

# Golda Meir's Foreign Decision- Making Process



# Golda Meir's Foreign Decision- Making Process:

*An Analysis*

By

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“... And after starting the activity in this, it is possible to add more - through browsing and reflection in the ways to function, including consultation with more people, to make a meeting, investigation, examination etc., to think of an idea how to accomplish that the world should be in a situation of "he did not create it for emptiness; he fashioned it to be inhabited", that it should not be a place that all sorts of powers and conflicting ambitions that are impossible to bridge between, so that it becomes a situation of conflicts between one and another, but rather, to tie and connect all strength to one and only purpose - "he fashioned it to be inhabited" ...”

Rebbe Menachem Mendel Lubavitch



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## ABSTRACT

This research analyses the Israeli leadership's foreign decision-making from 1970–1973, focusing on both the political and diplomatic aspects of Golda Meir's foreign policy, whilst serving as Prime Minister. The main research question is how to characterise her foreign decision-making processes during the period.

In trying to describe and understand this, the research analysis addressed three main questions: What were the dominant reference events in Meir's foreign decision-making processes during the war? What were the main factors that influenced Meir's foreign decision-making processes? And how do aspects of various decision-making paradigms characterise Meir's foreign decision-making processes?

The research was conducted using a hermeneutic qualitative paradigm (Ricoeur, 1981), with a case-study approach (Yin, 2009). The findings are presented and discussed according to three case studies conducted within historical document analysis (Shkedi, 2012) and interview analysis (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

The researcher characterised Meir's decision-making process through three case studies focusing on three different events: (1) Case study 1—The American peace initiative of 19 June 1970; (2) Case study 2—Meir's foreign decision-making with regard to ending the *status quo* in Israeli-Egyptian relations (February–October, 1973). (3) Case study 3—Meir's foreign decision-making regarding the ceasefire agreement (October 22 1973–November 11 1973).

In order to analyse Meir's foreign decision-making points during these events, the researcher applied three principal approaches: the rational approach (Cashman, 1993), the bureaucratic approach (Allison, 1971; Halperin, 1974), and the psychological approach, primarily Prospect Theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) and Dissonance Cognitive Theory (Festinger, 1957), as well as the following irrational factors: converting question (Kahneman, 2013), heuristic affect (Slovic, Fischhoff & Lichtenstein, 1979), availability bias (Schwartz, 1991), risk and emotional

biases (Slovic, 2000), expert overconfidence bias (Tetlock, 2005), intuition (Simon, 1992, Dawes & Dana, 2004) and optimism bias (Kahneman & Lovallo, 2005).

The researcher suggests that a holistic perspective with regard to characterising this foreign decision-making is reached in two major ways: (1) using the chosen models and using the innovative way of analysis applied here; and (2) identification and analysis of influencing dominant factors that were involved in Meir's consideration.

Finally, a decision-making analysis model was developed as a result of this research. The conceptual framework of this research process and its conclusions led to the formulation of the applied Holistic Combined Spiral Model (HCSM) model.

*The nature of historical decisions is that they are made at the right time, at the right place and influence the course of history...Golda Meir made historical decisions.*

(Prof. V. Puscas; Cluj, April 13 2016)



## INTRODUCTION

This research deals with an analysis of foreign decision-making processes, focusing on Golda Meir's foreign decision-making process from 1970–1973, whilst she was prime minister.

Since this research seeks to analyse a foreign decision-making process by focusing on the characteristics of Golda Meir's foreign decision-making processes (1970–1973), the main research question is: **How to characterise Golda Meir's foreign decision-making processes during the period from 1970–1973.**

In trying to describe and understand these characteristics, the research analysis deals with three main questions: What were the dominant reference events in Meir's foreign decision-making processes during the war? What were the main factors that influenced Meir's foreign decision-making processes? And how do the aspects of various decision-making approaches characterise Meir's foreign decision-making processes?

The research also particularly focuses on the relationships between decision-makers in four countries (Israel, the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R. and Egypt), as well as two additional aspects linked to it—military and intelligence. Other aspects referring to relationships between countries such as economics, trade, culture and the like, are not referred to in this study.

The research comprises five chapters. The first reviews the principal approaches in the field of foreign decision-making, when the main consideration assumed that key foreign decision-making processes are mental ones, and as such the study does not focus on research literature covering biological or physiological aspects.

The literary review is arranged around three key approaches: rational, bureaucratic and psychological, which includes references to irrational factors.

The rational approach, in its classical version, views state actors as principal players who operate according to a clear system of priorities,

players who are aware of all possible alternatives, and choose the one that leads to maximum benefit from their point of view. This approach is the starting point for all comprehensive international relations analysis (Mintz & DeRouen, 2010).

