

HOW DO LEADERS MAKE DECISIONS?



Contributions to
**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, PEACE ECONOMICS AND
DEVELOPMENT VOLUME 28 PART B**

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Contributions to
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, PEACE ECONOMICS AND
DEVELOPMENT VOLUME 28 PART B

HOW DO LEADERS MAKE DECISIONS? EVIDENCE FROM THE EAST AND WEST, PART B

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FOREWORD

The chapters in this book discuss the leadership style of some major political leaders. There are a number of publications on leadership characteristics of US Presidents and other political leaders. However, this is the first book that uses a theoretical framework (namely, the Poliheuristic Perspective) to better understand the leadership patterns of some political leaders. In business management, leadership is an important subject and a vast literature exists in the area of leadership of business executives. These studies also discuss the style not only for the business as a whole, but also in relation to multi-level structure within it.

In politics, leadership is very important not only for intrastate disputes, but also for interstate conflicts. In many situations, this dual nature of conflict is related. Also, a leader has to work within the framework of a team or a political party. The theory of leadership in politics is quite complex. A very important subject in leadership theory is Transformational Leadership which deals with changes instituted by the leader in the vision, mission, and goals of the organization. This idea of transformational leadership is ingrained in the mission for social and religious leaders such as Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, Nelson Mandela, etc.

A political leader's attitude depends on cultural complex. This dependence is due to cultural ecology and environment. This may also depend on social organization and cultural biology of the leader. The leader will be influenced by psychological, sociological, and cognitive factors. A political leader's attitude is a part of group behavior. The decision-making of the political leader depends on Image, Script, and Schema. These factors also affect the strategy of the leader in negotiation process. This may be acquired as a result of a learning process. The nature of a decision also depends on the stress and crisis situation. Although this book covers some of the most important leaders of our time, the list is not complete.

In CCMPED 28 Part A, some selected leaders were included. CCMPED 28 Part B includes the remaining leaders.

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INTRODUCTION: HOW DO LEADERS MAKE DECISIONS? EVIDENCE FROM THE EAST

Alex Mintz and Eldad Tal-Shir

ABSTRACT

Understanding how leaders make foreign policy and national security decisions is of paramount importance for both the policy community and academia. It is our assertion that decisions in these domains can be explained best by tracing the cognitive process leaders go through in formulating and arriving at their decisions, using the applied decision analysis (ADA) method.

Consequently, this chapter introduces readers to Applied Decision Analysis (also see Mintz, 2005; Mintz & DeRouen, 2010), which is utilized throughout the chapters comprising this volume. We describe the methodological and theoretical implications of the research findings presented in this edited volume. Specifically, the range of leaders analyzed in this volume using ADA (namely, Vladimir Putin, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Khaled Mashal, Mao Zedong, and Saddam Hussein) substantiates this method's capacity to provide robust analysis of decisions made by leaders from diverse nations and cultures. We conclude this introduction by providing a brief summary of the chapters that are included in this volume.

This volume is the second of two volumes analyzing decision-making, policy, and strategy of 12 prominent political leaders from the East and West through the lens of ADA. The chapters comprising both volumes seek to uncover how political leaders make decisions: their decision calculus and the motives and factors affecting their crafting of foreign as well as national

security policies. The concluding chapter outlines the empirical and analytic contributions of ADA and poliheuristic theory to analysis that should be undertaken in national security and foreign policy affairs. Specifically, the chapter underscores ADA's policy relevance and ramifications vis-à-vis intelligence analysis, international security analysis, as well as cross-cultural decision-making studies of rivals and allies.

