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Decision Making inInternational Relations: A theoretical Analysis

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Abstract

In the course of everyday running of contemporary political and institutional systems, decision makers are often faced with a great complexity of big and small challenges requiring decisive action in line with laid down principles and rules of behaviour. In the process of trying to satisfy the various corporate interests within an institutional framework, the decision maker is faced with, and often has to choose between various competing policy options. Making use of library research methodology, the paper undertook a careful and critical appraisal of the ways and means by which decision makers arrive at basic decisions in the dynamic field of international politics, with a view to discovering basic consistencies that can form a basis for an understanding of the theory of decision making, in a descriptive explanatory and predictive perspective. The paper concluded that, since the decision making environment does not always manifest openness and popular participation, the ultimate decision maker's sense of objectivity cannot always be guaranteed.

Key words: Decision-making; Rational actor; Bureaucratic politics; Bounded rationality; Leadership

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INTRODUCTION

In the course of everyday running of contemporary political and institutional systems, decision makers are often faced with a great complexity of big and small challenges requiring decisive action in line with laid down principles and rules and behaviour. In the process of trying to satisfy the various corporate interests within an institutional framework, the decision maker is faced with, and often has to choose between various competing policy options.

Political decision-making for instance concerns authoritative allocation of public values. The essence of responsible political leadership is very often the need for just, equitable and deliberate or conscious allocation of common values that are held in trust for the commonwealth, by the leadership. This conscious allocation however involves the notion of opportunity costs. This implies that the more the government directs its resources towards the attainment of particular ends, the less it has the ability to deploy the same resources to meet other pressing needs.

Decision making is therefore that thinking that results in the choice among alternative courses of action. The degree of independence a nation state enjoys can in a sense be measured in terms of the extent to which its choice reflect the uninfluenced decision of its leadership, rather than to what extent its actions or choices are predetermined by the events in its external environment.

Decisions may be classified in terms of their weight or importance. Some decisions are very weighty and fundamental while others are merely routine. Such fundamental decisions as Selznick (quoted in Adeniran, 1983) refer to as "Critical decisions" may have far reaching consequences for the state as for the international arena within which they are taken. Such decisions may involve a reformulation of goals, strategies and techniques.

Whereas routine decisions, as Selznick (in Adeniran, 1983) observes, are established cannons that provide the premise for everyday decisions and actions. Routine decisions may deal with such issues as selection of employees, morale building, group cohesions and organizations procedures and forms.

The purpose of this work is to take a careful and critical look at the ways and means by which decision makers reach their decisions in the dynamic field of international politics and perhaps arrive at an appreciation with a view to discovering certain consistencies that can form a basis for an understanding of the theory of decision making.

The decision making framework involves essentially the following five elements:

1) The decision situation, which involves or relates to the objective character of the environment which can be essential to decision-making. This could be internal or external, human or non human, or contending factors that may or may not be antagonistic to one another, hence the Decision Situation could be one of calm crisis, or pressure.

2) Decision Participants, concern the key actors in the decision-making process, their backgrounds in education, experiences, value systems and value preferences. Here, one needs to consider the perception and capabilities of the officials involved in the decision making process.

3) The Decision Organisation, revolve around the context within which decisions are being taken, in terms of the units and sub-units that are involved, and the general or specific roles that are assigned to each.

4) The Decision Process which touches upon the various techniques and strategies used to arrive at the decision. This relates to the competence of decision participants, the information available to them as well as what their motives or motivation might be

5) The Decision Outcome. This concerns the net results or totality of the output of the decision making process, and involves all the effects and consequences of this process.

Decision making therefore deals with the trends which lead to or build up into choices and consensus. It analyses the relationships among policy makers, between them and the public, between officials and the press and between goals and issues. Thus according to Rosenau (1966), Decision making sustains bureaucracies, dominates legislatures, pre-occupies chief executives and characterizes judicial bodies. Decisions lead to policy, produce conflict and foster cooperation.

1. ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK--THE STATE AND INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM AS LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

The ecology of a decision making process that can form a basis for an enduring decision making theory must display certain basic prerequisites, which can manifest only under very well defined conditions. A viable ecological framework for analyzing any theory of decision making therefore must of necessity encompass those basic conditions within which the decision maker can fit into his role as required by the challenges of his necessary activity.

Thus, the nation state, and the international system of states readily presents themselves as necessary and inescapable fields of activity for the decision maker, and therefore a natural framework for the analysis and understanding of the theory of decision making. But what manner of state, and what manner of international system, becomes the poser that arises before one. In a fascist or dictatorial state the state is in the grip of a political "strongman" who is capable of arbitrary subjective and ill-motivated decisions, and who can afford to, as it were "damn the consequences" for so long as his private objective is attained.

Nigeria under Abacha, Uganda under Idi Amin and Central African Republic under Bedel Bokassa are examples of such states, still so numerous in parts of the third world. Such states as these do not manifest such basic pre-requisites for the building of a sound theory of decision making, as the conditions necessary for this, involving as it should, a high level of neutrality and objectivity in information gathering, analysis and processing for sound decision making is lacking.

Consequently, a modern democratic state with its many sided controls based upon the rule of law and accountability to the populace may form the best ecological framework within which a decision making theory may be situated. Also, those actors who make decisions in any state are simply a reflection of the socio-economic, political and ideological conditions prevalent within the state. For instance, in a capitalist state like the U.S.A., the decision making actors are drawn mainly from the big multinational corporations. Their perception of the world leads to policies designed to reinforce corporate capitalism through the pursuit of profit at home and abroad.

Conversely also, when a technologically underdeveloped nation chooses the path of Western style democracy and capitalist oriented free market economy, her leaders already in the compradorial network of global capitalism, are soon socialized and oriented to subject the nation to neo-colonial control through the policies that they pursue. Thus, according to Adeniran (1983), the nation state level of analysis concentrates upon such factors as the political system of the state, its economy, social structures and other internal characteristics. All these will determine the behaviour of a state in the process of decision making.

But according to Holsti (1983) when we say "states" behave, we really mean that policy makers are defining purposes, choosing among courses of action and utilizing national capabilities to achieve objectives in the name of the state". In Holsti's view, the State as a level of analysis, "focuses on the ideologies, motivations, ideals, perceptions, values, or idiosyncrasies of those who are empowered to make decisions for the State" (Holsti, 1983).

The International system of states is a system of inter connection between states as actors in the international decision making process. This refers to the component

units of all the sovereign states that make up the world system, their behaviours regulated by national interest and international law, in a never ending game of strategy.

The focus on the international system as a level of analysis places emphasis on the external environment as the determinant of foreign policy decision making. This view assumes that all states display similar characteristics with regards to the interests they pursue. In this regard, states are interdependent.

According to Tunde Adeniran,

> One common example that is often used to illustrate the usefulness of this level of analysis is the balance of power theory. It is usually applied in such a way as to explain the shifts and consistencies in the behaviour of states over a period of time. States according to this theory, forms coalitions and counter-coalitions in order to prevent the dominance of hegemony of an ambitious state. Presumably a balancer also exists to intervene on behalf of the weaker side in order to prevent an imbalance in the power relations. The way this type of equilibrium is maintained and the patterns of balance and imbalance are said to reflect the behaviour of states as units in the system. (Adeniran, 1983)

The international system of states provides a good environment within which a theory of decision making may be observed, analysed and understood. Although the dependency status of many states who, though politically independent, are in a neo-colonial relationship with their erstwhile colonial masters may intervene. This fact somewhat limits the usefulness of this level of analysis.

It is pertinent to mention here that these two levels are not by any means exhaustive of possible levels of analysis of the theories of decision making. There are other units such as the individual personal actor, and other sub-units like political parties, organizations, classes and ethnic groups as well as ideological blocks, regional and multi-national corporations *inter alia*.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

2.1 The Game Theory

As a framework for analysis of the games theory is perhaps the best approach to decision making analysis in the two principal levels of analysis outlined above.

The theory of the game is a mathematical analysis of any situation involving a conflict of interest with the intent of indicating the optimal choices that, under given conditions will lead to a desired outcome (Dauben & Warren, 1993).

