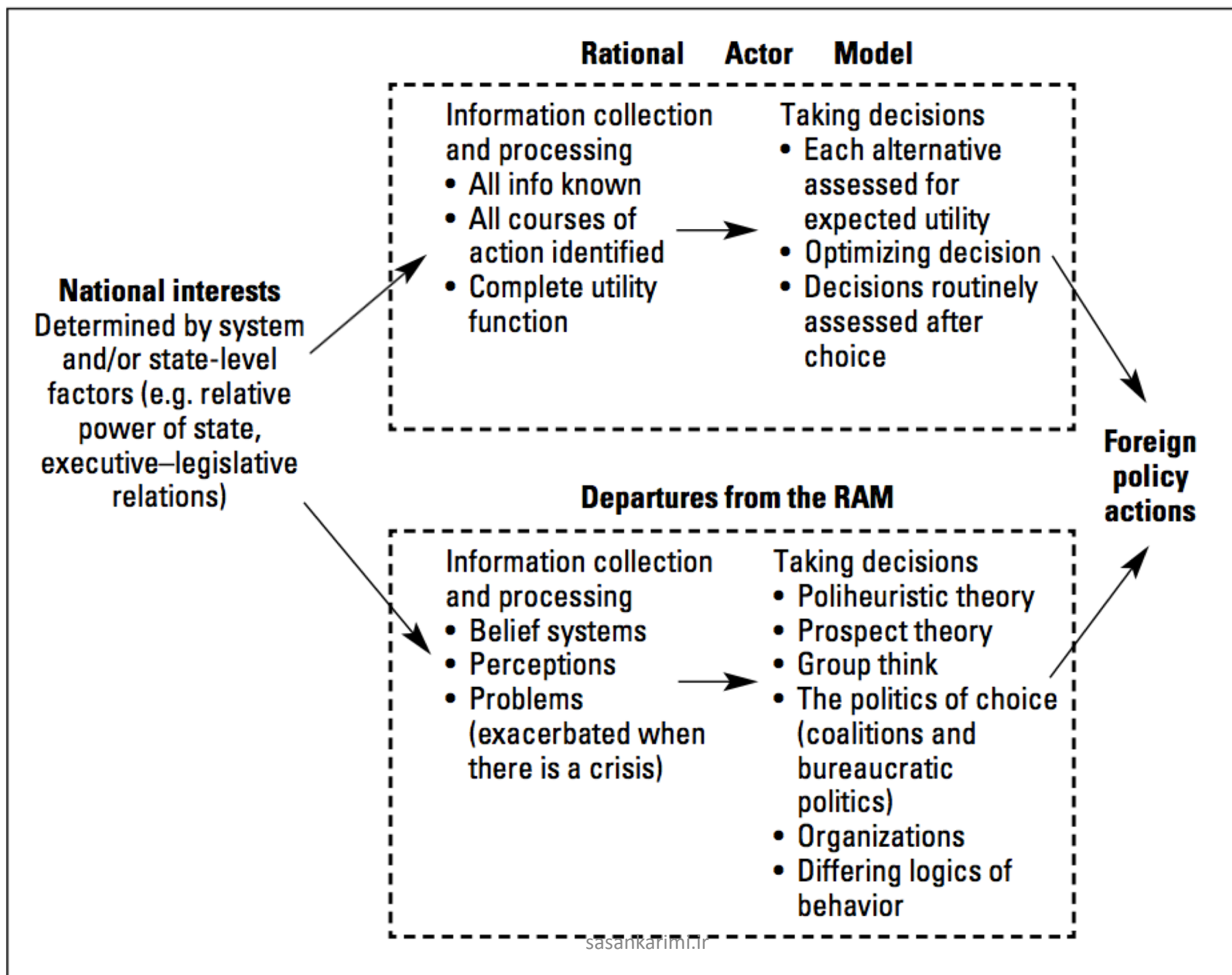
Iran Foreign Policy Course

Foreign Policy Analysis

Session five

Making choices

Review :RAM



In RAM, whether

- (1) we can assume that states do have a **single national interest**,
- (2) governments undertake a fully **synoptic assessment** of the utility of each option and
- (3) whether utility maximization realistically **models how actors choose between options** in the real world.