The rational model has undergone many developments and references, some of which derived from its criticism. There were those who argued that the rational model could not serve as a basis for analysis in situations where decision-makers were forced to deal with equal value alternatives; and there were those who emphasised irrational components. These criticisms gave birth to myriad models that adopted only part of the fundamental assumptions of the rational model, such as, for example, Braybrooke and Lindblom's (1963) Incremental Model or Simon's (1985) Bounded Rationality Model.

The bureaucratic approach developed as a reaction to rational explanations for foreign decision-making processes, and later as a criticism in the area of organizational research. Literature dealing with the study of bureaucratic aspects in foreign decision-making processes began to develop in the 1960s, intending to apply new knowledge from the field of organizational research. Researchers such as Neustadt and Snyder recognised the influence of the organizational part of foreign decision-making processes, but did not apply this knowledge to *specific* decision-making processes. Allison (1971, 1999) was one of the first to address this issue in-depth. He proposed two bureaucratic models as an alternative to the rational model: the first is the organizational politics model that perceived decisions as outputs of large organizations operating under standard operating procedures (SOPs); and the second is the bureaucratic politics model, according to which decision-making is the result of the accumulated effect of attraction, rejection, bargaining and negotiation between actors carrying out political roles divided on political questions. Allison's models have earned many applications, and developments such as those suggested by Rourke, George, Halperin, and others.

The psychological approach teaches how psychology has penetrated the area of research into the foreign decision-making processes field. In principle, the intention is to show off the unique contribution made by specific decision-makers to state foreign decision-making processes in determining policy. Within the psychological approach, two different streams emerged: one in the 1960s and 1970s was founded on psychodynamic studies into specific decision-makers; researchers such as the Georges, Mazlish and Langer, who focused on studying individual leaders,

and sought to prove that early childhood experiences affected their adult decision-making patterns. The second stream—starting in the 1980s—used cognitive research to analyse foreign decision-making processes in social sciences. Standout concepts emerging from these studies are “system of beliefs” and “operational code”, developed by Leites, Holsti, George and others, which gave rise to a number of applications and developments.

The section that deals with irrational factors refers to relevant developments starting with Thaler (1980), who distinguished between “econs” (economic being) and human beings. Humans and “econs” may represent symbolic concepts for the differences between the various theories, and create a dichotomous distinction between two kinds of decision-makers. According to Thaler, while “econs” are rational beings, there is sweeping evidence that humans are not able to be rational decision-makers. “Econs” do not have tendencies to heuristics and biases such as those set forth in this section, while human beings cannot avoid them.

This section presents some of the irrational factors involved in decision-making processes. It describes studies that focused on identifying heuristics biases in decision-making processes. This part will present in detail four selected biases, which have been found to be connected and relevant to foreign decision-making analysis: convert questions (Polya, 1945; Kahneman, 2013), heuristic effect (Slovic, Fischhoff & Lichtenstein, 1979), availability bias (Schwartz, 1991) and risk and emotional biases (Slovic, 2000). In addition, it will focus on illusions resulting from an overconfidence bias (Sunstein & Koran, 1999; Tversky, 1973; Tetlock, 2005; Lovallo, 2005), which have been found to be an essential irrational factor in foreign decision-making research in general, and the subject of this research in particular.

The second chapter deals with the research methodology and details the research paradigm and approach. The research was performed using a qualitative hermeneutic interpretive paradigm, with a case study approach.

This chapter will discuss the methodology related to social science decision-making analysis, and will present a review of methodological developments in understanding decision-making processes in social science.

The first reference will focus on two major scholars who constitute the methodological background for the proposed research model, Dilthey

(1976) and Ricoeur (1981). These researchers contributed to understanding interpretive methodology developments in decision-making, particularly in the political field.

One of Ricoeur's important contributions is the "Hermeneutic Spectrum". Ricoeur referred to historical analysis as a naïve interpretation that leads to more critical analysis that is deeper and open-ended. One end is open to how researchers interpret and understand the subject matter (decision-maker), and the other end is the researchers' self-reflection.

Since the topic deals with Meir's foreign decision-making in three case studies in the period 1970–1973, which are **historical events**, this part also discusses the revival of historical approaches to research in social science decision-making processes. In addition, it presents the strategies offered by Lustick (1996) in the implementation of this research type, which is adopted as a basis for the innovative proposed model. In essence, the chapter discusses the distinction between social science historical research and scientific research, and the interpretative approach in social science decision-making research. In addition, it also presents the main criticisms towards this approach and some possible answers to them.