Keywords: Applied decision analysis; poliheuristic theory; decision theory; leadership theory; international relations; international politics; international security; intelligence studies; decision-making studies

The analyses, which use a unique Applied Decision Analysis (ADA) method to uncover how leaders make decisions, are based on traditional and contemporary theories of decision-making covered in depth in the introduction of the former volume. These include, but are not limited to the rational actor model (see Allison, 1971; Bueno de Mesquita, 1989; Sage, 1990), the cybernetic theory of decision (see Simon, 1985), poliheuristic theory (see Mintz, 2004), as well as various decision rules including elimination-by-aspects (see Tversky, 1972a, 1972b), and the lexicographic decision rule (see Payne, Bettman, & Johnson, 1988). As we pointed out in the first volume, *it is our assertion that foreign and national security policies can be explained best by tracing the cognitive process leaders go through in formulating and arriving at their decisions, using the Applied Decision Analysis method (Mintz & Tal-Shir, 2019).* This is further underscored by the findings of the research conducted in this volume, which substantiate a compelling argument, that decision-making in the global arena is characterized by the use of heuristics — political considerations and constraints in decision-making, more than by rational, expected-utility based calculations (Mintz & Tal-Shir, 2019).

This conclusion demonstrates the importance of integrating the rational and cognitive schools of decision; that is, treating policy makers as suboptimal information processors and decision-makers that can only decide “rationally” after having reduced the complexity of the decision task by rejecting alternatives on the basis of heuristics, namely, mental rules-of-thumb. The prevailing theory in this domain, which has consistently been able to best explain the decisions analyzed by the scholars that contributed to this volume and in the previous volume is the Poliheuristic theory of decision. As such, we hope this volume will serve to aid its readers with understanding the substantive mechanisms by which decisions are made on the global arena, and further aid the unfolding paradigm shift in traditional international relations to that of behavioral international relations. This has important implications for domestic policy analysts, as well as to national security and foreign policy analysts.

A major contribution of this two-volume project, is methodological. Authors of chapters in these volumes have used the ADA method to uncover the decision rules of political leaders. By enabling the deconstruction and elucidation of the complex and impenetrable processes by which leaders and policy makers arrive at their choices, ADA demonstrates its merit for both policy and academic

analysts and researchers as a structured approach to the understanding and simulation of cognitive mechanisms. Indeed, ADA's capacity to uncover the decision calculi of leaders may also position it well for strategic application as a tool for forecasting political decisions in both interactive, sequential, and standalone scenarios.

As was pointed out in the first volume, "How Leaders Make Decisions? Evidence from East and West" (Mintz & Adamsky, 2019), these volumes have attempted to uncover various decision rules in decisions of world leaders from East and West. Authors in this volume focus on the decision calculi of leaders of the East, and do so using ADA. For the benefit of the reader, we summarize this method below.

APPLIED DECISION ANALYSIS

The key method used in this book (and in Volume 1 of this 2-volume project), is Applied Decision Analysis (ADA) (Mintz, Chatagnier, & Brule, 2006; Mintz & DeRouen, 2010). ADA is an "analytical procedure aimed at recreating or 'reverse engineering' decisions of leaders, groups, and coalitions using a decision matrix" (Mintz et al., 2006; Mintz & DeRouen, 2010). ADA permits analysts and scholars to assume the mantle of the decision-makers analyzed, and unveil the mechanisms by which they arrive at decisions.

ADA facilitates post-decision analysis by structuring the complex process of reverse-engineering decisions. Once a decision has been made, ADA provides an analytical framework by which analysts and researchers may trace the cognitive steps that the decision-maker has taken en-route to his or her decision. It does so by utilizing a "decision matrix" which serves as a visual aid, and wherein rows depict decision-criteria (or dimensions), and columns depict available alternatives.

Those enable researchers to explain how decision-makers winded up at their choice. This is done by uncovering the searching, processing, and decision characteristics of those analyzed. Moreover, it facilitates counterfactual analyses that explicate how different choices could have been made by either modifying the decision rule utilized, or the actual decision context (e.g., changing decision-criteria or implications).