Developed by John Von Neuman *inter alios*, the game theory is a technique of making rational choices among several alternative courses of action, with a view to maximizing gains and minimizing losses. It assures that all players are rational and will make such choices amongst available alternatives that will enhance a favourable outcome or pay-off and minimize losses. Since all players at the game are similarly motivated, the level and volume of information available to each player relative to the other become decisive.

Although John Neuman originally considered and assumed a situation of perfect information, this is not possible in the real life scenario making instability an inevitable albeit temporary accompaniment of the game in real life situations.

2.2 Basic Concepts

Basically the team game refers to a rather definite conflict scenario in which 'N' of individuals known as players participate, with a known list of rules stipulating the conditions under which the game commences.

Also stipulated are possible legal "moves" at each stage of play, the total number of moves that constitutes the entirety of the game, as well as the terms of the outcome at the end of play. The basic concepts in Games theory include such terms as "move", "pay off", Extensive and Normal form, perfect information and strategy.

2.2.1 Move

This refers to the actual process of play, and the manner in which the game or play progresses from one stage to another, and through to the final move. Moves may alternate between players in a predetermined fashion or may occur simultaneously. Moves maybe made either by personal choice or by chance, in which case all probabilities are calculable.

2.2.2 Payoff or Outcome

This is a game theory term describing what happens at the end of a game. This refers to a situation where a winner has emerged and the prize at stake is declared or recognized as going to the winner, as was anticipated at the beginning of the move. The payoff is the reward for victory or participation at the game.

2.2.3 Extensive and Normal Form

One of the most important distinct wins made in characterizing different forms of games is, that between extensive and normal. A game is aid to be in extensive form if it is characterized by a set of rules that determines the possible moves at each step, indicating which player is to move. The probabilities at each point if a move is to be made by a chance determination, and the set of outcome, assigning a particular payoff or result to each possible conclusion of the game. The assumption is also made that such player have a set of preferences at each move in anticipation of possible outcomes that will minimize losses. And a game is said to be in normal form if the list of all expected outcomes or payoffs to each player for every possible combination of strategies is given for any sequence of choices in the game (Dauben & Warren, 1993).

2.2.4 Perfect Information

A game is said to have perfect information if all the moves and strategies are already known to all the players

involved. This is hardly possible in real life situations where the game is international politics and the pawns are human beings.

2.2.5 Strategy

A strategy in the theory of games is "a list of optimal choices for each player at every stage of a given game. A strategy taking into account all possible moves is a plan that cannot be upset regardless of what may occur in the game (Dauben & Warren, 1993).

2.3 Kinds of Games

In the theory of games, there are various classifications depending on the number of players and the circumstances of play in the game itself. Thus there is the Solitaire or one person's game, the two person's games, and the zero-sum games.

2.3.1 One Person Games

An one-person game is a game where there is no conflict of interest. It is played by one player alone, and there is no adversary to offer counter strategic choices with which the single player can contend. This is hardly relevant to any situation other than a one man dictatorship in political theory.

2.3.2 Two-Person Games

The two-persons games have been the subject of intensive analysis in game theory. The problem arises when there is an attempt to extend the results of a two person theory to N-person games, with a view to predicting the possibilities and probabilities of inter-action among various players.

In most two-party games the choices and expected pay offs at the end of the game are generally well known, but when three or more players are involved, many interesting but complicating opportunities arise for coalition, cooperation and collusion (Dauben & Warren; 1993).

2.3.3 Zero-Sum games

A game is said to be zero-sum when in payoff, the total amount gained is exactly equal to the total amount lost. Thus a zero-sum game is one where the total amount of pay offs at the end of the game is zero as what is won cancels out what is lost. The condition here however is that, between the two players, what is lost by one is won by the other.

Thus in the practice of international politics the zero sum game scenario is hardly possible, or very rare. For instance the war over Kuwait fought against Iraq by America and its allies were won by America. Kuwait was seized back from Iraq, but remained an independent state, and did not become owned by America. Thus Iraq's loss did not translate to America's gain in a zero-sum perspective. Instead, the scenario most common to the international system is the N-person non zero-sum option. Under this option, a player may gain more at the expense of the other who gains less, but it is almost never zero-sum.

