

Foreign Policy Theories: A Review

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Abstract

Foreign Policy Analysis brings together many interpretations of foreign policy decision-making and one of them is the psychological aspect of decision-makers and leaders in the system. Deciphering a leader's world view is not easy as most researchers do not have access to analyze them. Many models have been created to answer such puzzling questions and analyze the behavior of foreign policy leaders. This paper follows three such models: Leadership Trait Analysis, Rubicon Model of War, and Operational Code Analysis to find similarities between three theories of leadership psychological characteristics in comparison to their surroundings, pressure from parties, individual traits, etc. to help future research on political psychology and proposes a more inclusive approach in foreign policy theory building that could help to predict leader behavior in crises. This paper lays an observation of how psychological aspect is not an independent variable in decision making, rather it is affected by the surrounding in which it persists.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Leadership, Leadership Trait Analysis, Rubicon Model of War, Operational Code Analysis

Introduction

Often a state's foreign policy is seen in terms of the leader's personality (Winter 1992). Hence, within the discourse of foreign policy analysis, it has been suggested that most foreign policy crises and war conditions are influenced by an individual's distinctive decision-making style, policy preferences and relationship with their advisers (Dyson 2006). However, deciphering such a leader's worldview is not easy as most researchers do not have access to analyze them in person (Dyson and Parent 2018). In the study of foreign policies, many models have been created to answer such puzzling questions and analyze the behavior of foreign policy leaders, such as Hermann's framework of eight personality traits (Snare 1992); Etheredge's (1978a, b) scheme for determining political personality; Psychohistory by deMause (1975) (Ihanus, 2001), Behavior Analysis (Kimhi 2001) and much more.

The many research available in the field of political psychology, although offers different perspectives on particular leader characteristic, it also contributes to its difficulty in analyzing leadership traits affecting crucial decision making in real life crises. Hence, the purpose of the paper is to find similarities in three distinct models that attribute to three different types of psychological aspects of leaders. This research will help to find a more inclusive theory in the future that will help policymakers and theorists to analyze real life crises more efficiently. The three such models in question are

Leadership Trait Analysis technique (Dyson 2006), Rubicon model of war (Levy 2013), and Operational Code Analysis (Schafer and Walker 2001). Leadership Trait Analysis explores actor specific factors, Rubicon model of war explores rationality in leaders, and Operational Code Analysis explores factors that influences leader perception. Finding similarities in the three distinct theories allows the paper to build its argument that a more inclusive approach could help to predict leader behavior during different crises.

Research Method

The paper has focused on secondary resources and existing literature to compare different foreign policy theories that explain the various psychological aspects affecting foreign policy decision making. Through the help of existing literature, the essay found similarities and contrasted the three main theories of the paper to other theories. The overlap is an interesting observation and can be used to build newer theories combining elements of the theories discussed. The paper follows an exploratory method to answer the research question with some aspects of case study to explain real time implications of these theories. Various literature has been reviewed through the paper to help detect the appropriate and relevant theory for understanding psychological aspects in foreign policy leadership.

Result

Leadership Trait Analysis

At-a-distance techniques have been popularized in recent times as it allows researchers to explore relevant individual characteristics and mitigate the problem of the lack of direct access to leaders (Dyson 2006; Taber 2000). The technique relies on public verbal outputs of foreign policy leaders, processed by content analysis, and then linked to various psychological concepts (Dyson 2006; Schafer 2005; Winter 2003). These techniques have become useful in addressing leadership traits that affect prominent events of international relations, such as wars and negotiations. One of the at-a-distance techniques is known as Leadership Trait Analysis. The framework was initially created by Margaret Hermann. The framework introduces seven leader traits that affect leaders' inclination towards respect or challenge to the international environment, their interest in adopting information, motivation as a leader, etc., (Dyson 2006; Hermann 2003; Schafer 2000). The framework initially used hand coding to develop a score for samples, often leading to worries about score biases (Young 2000). However, with new computer software available, it eliminates intercoder reliability concerns (Dyson 2006).

The first trait that the framework introduces is the leader's belief in the ability to control events (Dyson 2006). This trait is usually a subjective perception of the leader about their political environment.

Usually, the high scorers on this spectrum estimate their state's influence to be high in relation to the political environment which leads to a more proactive policy behavior (Dyson 2006). The leader's subjective perception may not always be implemented. Hermann (2003) emphasizes this by explaining that reality differs depending on the combination of other traits that may affect their decision making. It proves that none of the traits is a standalone trait, they complement each other to formulate one distinct personality.

