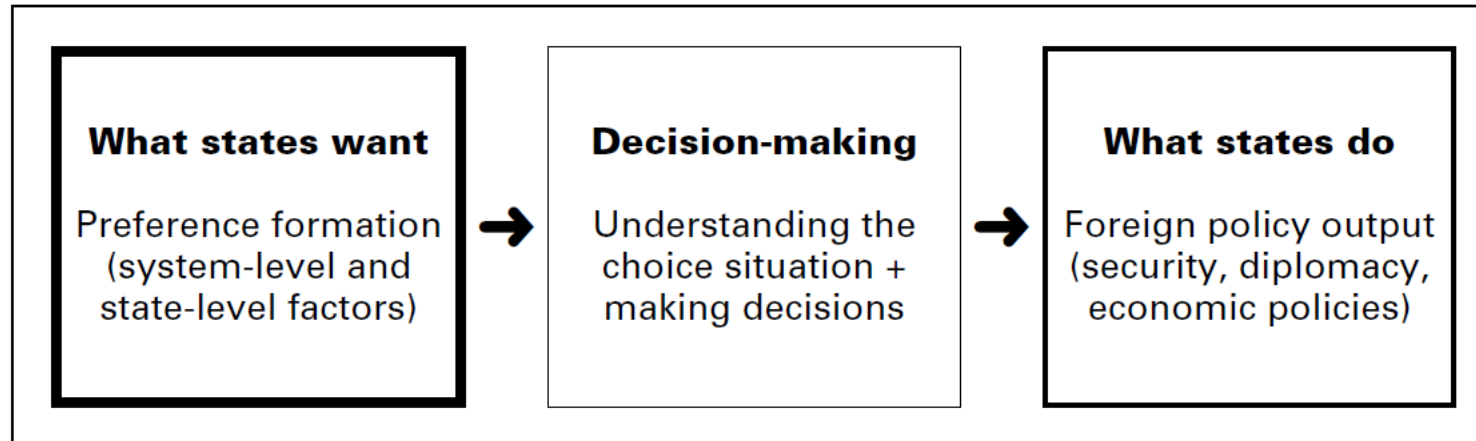




Session#3

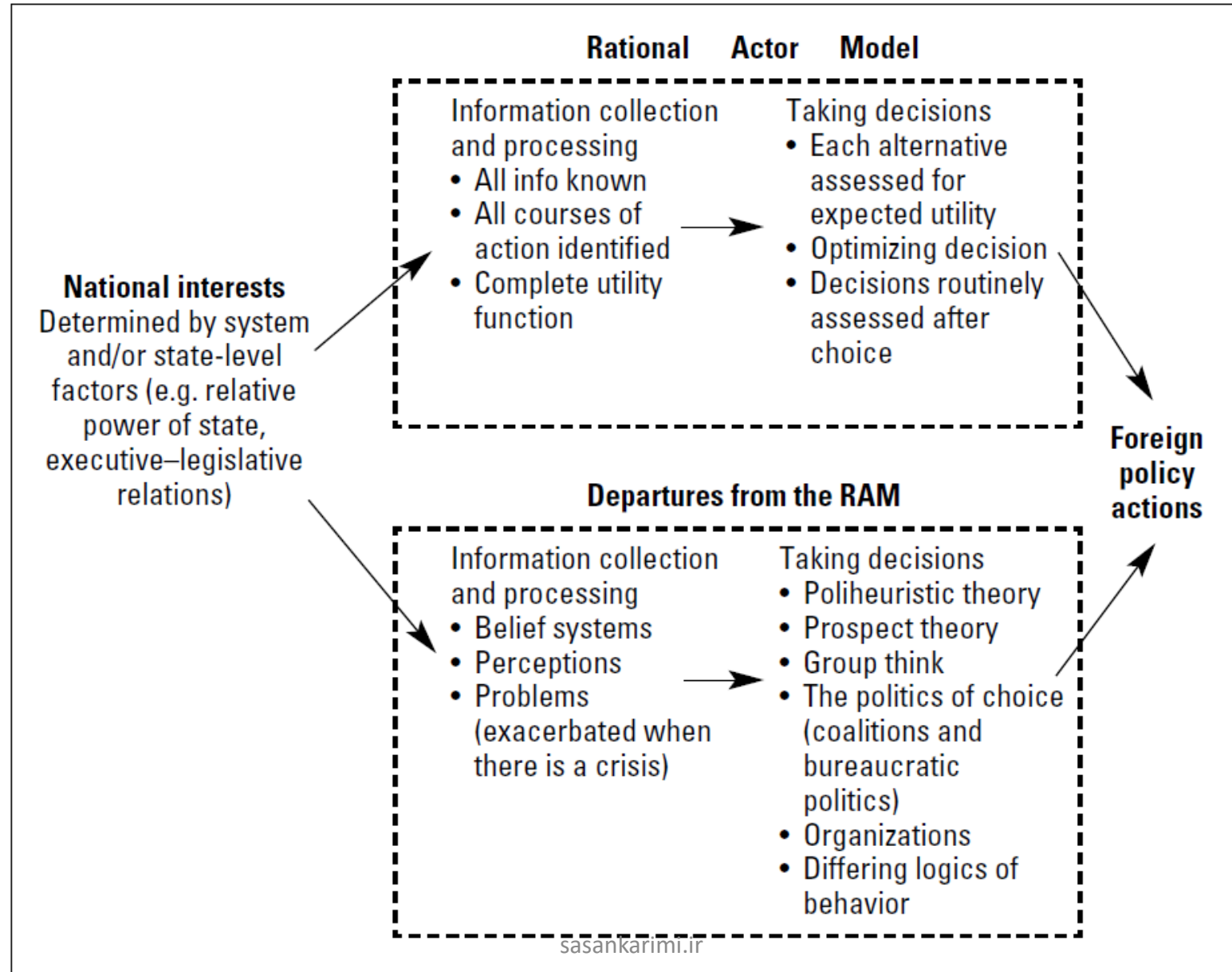
Decision making

Understanding the Choice Situation



The three-stage framework for foreign policy

Figure 4.2 Two different sets of theories of the foreign policy decision-making process



Decision-makers:

- Identify the problem.
- Identify and rank goals (a constant and complete utility function establishes the values affected and trade-off between them).
- All relevant available information is gathered.
- All possible courses of action are identified.

Decision-makers undertake:

- Each alternative is assessed on the basis of the utilities and probabilities associated with all possible outcomes (*expected utility*).
- An optimizing decision is made in choosing among alternative courses of action (*utility maximization*).
- The decision is assessed routinely after it has been made, and any relevant alterations in strategy are implemented.

Phase#1(understanding the choice situation):

- *Cognitive theory A*: how the belief systems of decision makers matter.
- *Cognitive theory B*: how the subjective perceptions of decision-makers can systematically diverge from an “objective” depiction of the choice situation.

Phase#2:

a number of competing theories of foreign policy decision-making,
Polyheuristic theory as the center of the bureaucratic politics

The Rational Actor Model (RAM)

A rational actor will choose the foreign policy that maximizes gains with the minimum of cost

Synoptically rational (comprehensive rationality)

Synoptic rationality does not necessarily mean that actors possess perfect information about the capacities of adversaries or the consequences of actions.

RAM does not mean that just because a decision-making process is 'rational' that optimal outcomes are reached in relation to goals.

Choice situations: one can only choose between bad and worse options.

Rational decision-making does not necessarily mean that the outcome will be beneficial.

Case

US intervention in Somalia in late 1992 that was intended to provide security for UN humanitarian assistance, but resulted in the US being dragged into a bloody internecine conflict that ended with a humiliating exit for it after 18 marines were killed in October 1993.

Structural realism vs. RAM