3. THE THEORY OF DECISION MAKING

The main emphasis international relations have undergone a shift from the institutional and specific event analysis that is both time and place specific to a more generalized and theoretical format. This new area of emphasis could be of fundamental importance in the formulation of predictive theories of Politics and International relations, but even more significantly for creating organizing devises or approaches that helps to operationalize in an orderly manner, the great diversity of events and facts in international politics.

This has resulted in a new trend in the discipline which compels students and investigators not only to learn in a historical and descriptive perspective, basic international events, but also to become concerned with selecting data relevant to a given problematic, ordering and relating the gathered data to each other with a view to arriving at preliminary generalizations which can form the basis for the development of a theory.

One of such theories in international politics is the theory of decision making. Researches and studies based on the decision making theory seek to discover:

1) Who within the state makes political decisions, and whether such decisions are rational or irrational.

2) What are the parameters for determining rationality in political decision making?

3) What are the impact of such decisions on the political system?

In Politics and International relations today, three main theories of decision making are current. They are:

1) *The Rational actor theory,*
2) *The bounded rationality theory,*
3) *The Bureaucratic politics theory.*

3.1 The Rational Actor Theory

The rational actor theory of decision making, also known as *the maximizing of expected utility theory,* assumes that:

1) There is a single homogenous good or utility which is present in all actually desired ends, and an increased amount of any end brings with it an increased amount of utility, at a steadily diminishing rate (Snyder & Diesing, 1977). In this case the end or good is subject to the theory of diminishing marginal utility.

2) The decision maker is faced with a set of well defined and mutually exclusive alternatives from which he can choose.

3) That being a rational educated and skilled actor, the decision maker is able to estimate the outcome and calculate the expected value or benefit of each outcome.

Given these assumptions, the decision maker calculates the expected value of each alternative, compares all alternatives, and chooses the alternative that maximizes expected utility, or in the game perspective chooses the strategy that maximizes utility and minimizes regret. It is assumed that the decision maker can compare two

packages containing varying combinations of goods and know that he prefers one or is indifferent between them.

For example, if we suppose that there are two desired goods in one package such as pounded yam and egusi soup, with N100 to be spent on them. It means we can have 100 alternative combinations of pounded yam and egusi soup ranging from N1 worth of pounded yam and N99 worth of egusi soup to N99 worth of pounded yam and N1 worth of egusi soup. In other words, the decision maker can have more of one and less of the other over a range of 100 combination packages, and know which combination he prefers to the other. But in order to be in a position to compare goods in this manner, the goods themselves must display a high degree of homogeneity, as for instance egusi soup and pounded yam are both foods. It would be more difficult for instance to compare such packages if one was food and the other personal safety and security. Thus in practice homogeneity of goals is also assumed, perhaps even more than the concept of a single ultimate utility.

Also, in order to be able to calculate an infinite number of alternatives and the expected value of the outcome of each one, an infinite calculating ability and omniscience is assumed, as an underlying principle.

However, it has been argued elsewhere that

> The assumption of omniscience is not necessary to a maximization model as Cross among others has shown. Without this assumption, the maximiser has a set of comparable goals, some but not all possible alternatives, and some information about the expected effect of the alternatives on the goals. He then calculates the expected value of each alternative and chooses the one with the highest expected value. But in Cross's version, this simplification introduces a new complication: as each new price of information comes in, the bargainer must recalculate all his equations, his cost and return curves and continue or change his current strategy accordingly. He can also calculate the cost of new information, compare it with the expected returns, and estimate how much time or effort he must expend in getting new information (Cross, in Snyder and Diesing, 1977) (emphasis mine).

Cross' version of the maximizing model thus depends even more on the assumption of remarkable calculating ability since the calculations are done not once, but continually. (Snyder & Diesing, 1977)

Another version of the rational actor theory, not only drops the assumptions of omniscience on the part of the decision maker but also drops the assumption of extra-ordinary calculating ability. Under this model, the decision maker has several crudely defined alternatives which value and consequences he merely makes intelligent guesses about. He then compares the expected consequences, two at a time and by a process of elimination finally determines the best alternative. This version of the theory retains only the comparability of goals and its homogeneity in terms of the ultimate good.