Poliheuristic theory

A two-step theory contends that **decision-makers undertake a rough first cut** where **they eliminate with little consideration options** that do not fulfill certain key objectives. This is followed by a **more synoptic, RAM-like evaluation** and **choice between the remaining options.**

Prospect theory

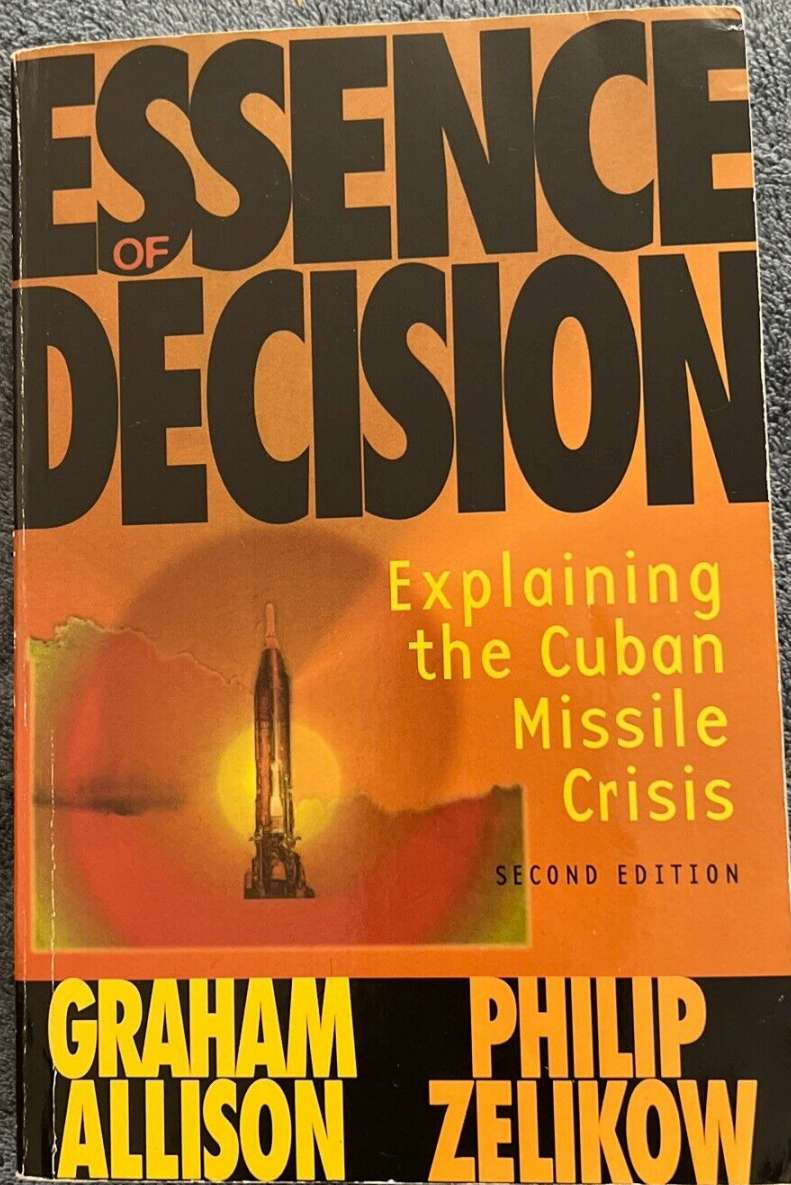
A cognitive psychological theory that departs from the RAM by contending that **decision-makers evaluate gains and losses differently.**

Decision-makers attach **more weight to losses** than prospective gains and will **choose riskier options** with lower levels of expected success when in the domain of losses than when in gains :
Vietnam war.