The second trait is known as conceptual complexity where individuals' description of the actors, places, people, and things involved in the political environment within which they operate affects decision-making (Dyson 2006). Individuals who score higher tend to have a more nuanced and complex view of the world whereas individuals who score lower tend to have a more black and white perspective of their political environment (Dyson 2006). High scorers would be open to acknowledging more information before deciding on a policy while low scorers fail to perceive alternatives and decide on the limited information available to them. This conceptual complexity may be a concoction of existing cognitive central beliefs which are not susceptible to temporary changes (see, Pursiainen and Forsberg 2021).

The third trait, also known as, the need for power draws upon the individual's need to gain, maintain or restore their control over

decision-making and policy outcomes (Dyson 2006). Individuals ranking higher on the spectrum are more involved in policy (Dyson 2006) and Preston (2001) also found evidence of leaders shaping advisory processes and tending to keep debates and decisions within a tightly knitted inner circle. The individualistic nature to an extent matches Barber's personality framework (Snare 1985, 1992) of "Advertiser" who may be more hostile towards adversaries as they seek to maintain their independence. Whereas individuals scoring lower tend to delegate their policy decision and are more likely to accept contrary outcomes (Dyson 2006). There may be a possibility of such individuals having some controlled interdependent activities with other states as well, and an in-between action of maintaining the status quo and reacting blatantly to international events (see Etheredge Personality Framework 1978a, b).

The fourth trait known as self-confidence influences how open an individual would be to added information (Hermann 1999). Individuals scoring higher in self-confidence are more driven to follow their ideologies and principles and persuade others around them to follow their course of action (Hermann 1999). They are also unresponsive to any cues from their political environment. Those who are on the lower end, however, are more pragmatic and responsive toward others' ideas (Hermann 1999). The notion of self-confidence may have an interesting relationship with birth order as well because

of their ingrained belief in understanding when and where to yield power given the status of their order and age (see Hudson 1992).

The fifth, sixth and seventh traits, known as in-group bias, task orientation, and distrust of others (Dyson 2006) can be explained together as they sometimes may exist concurrently. The three traits together can explain what motivates a leader (Hermann 1999). On one end of the spectrum, a leader's ingroup bias provides evidence of how they form cooperative relationships or is threatened by other states as there is more literature to show that such in-group bias affects how confrontational a state will be (Herman 1999; Pettigrew, LeVine and Campbell 1973). According to Hagan (1994), this is also known as the "statist approach" where a leader is inclined to protect their administration which shapes foreign policy to be either conflictual or cooperative. Task orientation is more likely in a situation where in-group bias is high because of the leader's nature to appease their members, a result of a likely (maybe) groupthink situation (see Badie 2010). On the other end of the spectrum, distrust of others works oppositely. Leaders often isolate their decision-making process to avoid getting sabotaged and to an extent, this view comes from a zero-sum view of the world (Hermann 1999). On the higher end, leaders may remain vigilant while building relationships with other states if in-group bias is low. On the lower end, leaders may have more aggressive and assertive foreign policy behavior, considering in-group bias is high

(Hermann 1999). If the distrust for others is higher for an individual, task orientation may be more isolated. An interesting comparison can be made with psychoanalytical theories of pathological narcissism where a lack of empathy may lead to distrust (see Sheng 2001).

Rubicon Model of War

Rubicon Model of War sets a framework that is overarching a diverse range of psychological biases and how these biases affect various stages of the decision-making process (Levy 2013). It is an important contribution to the literature on decision-making leading up to the war and provides a contrast to the rational bargaining model (Levy 2013). The model contributes to a growing literature of proposed research on varying factors such as glory, honor, pride, reputation, and numerous other variables affecting the decision-making process in war (Johnson and Tierney 2011). The model also sheds light on overconfidence in decision-makers that lead to an overestimation of the probability of victory which makes avoidable wars into a reality (Johnson and Tierney 2011). The authors also mention policy implications that result from psychological biases of decision-makers and how implemental-mindset makes them overconfident and ultimately both parties suffer from failure in deterrence and escalation of war (Johnson and Tierney 2011). There are various stages that the Rubicon model posits that a decision-maker goes through.