Other given or basic assumptions of the rational actor theory of decision making has to do with its ecology or the environment within which it can become optimally operational.

1) That the decision maker has access to limitless information concerning all the options connected with the alternatives under his consideration.

2) That the maximiser is an institutionally designated actor empowered to act in a democratic or popular participatory political context, which is inherently stable.

3) That the decision maker is able to rise above personal prejudices and biases in order to be unyieldingly objective and rational.

It is however just in these assumptions that the limitations of this paradigm lie. First being overly dependent upon information, it becomes vulnerable if incorrect information is given or if the information available is not comprehensive enough to permit of a sound decision.

Secondly, the reality of international relations hardly gives time for a long process of information gathering and analysis as is necessary to arrive at the best available alternatives, especially in crisis situations. Besides, being human, one cannot rule out the psychological element in the analysis of the decision maker, whose decision may not always be completely devoid of subjectivity.

Furthermore as has been stated earlier under ecological framework, the decision making environment must manifest openness and popular participation. This not being always the case, the decision maker's sense of objectivity and responsibility cannot always be guaranteed.

3.2 The Bounded Rationality Theory

The bounded rationality theory may be seen as a complement to the rational actor model. Dropping some of the assumptions of the latter such as homogeneity of goods and outstanding calculating ability, it comes closer to empirical practice without necessarily losing theoretical simplicity. The bounded rationality theory assumes inter alia, but most fundamentally, the heterogeneity of goods, as against the homogeneity of the rational actor. It acknowledges the great difficulty associated with making comparison between incomparable ends which are mutually exclusive, or nearly so, such that achieving one may undermine if not completely sacrifice the other. As for example, the concepts of; Freedom and National Security. One cannot tell how much of freedom to sacrifice in order to get sufficient value of national order and security, or how much of the latter to sacrifice to get enough of freedom.

Secondly, there is an assumption of greater dynamism and mobility in the availability of alternatives and information concerning available options. Thus not all alternatives are known or available at the start of a decision making process. Thirdly, even for the known options, one is not able to calculate the probability or otherwise of their capacity to attain specific goods in mathematically exact terms. This calculation can be done only crudely.

However, the main distinguishing feature of this model from the earlier one, is the fact of heterogeneity of goods. This eliminates completely the idea of the "best possible alternative", which in this context has no operational meaning, as there is no way of "maximizing" choices. Since each good is qualitatively unique, one cannot compensate for the sacrifice of one by the extra achievement of the other. Consequently, all goods must be achieved and an alternative is unacceptable unless it is able to achieve all goods. Put differently, each goods achieved, becomes a constraint to the achievement of an acceptable alternative.

According to this theory constraints can be positive or negative. It is positive when it concerns the use of some positive action to achieve a good. In which case, the constraint is called a "goal". But when a good is already in existence having been previously attained, action to prevent it from being damaged or to avoid a potentially damaging effect is called a negative constraint.

Very often a desire to achieve a good may mean being exposed to the risk of endangering an already existing value. "A simple decision/problem under this paradigm is one in which there is a single goal to be achieved and two or more evils to be avoided, and in which an acceptable alternative is one that achieves the goal and avoids the evils. In another kind of problem, one must prevent one evil while avoiding still others (Snyder & Diesing, 1977).

However, "achieving a goal" is not an absolute concept, since goals are achievable in stages and to vary degrees. The criterion which specifies what degree of achievement is acceptable to the decision maker is what is known as the level of aspiration. For example, if the United States of America could not "take out" Saddam Hussein and install a new government in Baghdad as was the main objective, it could at least contain and neutralize Iraq under Saddam as an effective military threat in the Gulf region. The latter being a reduced but acceptable (even if temporarily) level of aspiration vis-à-vis the initial goal. America had to be satisfied with this reduced level of aspiration for now in order to avoid the greater evil of losing the support of its allies in the event of its going ahead to overrun Baghdad and arrest Saddam in person. Besides it needed to avoid the risk of a more determined opposition from the Soviet Union and China, in addition to international condemnation, instead of applause.