Organizational politics

Organizational politics
Bureaucratic/governmental politics

Foreign policy actions are NOT the product of **careful evaluation**, and the option chosen does not necessarily **maximize state utility** as in the RAM.



Mainstream social constructivist theories mark an even more dramatic departure from the expectations of the RAM.

In decision-making situations where there are highly embedded norms, actor decisions do not follow the RAM but instead are dominated by what is termed a **'logic of appropriate action'**.

Logic of habit, where decisions are not made consciously; instead much action taken by actors is more-or-less automatic and **habitual**.

Cognitive and social-psychological theories of decision-making

Improve RAM more realistically:

- 1) Cognitive theories are used to describe the non-compensatory and non-holistic search for options,
- 2) A utility maximizing choice is made between the remaining options.

Poliheuristic theory

politically unviable options are eliminated out of hand.

A non-compensatory, non-holistic search:

- No substitution or **trade-off** effect between different utility dimensions (political, economic, etc.) as assumed by the RAM.



Poliheuristic theory

What is being explained?	How states make decisions
Type of theory	Explanatory theory
Core argument	Decision-making is a two-stage process: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A non-compensatory, non-holistic search that eliminates options that are threats to the leader's political survival2. A RAM choice between the remaining options
Hypotheses	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. During the first stage of decision-making, leaders tend to avert political loss by using the non-compensatory rule with an emphasis on the political dimension2. During the second stage, leaders tend to make the final choice among the remaining options by using the utility-maximizing principle along a more diverse set of dimensions (political, military, economic, diplomatic) (James and Zhang 2005: 35)
Example (James and Zang, 2005)	<p>Chinese foreign policy decision-making during crises</p> <p>In a comparative analysis of Chinese foreign policy decision-making in crises, James and Zhang test the two hypotheses of Poliheuristic theory</p> <p><i>Data</i> Coding using the dataset of the International Crisis Behavior project for nine crises involving China (Korean Wars I, II, III; Taiwan Strait I, II, IV; China/India Border II; Ussuri River; the Sino-Vietnam War)</p> <p><i>Findings</i> Decision-makers used the political dimension to eliminate options that have strong unwanted domestic political costs early in the decision-making process (Hypothesis 1 found support)</p> <p>In contrast, the results were mixed for Hypothesis 2, with some cases such as the Korean War II (1950–51) and the Taiwan Strait crisis II (1958) and IV (1995–96) exhibiting behavior where options were chosen based upon a two-stage assessment, where the second stage involved considering all four dimensions, whereas other cases did not exhibit two-stage behavior, with political considerations dominating throughout the decision-making process</p>

Cognitive and social-psychological theories

Maximizes the utility benefits to the leader while minimizing risks

Utility of options along four dimensions:

1. Political: considerations about the domestic political consequences
2. Military: strength and weakness of the military
3. Economic: expected effects of policies on the national economy
4. Diplomatic: external political consequences that actions are expected to have.

Prospect theory

Different evaluations of gains and losses
Stronger departure from the RAM

Psychological theory that suggests that the human mind does not function **totally 'rationally'**.

Status quo and **reverse aim** for winners and losers: different calculations.