The pre-decisional phase consists of options and outcomes that are compared and weighed, where the deliberative mindset tends to dominate (Heckhausen and Gollwitzer 1987). A deliberative mindset has a “cognitive tuning” that helps to compare the information of options based on their desirability and feasibility (Johnson and Tierney 2011). This also proves them to be more receptive to information. In the pre-decisional phase, cognitive dissonance for deliberative minds is low, as well as vulnerability towards self-serving evaluations and any illusion of control (Johnson and Tierney 2011). The opposite applies to implemental mindsets. The implemental mindset dominates the post-decisional phase where they are more focused on trying to implement the “narrow-minded” course of action (Heckhausen and Gollwitzer 1987). The reason for the “narrow-mindedness” comes from their inclination to find an action that complements their choice. They are also more vulnerable to being affected by cognitive dissonance due to their increased tendency to believe that they can control events. One could say that the deliberative mindset tends to be more pragmatic in the decision-making process while the implemental mindset is more optimistic (Johnson and Tierney 2011). The literature within the Rubicon model of war explains three reasons why decision-makers may change their mindset from deliberative to implemental: one, the decision-makers believe that war is the right course of action; two, the decision-makers feel that war is imminent, hence they must partake in

it; and three, the decision-makers feel that they are forced to partake in war even though they might not want to (Johnson and Tierney 2011). Given the implications of the mindset, an appropriate reading of the mindset and its effects on decision-making could be that:

Table 1: Explanation inspired by Rubicon Model of War from Johnson and Tierney (2011) and works of Maoz (1990), Saunders (2017) and t'Hart et al (1997):

Foreign Policy Decision	Implemental Mindset: Causes and Action	Psychological Traits Applicable	Deliberative Mindset: Causes and Action	Psychological Traits Applicable
War is the correct choice	<p>Tendency to only receive information that agrees with their course of action.</p> <p>Over-confidence in their ability to control events related to war.</p>	<p>Less experienced leaders in foreign policy may be more prone to implemental mindset. This also leads to them being more susceptible to persuasive argumentation.</p>	<p>Pragmatic decision-making shows that war may not be worth the risk.</p> <p>More receptive to alternative options to judge actions that do not lead to war.</p> <p>Less confidence.</p>	<p>More experienced leaders will tend to have a deliberative mindset. Leaders have less biases and are less susceptible to group thinking.</p>
War is imminent	<p>Could be a victim of cognitive dissonance.</p> <p>Optimistic tendencies while planning wars.</p>	<p>Leaders may be more susceptible to political manipulation if they are prone to outcome or procedural rationality.</p> <p>Bureaucratic politics may play a powerful role in influencing leader's decisions because less</p>	<p>Could be a victim of cognitive dissonance.</p> <p>Victim of perception manipulated by implemental mindset.</p>	<p>Procedural rationality may be present which makes it more difficult to be victims of cognitive dissonance.</p> <p>Group settings like "Command center" or "Arena" may make</p>

		experienced leaders have limited risk assessment abilities.		individuals more susceptible to changing their initial decision.
Forced into war	<p>Victim of self-serving evaluations.</p> <p>The mindset itself can lead to an otherwise avoidable war.</p> <p>Underestimate the cost of war.</p> <p>Risky military planning.</p>	Hawkish behavior of leaders within decision-making groups may lead to an overestimation of the benefits of war.	<p>Victim of political manipulation.</p> <p>More planning towards military.</p>	<p>Political manipulation may lead to an outcome-based rationality where the deliberative mindset leaders are forced to consider implemental actions.</p>

What makes this Rubicon Model of War interesting in the assessment of the psychological aspect of foreign policy decision-making is that individual psychology is intertwined within a group setting political manipulation and bureaucratic politics. There are various circumstances in which political manipulation and bureaucratic politics may affect the change from deliberative to implemental mindset and are also evident within the decision-makers group setting. These explanations apply to groups, such as parties and close-knitted advisors, including individuals who are members of such decision-making groups and are equally affected.

1. Individuals may fall victim to persuasive argumentation where decision-makers of an implemental mindset are less receptive to added information (Maoz 1990; Johnson and Tierney 2011).

2. Both value theorists and the Rubicon model of war theorists agree that there may be some degree of irrationality when choosing the action for the problem. The perception of the dominant group's shared norm may influence deliberative mindset decision-makers to change into an implemental mindset before the war.
3. Procedural rationality (Maoz 1990) may align heavily with a deliberative mindset as both emphasize being receptive to information and weigh the outcomes, leading to a less likely circumstance of war.
4. Outcome and preferable rationality (Maoz 1990) are susceptible to political manipulation within a group and overestimation of favorable outcomes, both of which are evident in the implemental mindset.
5. Bureaucratic politics provide powerful influence in foreign policy decision making (t'Hart et al 1997). The change from deliberative to implemental mindset may be more likely within groups that have formal or informal leaders with hawkish tendencies (see Kesgin, 2019), especially present in group settings such as Command Center and Area (see t'Hart et al 1997).
6. Less experienced leaders are more likely to have an implemental mindset because of their limited risk assessment abilities whereas experienced foreign policy leaders tend to ask more questions and

diminish bias with increasing opportunities for monitoring agents (see Saunders 2017).