The level of aspiration could be reviewed upwards on downwards in the course of development of events, and is by no means static. But since the term "level of aspiration" cannot be used in reference to negative constraints, which concerns protection of something already achieved, the term level of acceptability is used to describe the protection of existing values or avoidance of evil effects or better put, "negative constraints".

From the theoretical viewpoint the level of aspiration and level of acceptability represents the maximum and minimum levels respectively to changes in aspirational level. Initial aspiration level may be set at maximum level at the onset of bargaining, although the decision maker normally does not expect to achieve his full initial bid, and would be satisfied with a bit less. As the bargaining progresses, there maybe successive lowering of levels but usually never as low as the minimum, but this varies according to the nature of available alternatives. But in none of these procedures for raising or lowering levels of aspiration or acceptability is complex calculating ability required.

Bounded rationality and maximizing theories are not as incompatible as they may appear to be. They can indeed be combined with one as a supplement to the other. The bounded rationality can provide solutions where the shortcomings of the maximizing theory become an obstacle. As for instance, in the process of searching for the best alternative, it is impossible to consider *all* alternatives. Thus the decision maker may use constraints and levels of acceptability to eliminate and narrow down the alternatives to a few obvious reasonable and promising choices. Nor can one consider all possible consequences. When a particular bad consequence appears, one can eliminate the alternative or modify it to reduce the likelihood of that consequence recurring by using the levels of acceptability to screen alternatives.

Thus whereas maximization equation represents the ideal limits that a good decision approach, through its potential for greater exactitude, the bounded Rationality procedures are however more descriptive of actual decisions. Conversely, the maximizing theory, by focusing on the ideal limits ignores the actual difficulties of comparing goods, (especially such goods as are not comparable). The bounded rationality theory by providing a practical way to deal with the problem, however loses sight of the ideal goal of the entire process. Both of these models are necessary and complimentary.

Finally, in order to properly position the bounded rationally theory in its true perspective, the view of Snyder and Diesing (1977) quoted below is most germane.

> One can approach this combination by considering why crises occur at all. They occur because the normal conflict of interest between great powers has become so intense as to produce an intolerable situation for at least one power. And because the attempt of that power to correct the intolerable situation makes things intolerable for one or more other powers. This specific situation is what the crisis is about, and the essential objective for the powers involved is to correct it, to make it tolerable.

The objective is not the vague abstract one of maximizing utility. It is quite specific one of correcting the intolerable situation. If there are several ways of doing this, some may be better than others, and one certainly prefers the better to the worse. More often, the problem is to find even one way, that is, finding one acceptable solution is a necessity, but finding the best possible solution is a luxury.

The bounded rationality theory focuses directly on this central point. Crises decision making is a search for a strategy that will correct the intolerable situation, that is, a strategy that will preserve or achieve all endangered goods at an acceptable level. It is a search for an acceptable strategy. When a decision maker cannot find or construct even one acceptable strategy, he does not choose the best of the unacceptable strategies, that is, he does not maximize, and he stalls if possible postponing action and search for a way out of the intolerable situation (Snyder & Diesing, 1977). Whenever the need arises to find an immediate solution to a crisis situation and where there are no acceptable choices, there is little opportunity to maximize. The bounded rationality model of decision making theory becomes imperative.

3.3 The Bureaucratic Politics Theory

Unlike the preceding two theories of decision making which are essentially problems solving the decision maker as a unitary actor, the bureaucratic politics theory drops the unitary actor paradigm and looks at the political processes occurring inside the decision-making unit.

Here the decision maker is the institutions of government, being composed of a set of bureaus with different resources and responsibilities, quite different information sources and also differing largely in the influence they each wield over the central decision maker. Within each department information is sourced and operationalized, conclusions reached and recommendations made in the process of development of policy decisions that are meant to contribute to the national interest. The various ministries/departments compete amongst themselves for opportunity to influence decisions using its political authority, contacts and expertise to develop and implement strategies.