Waltz himself contends that ‘the theory requires no assumptions of rationality or of constancy of will on the part of all of the actors’, suggesting that his theory is perhaps not compatible with a RAM.

Optimum action based upon a calculation of the costs and benefits of all feasible options.

The analyst would ask:

1. What threats and opportunities arise for the actor (e.g. what is the balance of strategic nuclear forces in 1962)?
2. Who is the actor (e.g. the Soviet Union or its leader in 1962, Nikita Khrushchev)?
3. What is the utility function (e.g. survival, maximization of power, minimization of threat, etc.)?
4. In order to maximize the actor's objectives in the specified conditions, what is the best choice (e.g. Soviet installation of nuclear armed missiles in Cuba)?

Patterns of perception and misperception

- 1. Tendency to categorize and stereotype, creating self-images and images of opponents (cognitive filter, reject or discount new information)*
- 2. Tendency to simplify causal inferences....overemphasize the situational causes of one's own behavior... actors tend to overemphasize or underemphasize their role in others' policies.... overestimate the degree to which his policies are responsible for the outcome.*
- 3. Historical analogies*
- 4. The tendency to ignore information and avoid situations that produce dissonance with existing beliefs and images*

Case:

When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, President Bush reasoned by analogy that the situation was analogous to the situation prior to World War II. In the Munich analogy, the UK Prime Minister Chamberlain accepted Hitler's annexation of parts of Czechoslovakia.

Box 4.2 Intentionality and the Cuban Missile crisis

An example of attributing intention when there was none can be seen during the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis, where a U-2 aircraft based in Alaska undertaking a routine mission accidentally strayed into Soviet airspace. The aircraft was luckily able to return to US airspace without incident. However, despite the mission being routine and planned before the crisis, the Soviet leadership perceived this accident to be a planned US provocation.

Source: Allison and Zelikow (1999: 240).



از توجه شما متشکرم

ساسان کریمی