The ADA procedure consists of the following tasks:¹

- (1) Identify the set of alternatives available to the leader – for example, use force, apply sanctions, or do nothing.
- (2) Identify the set of dimensions or decision criteria that may explain the decision – for example, a military dimension, an economic dimension, a political dimension, and a diplomatic dimension.
- (3) Assign weights (importance level) to dimensions (optional) – for example, rate the military dimension of the decision to use force as very important, the economic and political dimensions as important, and the diplomatic dimensions as somewhat important.

- (4) Identify implications – for example, the economic implications of the use of force alternative in the case of occupying Iraq were high, in the hundreds of billions of dollars.
- (5) Rate implications of each dimension on each alternative.
- (6) Identify decision rule(s) used by leaders – for example, determine whether the leader utilized a poliheuristic decision rule, a maximizing rule, or a satisfying model.

These tasks are undertaken in two-steps, wherein tasks 1–5 focus on correctly uncovering, and constructing the decision matrix used by the decision-maker, while task 6 facilitates the identification of the decision rule utilized en-route to the choice made through a post-decision analysis.

The first phase, namely, decision-matrix identification, involves several tasks. Analysts must unveil the alternatives or courses-of-action that the decision-maker could have considered at the time, the decision-criteria or dimensions that the decision-maker tended to when making his or her choice, and the implications for each alternative on each dimension or how does each alternative do on a given dimension; these ratings are most commonly given qualitatively, ranging from –10 to +10. Moreover, researchers can tend to disproportionate importance levels of dimensions by assigning them weights – either qualitative or quantitative – which facilitate tracing actual decision calculi by incorporating subtle considerations.

This collection and identification process can utilize historic archives, experts' opinions, scholarly analyses, quotes and interviews, biographies and autobiographies, and media coverage to produce a matrix with high validity as to its accurate simulation of the decision context faced by the decision-maker analyzed.²

To expedite this stage, a specialized software, "The Decision Board" (<http://www.decisionboard.org>) has been developed (see its use in Mintz, Geva, Redd, & Carnes, 1997). Although the use of this platform for ADA is optional, the process confers numerous advantages by transposing these tasks to a web-based platform, wherein analysts can store their work and conduct it methodically as the software provides users with input fields and selections to build the matrix according to the tasks listed above.

The second and final phase involves the determination of the *decision rule* utilized by the decision-maker. This can be done by simulating the use of decision rules (e.g., LEX, EUT, PH, EBA, etc.), and comparing their expected-result with the actual choice made through a post-decision analysis. Another approach would be to find promising decision-rules or to rule out specific rules according to characteristics of the decision-maker analyzed, for example, a decision-maker that has been found to assign non-compensatory stature to a key dimension would not utilize an additive (compensatory) decision rule. A final method of analysis would be the comparison of the chosen alternative's overall expected-utility to those of its peers; if the chosen alternative did not bear the highest net-benefit, the analyst may rule-out rational choice theory – which, as aforesaid, asserts that decision-makers can and will choose the alternative providing maximal benefit – and focus instead on examining decision-rules belonging to the cognitive school of decision-making.

Given the inherent strengths of ADA's simplification and expedition of decision analyses, it was undertaken as the preferred approach virtually in all the chapters comprising this volume. Below we summarize and preview these researches by describing their hypotheses, methodology, and conclusions.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Hadar Glottman's chapter studies President of Russia, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin's decision calculus, basing herself on 12 decisions made throughout his third-term with regard to the Middle East. Utilizing interviews, expert opinions, quotes and biographic literature (among others), she finds that the amalgamation of Putin's personality, life experiences, aspirations and considerations results in his calculus being commensurate with the rational choice decision code.

The decisions analyzed vary in their topic and include diplomatic, security-related, and financial. Aside for a single outlier, Glottman's hypothesis (namely, of rational choice) holds, and the political dimension emerges most salient in Putin's decision-making. Glottman asserts that the typical lack of elements of stress and time constraints are what enable Putin to resort to this decision code.

