



Iran Foreign Policy Course

Foreign Policy Analysis

Session 8

Cognitive parameters in foreign policy

Rational theory

Rationality and foreign policy decision making

Anarchic international system

Influence of the structure

Bounded rationality: Herbert Simon

Calculations of national interest are self-evident

Maximization of utility by actors: the ultimate aim of foreign policy decision makers:

- Identify and prioritize foreign policy **goals**,
- Identify and select from the **means** available to it to fulfill its aims with the least cost,
- Trade off: different **possible** FP decisions and select one: **outcomes** matter.

Presumptions: undifferentiated decision-making body (unitary actor) & Universality

Game theory

Snyder and Diesing

During international **crisis**

1. Hero
2. Leader
3. Prisoner's dilemma
4. Chicken
5. Deadlock
6. Called Bluff
7. Bully
8. Big Bully
9. Protector

Homework

Thomas Schelling

Game theory application on nuclear strategy (prisoners' dilemma)

- Imperfect information
- Nuclear ambiguity
- Nuclear deterrence

- Brinkmanship
- Balance of terror
- Balance of fear

Homework

Robert Putnam

FP decision makers: two separate environments.

- ✓ Domestic concerns
- ✓ Different logics
- ✓ Information asymmetries

- Relation between domestic and foreign policy.
- Democratic peace... probable conflict between democracies and non-democracies.

Challenging rational decision making: the role of psychology, cognition and personality

Distinction between operational (objective) and psychological environments (subjective)

Inaccurate: unitary entity of state.

Black box of FP decision making: actors, processes, structure and state.

Centrality of decision makers with their subjective biases.

Cognition

FP makers tend towards those policy choices that involve the fewest trade-offs, not necessarily the 'best' or 'optimal' policies

The role of personality

Missile Crisis of Cuba

John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev (Age)

Margaret Thatcher in response to the Falkland Islands crisis

Tony Blair in Iraq war 2004

Homework

Review: role of the group

Group decision-making
Bureaucratic politics



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