Decision making in this theory is a process of getting one's government officially and actually committed to some bargaining strategy or tactic, and this involves getting the approval of those officials whose approval is needed officially and actually. In game terms, decision making here is a process of building a majority coalition. The strategy is the coalition agreement (Snyder & Diesing, 1977).

The strategy for building coalitions may include persuasion, bargaining, lobbying key officials and departments in a piecemeal fashion. It may also include trade-offs between departments that are natural opponents. Sometimes, two or more coalitions may form to oppose one or more coalitions, especially among those departments that are natural allies or that have a common interest in a given proposal. These may coalesce to form a majority coalition at the expense of another.

The term majority coalition does not here refer to a preponderance of numbers, but has more to do with clout – the resources at the disposal of the coalescing departments, their strategic importance in terms of power and prestige in government. Such departments as; the army, the finance ministry, and fundamentally also, the ministry that will become responsible for the implementation of the decision when it finally sails through.

This system of alliances and coalition in the struggle for influence in the decision making process seems to have a strong parallel with the theory of balance of power in a multi- polar, and bi-polar world that is ideologically polarized. Here the process is the same as when independent states form coalitions to resist a dominant power or to enforce a principle or a decision upon another independent state, as the U.S. was able to do in the case of Iraq during the Gulf war.

In the process of building a coalition with effectively pressurizing the central decision maker, the imperatives of lobbying bargaining and trade offs may also cause the original strategy to undergo modifications to satisfy coalition partners. Sometimes, admitting new strategic coalition partners may alienate old ones. The sponsors of the strategy must therefore weigh carefully the cost-benefit analysis of admitting new partners at the risk of losing old ones. Or even at the cost of changing the strategy or amending it.

The bureaucratic politics theory has two components; a non rational and a rational. The non rational is basically psychological and being related to the individual's values, beliefs, and cognitive sensibilities which are mainly determined by his portion in government. For instance, the finance minister may be sensitive to politics that proposes heavy extra-budgetary expenditure, and may thus oppose the move. Therefore partisanship rather than objectivity is a likely feature of the inputs into the decision making process.

The general picture this theory presents of the decision making process is therefore a picture of partisan maneuvering into alliances and opposition, each trying to capture the commitment of the central decision maker, who however avoids committing himself. He mediates between the partisans suggesting compromises and trying to work out a combination proposal that will satisfy most of the partisans. If he succeeds or one of his allies' aides or assistants succeed, then the decision is made.

CONCLUSION

In concluding this work, reference has to be made also to the cybernetic theory of decision making, which sees the demands of the system through information gathered from the system as inputs into the decision making process. The policy decisions that emerge from the system are the output which is delivered into the society. The output further elicits reactions which are returned to the system as feedback. The feedback forms a new input for further analysis to produce a fresh output. Basically however, the three theories of decision making discussed in this

work, and which forms the basic cornerstones of decision making theory are complementary.

The bureaucratic politics theory supplements rather than competes with the rational actor and the bounded rationality theories. It focuses more on the institutional framework for decision making and the internal political imperatives of maintaining and increasing influence and power, rather than on the problem of choosing a strategy to deal with external opportunity or threat. The bureaucratic model may be seen as the basic machinery through which the first two theories operate within the state. Therefore one can conclude that the same decision making behaviour can be described as a process of forming and changing coalitions, or as a process of testing alternatives against constraints, lowering aspiration levels estimating costs, and raising levels of acceptance.

Therefore, all that remains is an effort to juxtapose one theory on the other, that is, to show how a process in one theory can be described in quite a different process in the other theory. This attempt should be seen as mandatory because a viable decision making theory must encompass all three models. A detailed amalgamation of this sort has already been attempted by Gore in his work; *Administrative decision making* (1964).

Finally, it would be relevant to point out here a further relationship between these three theories in their complementary usefulness. When one or two people make decisions, the problem solving theories apply, but when three or more people, or a committee or cabinet are involved, and a potential coalition situation arises, bureaucratic politics theory is more relevant.

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