Shir Simchayoff uncovers President Erdoğan of Turkey's decision calculus through the analysis of six of his major decision vis-à-vis the Syrian Civil War. She demonstrates that Erdoğan's non-compensatory political dimension leads him to utilize a poliheuristic (PH) decision rule. Simchayoff demonstrates and explicates how this decision code accounts for Turkish policy changes vis-a-vis the Syrian issue.

Simchayoff bases herself on Erdoğan's personality and leadership style to identify the salient elements in his decision making, such as an aspiration for Turkey to play a central role in shaping the region's affairs. To that end, alternatives that are found to be damaging on the political dimension are discarded, while a subsequent rational, maximizing approach is utilized for selection from among remaining alternatives.

Leehe Friedman, Yair Samban, John Tyson Chatagnier, and Alex Mintz analyze Hamas' former leader Khaled Mashal's decision calculus. The authors found that Mashal tended to act as a pragmatic decision-maker that responds to changes in the political environment surrounding and challenging him (also see Mishal & Sella, 2000). The authors found that the decisions analyzed in this chapter can be explained primarily by the poliheuristic decision rule. Across time, Mashal has generally been sensitive to challenges to organizational cohesion and his standing in the organization. Yet, he has also found the public perception of Hamas to be a crucial component of his decision process.

Their analysis clearly indicates that:

Mashal views the political path as the best way to minimize dangers to Hamas itself [...] while remaining true to Hamas' founding principles and continuing the armed struggle against Israel.

Shimon Keselman analyzes Chairman of the Communist Party of China, the late Mao Zedong's decision calculus. Keselman examines six decisions on the use of force made by Mao in areas of foreign-policy to substantiate his

hypothesis on Mao's utilizing a poliheuristic (PH) decision rule. Mao's internal political needs, his vision for China as a military superpower, and ambition for the spread of communism drove Mao to prioritize maximizing utility on these dimensions even at inconceivable costs to the Chinese people.

Keselman shows how in contrast to common perceptions of Mao as imprudent, his decisions were made coolly, as part of his greater vision for China and its people. He further demonstrates that this pragmatism in combination with an absolutist ideology brought about internal domestic events such as the great purge and the Cultural Revolution.

Eli Mograbi examines former President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein's decision calculus, utilizing an "at-a-distance" method of leadership analysis, conceived by Margaret Hermann (1999) and ADA, to glean insights about Saddam's decision rule. Mograbi claims that Saddam's decisions fit a lexicographic (LEX) decision rule. Mograbi draws from records seized during the Iraq War to unveil Saddam strategic calculus traced throughout eight of his decisions.

Mograbi asserts that Saddam's use of the lexicographic decision rule drove him to choose alternatives for implementation based on how they fare specifically, on the political dimension, opting for alternatives that maximize utility on this crucial dimensions. Mograbi also finds that misperceptions were crucial components of many of Saddam's decisions, engendering suboptimal decisions.

Dmitry Adamsky focuses on the empirical, theoretical, and practical contributions of ADA method to the understanding of political actors' decision-making across ideologies, cultures, and structural settings, as well as in various periods of peace and war. Specifically, Adamsky's chapter suggests that ADA enables researchers and analysts to make an accurate prognosis of actors' actions by honing in on their decision code. Adamsky asserts that this capacity constitutes a highly effective facilitator of national security planning, intelligence analysis, net-assessment, and strategic planning.

These chapters clearly demonstrate the utility of using the ADA procedure for uncovering the decision code of international leaders. They also show the dominance of poliheuristic theory (along the rational actor and lexicographic decision rules) in decisions made by political leaders.

NOTES

1. This section is taken from Mintz et al. (2006). See also Mintz and Adamsky (Volume 1, 2019).

2. One can conduct a sensitivity analysis for both weights and ratings assigned to ensure the robustness of the findings. Moreover, such weights and rating need not be confined to a single number, as number-ranges may be assigned whenever the precise importance or implication cannot be identified.

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