In conclusion, within the Rubicon Model of War, it is possible to demonstrate that foreign policy decision-makers within group settings have psychological effects that come from their political environment. Individual leadership traits and any psychological aspects are intertwined with their group behavior. It is to note that it is beyond the scope of the paper to provide empirical case study evidence to support the similarities between the Rubicon Model of War and other group psychological aspects affecting individuals. The paper only focuses on providing similarities between the model and other aligning theories.

Operational Code Analysis

Smith (1988) mentions how the study of a leader's operational code links belief systems and international relations. Operational code analysis uses a certain subject of study, usually a leader, and deciphers how they perceive their political environment and their role in it. The analysis is focused on understanding an individual's core beliefs. Core beliefs make up for a leader's personality and decision-making style. George (1969) was one of the first proponents of the operational code analysis and he makes the argument that an actor's perception of their political surroundings and events lead to their effort of structuring strategy and tactics after weighing their choices and alternative

actions. Operational code analysis uses any available source, such as writings, speeches, etc., to build the leader's profile (Dyson and Parent 2018). Operational code analysis introduces two clusters of beliefs. One, philosophical beliefs are the beliefs that leaders have regarding the nature of the political world being either hostile or friendly and how much of it they can control; two, instrumental beliefs are the leader's characteristics in politics, such as how would a leader act in settings of norms, existing beliefs of the political world and engage in creating strategies and tactics that aligns with the political world. Initially, George (1969) provided five philosophical beliefs and five instrumental beliefs but after the creation of the Verbs In Context System (VICS), it has become easier to extract the beliefs through numerical data analysis.

Figure 1: George (1969) ten operational beliefs from Dyson and Parent (2018):

Philosophical Beliefs

1. What is the "essential" nature of political life? Is the universe essentially one of harmony or conflict? What is the fundamental character of one's political opponents?
2. What are the prospects for the eventual realization of one's fundamental values and aspirations? Can one be optimistic, or must one be pessimistic on this score; and in what respects the one and / or the other?
3. Is the political future predictable? In what sense and to what extent?
4. How much "control" or "mastery" can one have over historical development? What is one's role in "moving" and "shaping" history in the desired direction?
5. What is the role of "chance" in human affairs and in historical development?

Instrumental Beliefs

1. What is the best approach for selecting goals or objectives for political action?
2. How are the goals of action pursued most effectively?
3. How are the risks of political action calculated, controlled, and accepted?
4. What is the best "timing" of action to advance one's interests?
5. What is the utility and role of different means for advancing one's interests?

All the questions posed by Alexander George are interrelated and paint a larger picture of how foreign policy leadership is affected by beliefs, both internally ingrained and externally influenced. The first question under philosophical belief deals with the fundamental nature of a leader's political environment and the approach finds a leader's hostile or friendly nature based on their use of language (Dyson and Parent 2018). The second question in philosophical belief mirrors the first question which explores a bit more of an in-depth assessment of a leader (Dyson and Parent 2018). The third question explores the leader's perception of their role within the political world (Dyson and Parent 2018). The fourth question is interconnected with the third question as the leader's perception of control would define their effort to shape or influence political events. The fifth question posits the opposite to define leaders' perception if they think that they lack control in the international system. Instrumental questions then identify the course of action for a leader based on philosophical beliefs that are interwoven with instrumental beliefs (see, Holsti 1977). For example, the instrumental questions investigate the approaches, pursuit, risk assessment, and timing of goals, respectively.

These beliefs were also developed as types by Holsti (1977) that investigated the situational characteristics that allow these beliefs to influence behavior and hence the decision-making of leaders. These types were employed by Holsti from Waltz's (1959) categories of nature

(permanent/temporary) and source (human nature, society, and international system). Holsti (1977) provided six types which were later revised by Walker (1983) into four. These types can influence psychological aspects of decision-makers which are found more evidently in an individual's instrumental beliefs:

Table 2: Beliefs and Categories from Walker (1990):