Other parts of this chapter address research definitions and designs, as well as research tools. With regard to the last subject, the main research tool used in this research was analysing in depth narrative interviews and historical documents' review and analysis:

**The in-depth interview** used in this research was the semi-structured interview, including five starter-questions. This type of interview permits the addition of questions during interviews in order to refine, focus and better understand interviewees' answers (Edward, & Holland, 2013). Edwards and Holland, J. (2013) noted that semi-structured interviews become more complicated despite an orderly array of starter questions, and are subject to change depending on the dynamics created with interviewees, since the main purpose is to understand interviewees' norms, beliefs and motivations.

The research population selected consisted of two circles of Meir's acquaintance, who were aware of her foreign decision-making processes during that period. The first circle comprised people who had participated or known Meir's foreign decision-making during that period, and the second, of interviews focused on historians and journalists who have dedicated their lives to researching these subjects.

Among the interviewees were a former Interior Minister, who has been called the hero of Israel for his brave decision-making during the war; armoured battalion commanders both currently active, and serving during the Yom Kippur War; a leading historian who recently published a series of interviews on the subject of the Yom Kippur War in the Israeli press; and a journalist who has researched Golda Meir's personal life. Additional interviews were held with senior military officials and politicians who contributed their knowledge to understanding foreign decision-making processes during that period.

**With regard to the historical documents analysis** tool, documents included protocols **and** telegrams drawn from primary sources located in archives in Israel and the United States. In recent years, many classified documents kept in these archives have been released to the public. This process of sensitive document release was very helpful to the historical analysis, and allowed many more sources to be included in this research.

The third chapter presents and discusses the findings with regard to aspects of foreign decision-making that characterised Golda Meir's foreign decision-making process during the years 1970–1973. The findings and discussion are presented and discussed according to case studies. Document and interview analysis carried out in this research led the researcher to focus on three main events, in which Prime Minister Golda Meir's foreign decision-making processes were expressed:

**Case study 1: The American peace initiative of 19 June 1970.**

**Case study 2: Meir's foreign decision-making with regard to ending the *status quo* in Israeli-Egyptian relations (February–October, 1973).**

**Case Study 3: Meir's foreign decision-making regarding the "Six Point" Ceasefire Agreement (October 22 1973–November 11 1973).**

The analysis concentrates on the political-diplomatic aspects of Meir's foreign policy, with reference to two further connected aspects: military and intelligence.

The analysis of foreign decision-making in the three case studies, which examined the nature of Meir's foreign decision-making, was carried out according to the research questions and presented in four stages:

- First: layout and description of the event through research findings, described documents, interviews and historical literature on the topic analysed, as well as identifying and marking out dominant decision points during the course of the decision-making processes throughout this event;
- Second: emphasising and analysing the decision-making points that affected the event, and created it, in the light of **foreign decision-making models from the main research approaches**. The rational approach, using the Rational Model (Cashman, 1993), the bureaucratic approach, using the Organizational Bureaucratic Model and Bureaucratic Politics Model (Allison, 1971) and Halperin's Governmental Model (1974); the psychological approach, using Prospect Theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) and Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance Theory (1957). In addition, several decision-making points were analysed according to the following irrational factors: experts intuition (Simon, 1992); experts' illusion of overconfidence (Tetlock, 2005); planning fallacy bias by Tversky & Kahneman (1979); optimism bias by Lovallo & Kahneman (2005) and hindsight bias /outcome bias (Kahneman, 2013);
- Third: highlighting and analysing external factors that affected foreign decision-making processes in studying the event. It is important to point out that the research focuses on external factors alone, and will not refer to internal factors: i.e. emotional, psychological or any other factors with reference to the dominant decision-maker, Golda Meir. However, the researcher applied a psychological approach model to the analysis of several decision-making points in Meir's foreign decision-making process.
- Fourth: a final summary analysis of the events according to Cashman's (1993) Rational Model.

### **Case Study 1: The American Peace Initiative of 19 June 1970**

This case study deals in the main with Meir's foreign decision-making with regard to the presentation of the American peace initiative, against a background of increasing tension between Israel and the U.S.A., and escalation in the War of Attrition between Israel and Egypt (1967–1970),

and increased Soviet military presence in Egypt. At that time, two parallel channels of communication developed between Prime Minister Meir and the U.S.A: a formal channel to the State Department, headed by Secretary of State Rogers, and a back-door, secret, channel to the White House, and in particular the President's National Security Adviser, Kissinger. This section describes Meir's foreign decision-making in the light of the tension that existed between Israel and the U.S.A. in the light of the military happenings between Israel and Egypt, and the influence of contacts between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. and Egypt.

The analysis of Meir's foreign decision-making process in Case Study 1 will refer to the following five key decision-making points:

1. Meir's initial reaction to the presentation of America's peace initiative on 19 June 1970;
2. Decision on the nature of the first message sent to President Nixon regarding the American peace initiative;
3. Formal reaction to the American peace initiative, in the light of Egypt and the U.S.S.R.'s agreements;
4. Meir's dealing with the crisis regarding wording of Israel's agreement; and
5. Reaction to Egyptian and U.S.S.R. forces violating the initiative.