Prospect theory

What is being explained?	How actors evaluate utility
Type of theory	Explanatory theory
Core argument	Actors evaluate utility depending upon whether in the domain of losses or gains: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Actors are more risk-averse in the domain of gains, and more risk-acceptant in the domain of losses2. Actors evaluate utility in relation to a reference point (status quo). They quickly accept gains as part of a new status quo (endowment effect), whereas losses are not accepted in the short term
Hypotheses	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. In terms of <i>framing</i>, do decision-makers perceive their options to involve losses or gains (or a mixed lottery of losses and gains)? Do they appear to dwell more on potential losses than potential gains and possibly exaggerate the dangers through psychological bolstering? Do they consider alternative frames, and why is one selected over another?2. In terms of <i>probability assessment</i>, do any of these assessments approach certainty? If so, is there evidence that they give disproportionate weight to these outcomes? Do they take excessive risks to avoid certain losses? Are they surprisingly cautious when they have the opportunity to secure a certain gain? (Quoted from Levy 1992b: 300)
Example (McDermott 1992)	<p>Carter administration decision-making in the Iranian Hostage Rescue Mission (1980)</p> <p>The puzzle is that Carter chose to use force despite his predilection for the peaceful resolution of conflict</p> <p><i>Data</i> Detailed case study material investigating the two hypotheses.</p> <p><i>Findings</i> The Carter administration was in the domain of losses both domestically and internationally. Domestically Carter faced a difficult re-election campaign during an economic crisis. Internationally, the taking of hostages was a severe blow to US prestige and credibility</p> <p>The rescue mission was the riskiest military option that was seriously considered, but one that could have (if successful) restored the former status quo. Carter took a risk-acceptant choice that backfired, whereas a more risk-averse strategy (do nothing) had a much larger chance of success. This risky choice with little probability of success is unexplainable using the RAM but can be understood using Prospect theory</p>

Groupthink

A social-psychological theory

Originates from the social-psychological needs of individuals
within small groups

Cohesiveness, self-esteem, self-censureship

Groupthink

- 1) The decision-makers are a **cohesive** group.
- 2) There are **structural faults** in the organization (isolation, lack of impartial leadership, lack of methodical procedures, **homogeneity of members'** social backgrounds and ideology).
- 3) The group faces a stressful situational context (low **self-esteem** due to recent failures and lack of morally acceptable alternatives, high stress due to external threats with little hope of a better solution).

Groupthink

Symptoms

- 1) **Overestimation** of the group (including illusions of **invulnerability** and a belief in an inherent morality of the group).
- 2) **Closed-mindedness** of the group due to collective rationalizations and **stereotyping of outsiders**.
- 3) **Pressures toward consensus** (self-censorship, illusions of unanimity and direct pressure on dissenters).

Groupthink

Self-praise

Indicators for a **poor decision- making** process

- 1) An incomplete survey of **alternatives** and objectives.
- 2) A failure to examine the **risks** of the preferred option.
- 3) A lack of reappraisal of **options** initially not chosen.
- 4) A lack of effective **information searching**.
- 5) A **biased information** processing.
- 6) A lack of **contingency** planning.



Groupthink theory

What is being explained?	How social dynamics can affect group decision-making
Type of theory	Explanatory theory
Core argument	The self-esteem needs of individuals within small groups can result in concurrence-seeking tendencies, producing premature/artificial consensus where there are significant divergences from the RAM
Hypotheses	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Was the decision taken collectively by a group?2. Was the group cohesive and did the striving by group members to maintain the group override their critical judgment and rational choices?3. Were the antecedent conditions and the symptoms of Groupthink evident in the deliberations of the group?4. Was the decision an avoidable error?
Example (Yetiv 2004)	<p>Bush administration decision to invade Iraq in the first Gulf War (1990–91)</p> <p>Yetiv first investigates whether the antecedent conditions are present: (1) a cohesive group; (2) structural faults in the organization; (3) a provocative situational context. He finds a closely knit group fueled by norms of loyalty, and that all of the expected structural faults were present. He further finds that the group was facing a high stress environment arising from an external threat, and had recently suffered failures (e.g. renegeing on the ‘no new taxes’ pledge)</p> <p>Yetiv finds that the symptoms of Groupthink were also present. For example, when the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell questioned whether it was worth going to war to liberate Kuwait, Chief of Staff Cheney cautioned him to ‘just do the military options. Don’t be the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Defense or the National Security Advisor’ (quoted in Yetiv 2004: 115)</p> <p>Finally, Yetiv finds evidence suggesting a defective decision-making process as the result of Groupthink. For example, all alternatives were not evaluated, nor did they engage in a complete survey of objectives</p>



از توجه شما متشکرم

ساسان کریمی