Philosophical Beliefs	Instrumental Beliefs
Type A: Conflict is temporary and is usually caused by human misunderstanding or misperception. Impulsiveness of war leads to major danger and opponents are influenced by the other's firmness.	Avoid early use of force and establish a framework with shared interests.
Type B: Conflict is permanent and is caused by human nature, nationalism, and international anarchy. Opponents may vary. A lack of power equilibrium leads to a danger of war.	Any tactic of force is applicable, and the state should follow its goals vigorously within a comprehensive framework.
Type C: Conflict is temporary and there is a possibility for a change in the international system through a harmony of interest. The anarchical state system is what causes danger of a war. Opponents usually vary in nature and goals.	Use of force under a comprehensive framework is applicable but should act immediately if there is any opportunity for conciliation. Priority should be given to other resources than military resources.
Type D: Conflict is temporary and causes of war include miscalculation within warlike states. Opponents are rational and the political future is predictable.	Military force should be the final resort if circumstances require it, and a state should seek to fulfil its goals through flexible and moderate means.

Operational Code Analysis is unique as its effort combines psychological approaches with formal game-theoretic approaches

(Malici 2017; Bueno De Mesquita and McDermott 2004; Walker and Schafer 2006a). The analysis gives a clearer idea of how the system affects an individual's psyche and influences their leadership styles. However, these effects can be unique to everyone and there are multiple variables at play.

Compare and Contrast

The reason this paper selected the Leadership Trait Analysis as part of its exploration is that this framework presents an interesting outlook on personality traits overlapping with how decision-makers lead. There is numerous evidence presented by multiple researchers (Mintz and DeRouen Jr 2010; Levy 2013; Crichlow 2001; Kaarbo 2017) who have shown the relevance of personality traits as part of political psychology within international relations, especially foreign policy decision-making processes. Leadership Trait Analysis explores techniques relevant in contemporary times to elucidate foreign policy decisions and provides an opportunity to adapt it as a suitable model for understanding leaders.

The Rubicon Model of War redefines the literature on rationality and how overconfidence may be asserted through external influences, as well as present psychological biases. The model is successfully able to explain with empirical evidence through data and case studies how

the change from deliberative mindset to implemental mindset occurs leading to the danger of overconfidence and risky military planning.

Operational Code Analysis does not only provide a toolkit for micro-foundations within major International Relations theories (Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism) but also intends to build a bridge between behavioral IR and behavioral FPA (Malici 2017). The analysis helps researchers understand how leaders' function in certain conditions and how they might act in it in terms of strategy and tactics. It has also contributed to the understanding of major theories of International Relations, such as: regarding realism, operational code analysis has integrated the concepts of strategic culture; regarding liberalism, it has contributed to the understanding of democratic peace; and, regarding constructivism, it has contributed to the discussion of the agent-structure problem and the systemization of identity (Malici 2017).

The three approaches explained in this paper inquire into different psychological aspects of decision-makers and their elements are interwoven into one another. Even though there are limitations to every approach, the paper does not intend to scrutinize the literature beyond its scope of discussion. However, what the paper finds to be the most compelling approach is a combination of the three approaches together, fulfilling the psychological aspect of each stage of Foreign

Policy Analysis. Leadership Trait Analysis brings forth the psychological aspect of individuals that are mostly ingrained through experiences in the past and the experience while in the role of a foreign policy decision-maker. Rubicon Model of War makes an opportunity for other behavioral theories to insert their elements within the model to create a more state-level approach. The interwoven interpretation of political manipulation and bureaucratic politics affecting decision-maker mindsets makes the model applicable as a state-level psychological analysis with more actors present. Finally, the Operational Code Analysis, even though it deals with beliefs, shows how the international system influences the psychological aspects of a foreign policy decision-maker.

Conclusion

Foreign Policy Analysis brings together many interpretations of foreign policy decision-making and one of them is the psychological aspect of decision-makers and leaders in the system. Crichlow (2001) found numerous links between psychological characteristics and policy preferences. The three models identified and explored in this paper reaffirm that different psychological aspects affect the decision makers' process of adopting a policy. However, the paper also elucidates how these psychological characteristics are influenced by actors both within the system and outside. The paper was unable to include all such

factors and conditions that may affect the psyche of a decision-making process, but it finds that all frameworks and models that researchers produce have overlapping ideas that could help reassess other variables present in influencing foreign policy decision making. These variables could help to decipher more leaders' behavior and policy preferences to solve more crises, initiate negotiations, and predict political turns more accurately.

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Declaration of Conflict Interest

The Author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Biography

Nuzhat Tasnim Rahman Raisa is currently an independent qualitative researcher. She graduated in International Relations from Bangladesh University of Professionals, Bangladesh. She also completed her Master's in International Relations from the University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom. She has published five papers and two commentaries in open source journals in the field of security, political systems, political culture, diplomacy, etc.