### **Case Study 2: Meir's Foreign Decision-making Regarding Ending the *Status Quo* in Israeli-Egyptian Relations (February–October, 1973)**

This case study addresses Meir's foreign decision-making during 1973. The study is divided into two parts, the first part referring to before the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War on 6 October 1973, and the second to Meir's decision-making during the War. Meir's foreign decision-making in the first part took place at a time in which the *status quo* was established. The *status quo existed* both between Israel and the U.S.A., characterised by diplomatic support and long-term military supplies, and between Israel and Egypt, characterised by a continued political stalemate that prevailed from the failed American initiative in 1970 up to the outbreak of war. This section describes Meir's foreign decision-making and her reactions in the light of the rapprochement between Egypt and the U.S.A. and Egypt's distancing itself from the U.S.S.R., and the start of a secret communication channel between Egypt and the White House.

The second part of this case study deals with Meir's decision-making during the war itself.

The analysis of Meir's decision-making in this case study will focus on the following three principal foreign decision-making points:

1. Reaction to the Egyptian peace initiative, 25–28 February, 1973;
2. Considering a reaction to Egypt's threats of war; and
3. The decision regarding an early preventative attack against Egypt.

During the course of the review and analysis carried out by the researcher regarding the first four days of the war, it emerged that these were critical days in Meir's foreign decision-making on a political level, and of her partners, Defence Minister, Moshe Dayan; Chief of Staff, David Elazar; and Head of Intelligence Services, Eli Zeira, known collectively in the literature as "The Generals".

The second part will therefore describe and analyse three significant foreign decision-making problems with which Meir had to deal during the first days of the war:

1. The level of sharing with the White House the actual situation in the area;
2. Foreign relations with Jordan during the War; and
3. The *modus operandi* regarding the international diplomatic arena.

### **Case Study No. 3: Meir's Foreign Decision-making Regarding the Ceasefire agreement (October 22, 1973–November 11, 1973)**

This case study deals with Meir's foreign decision-making at the beginning of the transition process in the conduct of conflict between Israel and Egypt up to its resolution. During this period, a ceasefire agreement was reached (18 January 1974), which started with the "Six Point" agreement signed between the parties on 11 November 1973.

This section describes Meir's foreign decision-making whilst conducting contacts between herself and the White House and Egypt.

The analysis of Meir's decision-making in this case study will focus on the following four principal foreign decision-making points:

1. U.N. Security Council Resolution 338;
2. The one-time provision of non-military supplies to the besieged Egyptian 3<sup>rd</sup> Army;
3. The exchange of prisoners and permanent supplies to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army; and
4. The crisis around the "Six Point Agreement".

This research comprises a combination of a number of subject matters and research tools. The conclusions will therefore refer to each subject matter separately as follows:

The fourth chapter presents the research conclusions. This chapter is divided into three parts: the first presents the conclusions regarding Meir's foreign decision-making process aspects through in-depth narrative interviews analysis:

- with regard to various aspects of Meir's foreign decision-making process; and
- with regard to dominant influencing factors in Meir's foreign decision-making processes.

The second part refers to Meir's foreign decision-making characterisation through the three case studies applied with regard to the various analytical approaches, based on historical documents review and analysis:

- with regard to the selected case studies events;
- with regard to the analysis of aspects of Meir's foreign decision-making processes; and
- with regard to the analysis of dominant influencing external factors of Meir's foreign decision-making processes

The third part is a presentation of a graphic description of the research conclusions with regard to the three case studies.

This chapter serves as a springboard for the next section: the researcher's proposal and contribution to the study of foreign decision-making analysis, the Holistic Combined Spiral Model (HCSM).

The fifth and final chapter presents the HCSM: the proposed model combines the researcher's practical insights, which emerged from the literature review describing approaches to foreign decision-making, the review of methodology employed in this research and the discussion of

findings emerging from three case studies with analysis of Prime Minister Golda Meir's foreign decision-making (between June 1970 and December 1973). The conceptual framework of this research process and its conclusions has led to the formulation of the applied HCSM model.

HCSM tends to be a reflective model for foreign decision-making process analysis in political science, based on two key stages: a rejection of the basic assumptions of natural science, as being a suitable application of the study of decision-making in political science; and adopting basic assumptions from the hermeneutic interpretation tradition, from Ricoeur's (1981) school of thought.

The researcher tends to adopt the basic assumptions made by Ricoeur (1981), and apply them in this proposed model process. This chapter will present basic methodological assumptions, model goals and questions, in addition to five core application principles:

1. HCSM aims for a holistic perspective: a theoretical level with an ontological and epistemological starting point; and practical levels—continuing on from Hermann's (2001) determination and thus similarly to the first complex point of view presented by Allison (1971), the researcher in HCSM assumes that a holistic panoramic perspective of decision-making processes is likely to significantly contribute to understanding relevant phenomena;
2. HCSM offers to combine approaches and create new concepts; it offers to refer during the analysis to the **rational, emotional, bureaucratic and irrational** aspects taken from the fundamental approaches. The four aspects will be considered from two points of view: theoretical sources and practical applications;
3. HCSM tends to emphasise the **dominance of a single decision-maker**.

Relying on previous researchers' arguments, the model proposes a principal basic argument, according to which in cases of complex decision-making, decisions are taken by a lone and dominant decision-maker, who is a senior personality in the ruling apparatus, and who therefore has direct responsibility for its outcomes.

4. **HCSM Dominant Influencing Aspect (DIA) & Dominant Influencing Factors (DIF) within each Decision-making Points (DMP).**

These principles, derived from the case studies, are three of the common prominent conclusions that emerged. DIA refers to the fact that in every decision-making point, one can distinguish and focus on the existence and influence of one more dominant aspect among the four proposed; and DIF refers to the fact that in every decision-making point, one can distinguish and focus on the existence and influence of dominant factors.

5. HCSM proposes to describe foreign decision-making process analysis as an ongoing process that gathers decision-making points as represented by the **spiral motif**.

**In summary**, this research advances and combines two parallel areas of research—historical and foreign decision-making in social sciences.

Historical research: by examining the period between June 1970 and December 1973, the research describes how Meir's decision-making in the early 1970s contributed to driving the peace process in later foreign relations between countries, as well as it being the background to the commencement of direct talks between Israel and Egypt in November 1977. In this context, this research contributes another level to understanding the Israeli-Egyptian conflict and its resolution at that time.

Foreign decision-making in social science research: the research deals with analysing chosen models from principal approaches in the field, as well as their application in three case studies that investigated Meir's foreign decision-making in different events from 1970–1973. The application process led to conclusions from which the researcher formulated a theoretical and practical model for reflective analysis of foreign decision-making, known as HCSM.

# CHAPTER I

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Introduction**

The foreign behaviour of international players is one of the most important issues that engage the discipline of international relations. The analysis of decision-making in political science is a micro-strategy that aims to describe, explain, and sometimes even forecast the outputs of decisions as well as actual foreign decision-making behaviour itself (Bueno de Mosquita, 1992). Rosenau (1987), one of the pioneers of foreign policy study, described the field as research that intends to decode a wide range of human activity. It therefore engages practically in the study of decision-making processes in international relations at all politics levels.

Simon (1982, 1985, and 1992) a leading decision-making researcher in the field of political science and international relations referred to the issue and its solution as bridge or chess, as have others. In these games, the sweeping benefit is the ultimate goal, which means victory in itself is an integral part of the game. The event creates a match between means and goals, and players have to take only one decision in response to one question: What is the optimal option available that serves the desired purpose?

However, it is clear that politics is certainly not a game. Casif (2005) described politics as the art of assessing measures that others may take. The idea that politics is a game has helped develop a theoretical framework to define and distinguish different types of contests and games. Over time it has become strict, formal and mostly mathematical.

The literature chapter covers academic written texts in the field of decision-making processes in international policy-making, relying on two selection criteria: they display inalienable assets alone, and they belong to one of three approaches—rationalistic, bureaucratic (organizational and governmental) and psychological. Texts that relate to biological elements

of decision-making processes in international policy-making are not included, as this assumes that they are mostly mental processes.

## I. Decision-making Approaches of Foreign Policy Analysis

### I.1 The Rational Approach

The rational approach is the basic proposition in decision-making. The term “rational” itself is complex and requires precision and understanding regarding the reference. At first glance, the term “rationality” is neither an absolute nor an objective. However, some argue that the basic understanding of this elusive concept and the assumption that people sometimes tend to be rational creatures, is a significant basis for all social science research (Zisser, 1993: 333).

The rational approach, in its original state, sees national players as actors acting in the light of a clear system of preferences. In addition, the players are perceived as being conscious of every interchangeable possibility, and as those who choose the possibility that brings maximum benefits to themselves. It also provides a point of reference from which one can analyse the whole sphere of decision-making processes in international policy making. The realistic school assumes that countries act in a rational manner with regard to issues concerned with power struggles and power plays in an anarchic international sphere (Casif, 2005). On a simpler level, when relevant information is fully held, it is possible to imagine what a decision will be. Although, as the game gets more complicated—when information is incomplete, goals conflict, etc.—all these values make the use of the term “rational” very problematic.

However, the rational approach can be applied to a wider range of different decision games, for example, international relations researchers have used game theory in the study of bargaining processes and deterrence.

In its classical version, the rational paradigm assumes that decision-makers are primarily rational players who are aware of every possible alternative for action, and are capable of accurately determining expected results of these alternatives. Decision-makers take decisions in the light of clear and unambiguous priorities, which are set by an intelligent rules system. Allison (1971) defined rationality as a “consistent value, maximising choice within specified constraints” (Allison, 1971, 30). Other researchers perform three basic steps in the following order: 1. **Formulate** all possible

alternatives; 2. **Evaluate** in terms of the cost-effectiveness of each of these alternatives and apply an appropriate probability score; and 3. **Select** the optimal alternative, which would provide them with maximum benefit (Maoz, 1990, Russett & Starr, 1992, Allisson & Zellikow, 1999).

MacDonald (2003) expanded the three stages of rational decision-making:

“First, actors are assumed to employ **purposive action** motivated by goal-oriented behaviour and not simply by habit or social expectations. Decision-makers must be able to identify a priority goal and move forward with an intention of reaching that objective... Second, actors display **consistent preferences** as manifested in the ability to rank preferences in transitive order” (Mintz & DeRouen, 2010, p. 58).

McDermott (2004) defined transitivity as a situation whereby if outcome (a) is preferred over outcome (b), and (b) is preferred to (c), then (a) is preferred to (c). For example, if diplomacy is preferred to sanctions and sanctions are preferred over force, then diplomacy is preferred over the use of force. **Invariance** means that “decision-makers’ preferences hold steady in the face of various information presented” (Mintz & DeRouen, 2010, p.58). In addition, Riker (1995) noted that “preference ordering is a hallmark of purposive behaviour” (*ibid*). The two explanations therefore together arouse the understanding that actors must know what they want and must be able to rank various outcomes in relation to a goal (Mintz & DeRouen, 2010). In other words, the researchers emphasised the major principle according to which decision-makers need to know their destination if they hope to actually get there.

The rational approach has a number of application models, one of which is attributed to Cashman (1993). His application was founded as an operative and inclusive illustration of the rational model: 1. Identify problem; 2. Identify and rank goals; 3. Gather information (this can be ongoing); 4. Identify alternatives for reaching goals; 5. Analyse alternatives by considering consequences and effectiveness of each alternative and probabilities associated with its success; 6. Select alternative that maximizes chances of selecting the best alternative as determined in step five; 7. Implement decision; and 8. Monitor and evaluate (Cashman, 1993).

### **I.1.1 Rational Approach and Basic Concepts of International Relations**

- A. **Realist School:** Leading researchers in this school are Morgenthau, Kennan, Kissinger, Aron and others. This theory partly overlaps with the basic assumptions of the classical paradigm. Realist players perceive states as key unitary players in international relations. Only these players have the ability to define interests, goals and objectives in a distinct, systematic and coherent manner, and act on a priority basis. The realistic approach assumes that countries act rationally when they perform computational cost-benefit analyses and make maximum benefit decisions. Another assumption is that maximum benefit is maximum power in an anarchic international environment (Aron, 1966; Morgenthau, 1970; Kissinger 1994). These two assumptions are related to each other and even overlap, but the emphasis in each one is different. The first emphasises the potential for state-level players, and the second emphasises the outputs of decisions and actions.
- B. **Neo-Realism:** An important and integral member of this school is Waltz (1996). Waltz tried to organize starting positions of classical realism into scientific theoretical frameworks. He coined the term “structural realism”, and intended to identify the exact conditions in which state actors live and operate. According to his theory, state actors are like billiard balls, their relative values differ. Relative strengths of relevant variables such as GDP, military power, territories, population and others operating in an anarchic international environment must be measured. According to Waltz, in an anarchic environment, there is a strong tendency to strive toward a relative balance of power in the international system. Another assumption is that countries constantly move on a continuum between self-preservation and striving for universal dominance. Hence there is some overlap between the neo-realist school and classic paradigms: both assume that states are units that aspire to maximum values and goals. One of the main differences between them is the premise in structural realism that countries operate within a set of constraints and limitations influenced by the anarchic nature of the international system.
- C. **The school of international institutions:** emphasis in this school is the contribution of international interaction among international institutions, particularly with regards to the explanation of

cooperation between states. These are the fundamental variables used by this school to explain international politics (Martin, 1992).

- D. **The liberal school** rediscovery is an important development in recent years. According to the inclusive premise of this school, democracies do not fight each other (Levy, 1997). This school focuses on democratic countries, and therefore does not relate to fundamental differences in the form of international decision-making of democratic players versus non-democratic actors. Moravcsik (1997) tried to fit the classic rational model school, stating that macro social goals and values (cultural) actually shape the strategic preferences of various administrations, both democratic and non-democratic. He claimed that once they were designed, they became the foundation of governmental actors' rational behaviour.

### **I.1.2 Rational Approach—Criticism and Modifications**

The classic actor model tries to describe, explain and predict outputs of decisions in international terms. However, there are those who have tended to emphasise the ambiguity of the terms rational/irrational (for example, Ariely, 2009). Other previous researchers have presented more extreme criticism. Allison and Zelikow (1999) claimed that such concept interpretation means tendentious retroactive policy decisions analysis, which accommodates any rational principles to every foreign policy action (Allison & Zelikow, 1999).

Renshon and Renshon (2008) emphasised that a careful consideration of policy alternatives using the rational approach does not automatically ensure a sound outcome: “Experts and advisory groups often analyse policy dilemmas thoroughly but arrive at suboptimal outcomes. In general, the analytic process of the rational model should lead to better decisions, although not always to better outcomes” (in Mintz & DeRouen, 2010, p. 58).

Other researchers have highlighted decision-makers' tendency not to change policy direction, although it was irrelevant to situations at the time (e.g. Levy, 1992; Stein & Pauly, 1993).

Some critical scholars emphasised the irrational elements in the decision-making processes: these elements are specified separately and in depth below. In general, we should mention several examples: Singer (1968) and

Astorino-Courtois (2000), who have shown that in situations where decision-makers are tense or have serious concerns, they may use non-rational functions. In addition, Verba's (1969) model examined rational and non-rational decision-making processes. His main conclusion was that under certain conditions, administrations tend to make decisions in accordance with the guidelines of the classical paradigm, which he called rational measures meaning destinations and rationality. He estimated that decision-makers choose the alternative that enables the implementation of relevant targets, but not necessarily at the lowest costs.

Braybrooke and Lindblom (1963) offered a more critical perspective. They believed that most decisions that have created a major change in international politics do not meet the criteria of the classical rational model. According to them, the premise of the classical model—that decision-makers evaluate all possible alternatives in terms of cost-benefit analysis and choose the most beneficial option—is fundamentally wrong. The authors noted that decision-makers work within the constraints of time, budget, and available information, which make demands of the classical model too unrealistic. Braybrooke and Lindblom emphasised the difficulty of making rational decisions related to connections with decisions taken in the past, and simulated past decisions as branches that grew earlier. Therefore, in most cases, returning to a starting point is impossible. Thus, they argued that decisions taken reflect mostly supplemental changes and not fundamental ones. In addition, they referred to a decision-maker's limited perspective/viewpoint considering agenda issues, which leads them to prefer dealing with simple problems that require simple orientation. Their proposed model is the Incremental Model, which was first introduced by Lindblom in 1959 as "the Science of Muddling Through". The model suggests that a decision is made using measures that take into account limitations and constraints that appear over time during policy making and its implementation. Limitations and constraints relate to costs, connections, decisions made in the past and partial information. In addition, the researchers stated that decision-makers prefer to divide problem resolution into sub-components, thereby avoiding the need to devise a comprehensive strategy, requiring fundamental decisions that can be fatal (Casif, 2005).

However, Mandel (1986) noted that "this dynamic is conservative in that it entails only minor fine tuning of past decisions rather than a broad exploration of policy alternatives... Incrementalism leads to decisional inertia because the same alternatives are accepted over and over" (Mintz & DeRouen, 2010, p. 74). Because there is no large deviation from past

choices, there is little chance of catastrophic failure resulting from one decision. In addition, since incremental decisions only make for small changes in the *status quo*, they rarely completely solve problems, but rather provide temporary solutions (*ibid*). Braybrooke and Lindblom (1963) asserted that “this is the typical kind of problem solving encountered in everyday politics” (Mintz & DeRouen, 2010, p. 74).

The classic approach has been modified in various ways that combine, on the one hand, a critical stance towards it, and agree with some of its basic assumptions on the other. Significant modifications were made by Nobel Laureate in Economics, Herbert Simon<sup>1</sup> (1957, 1982, 1985 and 1992), and his Bounded Rationality Model. Simon emphasised the costs associated with locating the information needed for decision-making, contrary to the rational model that assumes that information is readily available and complete. Simon’s proposed decision-making model was called the “satisfactory” model. Simon objected to the assumption that policy makers try to maximize goals and objectives. According to him, decision-makers do not usually discuss all possible alternatives, tending to settle for several alternatives, which are examined with regard to future action, until they find an accepted option within minimum standards, although these may accrue during the early stages of the process or in a short time (Casif, 2005). In other words, decision-makers deal with the rejection of alternatives until they come upon the best alternative that is perceived as satisfying. According to Simon, since every decision has a cost effect on decision-makers, they tend to predetermine what is considered an adequate decision, then adopt this alternative criterion and end the search process. “Decision-makers consider specific criteria for satisfaction, which are subjective and determined in accordance with levels of ambition for expected results. For example, if decision-makers anticipate difficulty in finding an appropriate alternative, they may set a relatively low level of ambition and vice versa” (Doron, 1986, p. 64).

Another interesting theory that criticises the rational paradigm is the cybernetic paradigm. This approach is identified with Stainbruner’s (1974, 2002) venture. Stainbruner substantiated that the rational paradigm cannot address complex decision problems that force decision-makers to decide between given values. In his estimation, the central motivator of decision-

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<sup>1</sup> Herbert Simon was one of the greatest researchers of the twentieth century. His findings and inventions spread over a variety of fields starting with political science, through economics (the field in which he was awarded the Nobel Prize), and computer science, of which he was a pioneer, and psychology.

makers is the need to control uncertain factors and therefore to minimize uncertainty as much as possible. This is done by transplanting the emphasis in complex processes of learning specific dilemmas to a reflexive response based on previous learning processes. According to Strainbruner, when a decision-making dilemma is defined, the process of solution begins, and is done in a non-parallel systematic manner. Numbers of solutions suggested are relatively small, levels of sensitivity to new information are low, as are limited revisions of the overall picture. In addition, the likelihood of misperception and selective organization of new information in the light of previous concepts is high. Finally, the selected solution is the first that passes the criteria for suitability.

The latest significant modification to the rational model is the poliheuristic model developed by Mintz & DeRouen (2010). The researchers defined poliheuristic theory as “a bridge between rational and cognitive perspectives” (2010, p. 78). The combination between the two methods forms a theory that is willing to propose highly precise decision-making processes in complex situations. The term “poliheuristic” can be explained by the words: “poly” (many) and “heuristic” (shortcuts). The poliheuristic model is a two-step process model. The researchers explained that “It is innovative in that decision-makers simplify their environment in the face of stress and time constraints by making decisions in two steps” (*ibid*): The first stage involves using decision heuristics and corresponds primarily to the cognitive school of decision-making. The second stage involves rational processing of surviving alternatives, and corresponds to rational choice theory. Cognitive political heuristics are more important in the first stage of decision-making, whereas rational and maximising calculations are more applicable to the second stage. “This theory is applicable to single decisions made by leaders, group decisions, sequential decisions, and decisions in strategic settings and explains how and why leaders make decisions” (*ibid*). A key premise in that model is that leaders use more than one strategy when making decisions, including strategies that are suboptimal (Mintz et al. 1997).

In summary, modifications to the rational paradigm originated in the criticism that it earned. It was this that determined that the concept “rationality” is tautological. There were those who claimed that one could not use it as a basis for explaining commonplace situations, for example, in cases where decision-makers have to decide between contradictory alternatives. Others indicated a tendency not to change old policies even when their time had come. There were those who emphasised the non-rational components of decision-making processes that are relevant to the

psychological complexes of decision-makers' available constraints: clarity and information processing, etc. This criticism creates a chain reaction of modifications adopting only part of the classical model's foundations, such as the above-mentioned: the Incremental Model of Braybrooke and Lindblom (1963) and Simon's (1982) Bounded Rationality Model, etc. As will be described, there are several alternative approaches that challenge and question the rational approach and its modifications.

The rational approach has a key role in formulating theoretical propositions in political science decision-making research. However, even those who tend to adopt the basic assumptions of the rational approach, tend to present a critical stance towards it. This last statement will be used as a bridge to the bureaucratic approach.

## **I.2 The Bureaucratic Approach**

More than 100 years ago, Weber (1922, 1949 and 1978) stated that government in a modern state is influenced by the "routines of the administration" (Weber, 1947 in Casif, 2005, p. 13). As Weber predicted, these administrative routines' impact on decision-making processes is enormous (Casif, 2005; Korany, 1986; Ray, 1995).

In Weber's words, "It is obvious that technically the great modern state absolutely depends upon a bureaucratic basis. The larger the state, or the more it becomes a great power state, the more unconditionally is this the case" (Weber, 1947 in Casif, 2005, p. 13).

The literature of the bureaucratic decision-making approach began to develop systematically in the 1960s. It emerged as a critical response to the rational approach, and intended to apply new knowledge gathered from organizational research (Kegley & Wittkof, 1999).

The researchers, Neusstadt (1960, 1990), and Snyder, Bruck and Sapin (1962), were among the first to recognise the influence of the organizational effect on decision-making processes in international relations. Allison's (1971) research was the first to deal with the issue in depth. Allison's analysis showed that bureaucratic processes in foreign policy are desirable and possible as well. The impact on research in this field has been tremendous. Allison offered two options of bureaucratic models as alternatives to the rational paradigm in attempting to explain foreign policy decision-making processes: **the organizational bureaucratic model and the governmental politics model:**