CHAPTER 2

Conceptual Approaches to Foreign Policy and Application to African Countries

INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses the pertinent question of approaches to understanding foreign policy-making. Scholars have long debated whether the theories that explain foreign policy, overwhelmingly developed in western countries, are likely to explain the same phenomena elsewhere, especially in the Global South. Theories and approaches such as Almond’s Mood theory, domestic audience costs, bureaucratic politics, Groupthink, poliheuristic theory or foreign policy approaches that explain foreign policy in democracies have limited explanatory power over African countries, OAU and AU’s institutional foreign policy. This chapter examines the existence, absence, role and the sources of foreign policy in Africa—elites, bureaucracies, citizens, domestic audiences and the external stakeholders in the making of foreign policy. Foreign policy is a more recent area of growth in scholarship in global politics, and theory-testing around who the key actors, ideas and approaches continue to evolve. Though Africa’s post-colonial foreign policy was partly informed by colonial experiences and residual colonization, limited educational and political participation during colonialism impacted the ability of citizens to direct foreign policy and gave elites much latitude in crafting foreign policy. Still, once-consensus national, regional and pan-African goals were swept up in personality disagreements and regional vendettas. Still, understanding foreign policy from a theoretical perspective is invaluable; this chapter
examines approaches that are more, or less likely, to explain foreign policy in Africa.

What informs countries’ interests, preferences, choices and foreign policy decisions? Realist theory argues that states are functionally similar and their interests and interactions are informed by pursuit of, among others, security and power. Other theories herald cooperation: norms, rules and institutions promote cooperation (neoliberalism). Still others suggest shared values, interests and ideologies such as democratization, cooperation and peace can reduce conflict and increase cooperation (constructivism), even as the exploitative nature of powerful (core) states against weaker (dependent) states explains international interactions (Marxist theories). The ‘national interest’ is historically a perceived source of states’ interests articulated through foreign policy actions. The ‘national interest’ stems from the preferences of domestic audiences, interest groups, bureaucracies and elites. But try as one might, some countries evidently show little interest in gaining power, and whether all states are functionally equal is a fair question, as is the level of citizenry involvement in foreign policy-making. This extends to the theories explaining foreign policy-making and processes, including, for example, Almond’s Mood theory. African countries have tended to approach foreign policy as a ‘bloc’—at the UN and other IGOs, and the proliferation of RECs suggests that Africa might be functionally different from other regions.

Theories of foreign policy-making are still relatively new, and primarily based on the experiences of western nations. Granted, states are functionally similar, but just as development of states and economies cannot be explained by the same theories, one imagines the same to be true for foreign policy-making. There are many possible explanans and conceptualization of foreign policy-making, examined in detail in this chapter. Of great import is the question of whether they also explain African countries’ foreign policy individually and institutionally. Pending the analysis, it helps to reflect on why they may not be universally applicable. The impact of democracy and domestic audiences is expected to have a significant impact; so too, is the reality that most western countries have, at some point, been great powers with different considerations than those of African countries.

The sources and impacts of domestic sources of foreign policy have been especially infused with Euro-Atlantic, but predominantly American perspectives and explanations. For the hegemon, the maxim that ‘politics
stops at the water’s edge’ is a truism. The unitary nature of the state in its interactions with others is aptly captured: “when it comes to foreign policy, American political leaders should speak with one voice–a distinction from the cacophony that marks domestic policy making.”¹ A clear distinction between domestic and foreign policy-making exists; even as states are considered unitary actors, obvious ideological divisions within states manifest and globally. There are often stakes and levels of support for factions within the US, partly based on expected future relations. But since there is rare ability to constrain actions, e.g., pulling the US out of the JCPOA, Paris Climate Accords or TPP, the illusion of states as a unitary actor persists.

The preponderance of American power and influence on global politics especially post-Cold War makes sense, but is inherently risky as a source of explanation for other global phenomena. The US is unlike many other countries, even among its peers. It derives its character from unique historical, social, cultural and political basis that set it from almost every other country even liberal democracies. Its political system is peculiar, with robustly (almost) co-equal branches of government, domestic audiences, the Dahl-ian, key components of a democracy, a “harmonious system of mutual frustration.”² Where US policy-makers might be concerned about domestic audiences, other countries, e.g., Chad’s leaders might face fewer constraints and opposition. Governments, internal political mechanisms and checks and balances often confer foreign policy-making to the whims, sometimes expertise, of a pliant elite cabal, driven by concerns such as history, regime survival and their own well-being.

This brings us back to the important question: Do foreign policy-making structures especially in Africa mirror the US and developed countries? Can African countries’ foreign policy-making be explained by theories derived out of the Euro-Atlantic Westphalian state? Africa epitomizes the world of difference in social, economic and political processes

¹ Helen V. Milner and Dustin Tingley, *Sailing the Water’s Edge: The Domestic Politics of American Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 1.

² Larry N. Gerston, *American Federalism: A Concise Introduction* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2007), 35.
and conditions from the west, and the use of western theoretical frameworks to understand African issues has led to little progress. A cursory survey of the civilization missions of Europe, pseudo-scientific ideas of superiority that gave us slavery, the misadventures of colonialism, traditional theories of economic development, Washington Consensus, Structural Adjustment Programs, multiparty democracy and other issues illustrate their incompatibility with African realities. Explanants of Africa’s foreign policy stem from the western world; they rarely apply to Africa.

**PARSING PROCESS: CONSIDERING THEORIES AND FOREIGN POLICY**

Theory is as a body of statements that systematize knowledge of and explain phenomena. They consist of general, verifiable statements that explain why things happen and offer specific and empirically testable predictions. IR theories are “a system of generalizations,” “a collection of stories about international politics [which] relies upon IR myths in order to appear to be true.” Scholars can evaluate whether hypotheses predict or explain reality. Theories provide “cumulative knowledge about hitherto unexplained phenomena,” and “provide intellectual order to the subject matter of international relations. They enable us to conceptualise and contextualise both past and contemporary events. They also provide us with a range of ways of interpreting complex issues […] they

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3 Some scholars, e.g., Acharya and Buzan (2001) the preponderance and overwhelming source of western and absence of Global South IR theories, even though the major powers have inordinate influence on world affairs.

4 Janet Johnson and H. T. Reynolds, *Political Science Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks: CQ Press, 2015).

5 Yaqing Qin, “Why Is There No Chinese International Relations Theory?” In Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, Eds., *Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and Beyond Asia* (London: Routledge, 2010), 26.

6 Cynthia Weber, *International Relations Theory: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2001), 2.

7 Colin Elman and Miriam Elman, “Introduction: Appraising Progress in International Relations Theory.” In Colin Elman and Miriam Elman, Eds., *Progress in International Relations Theory: Appraising the Field* (Cambridge: BCSIA, 2003), 1
help us think critically, logically and coherently.”

Social science theories have downsides, including perceived inferiority by natural sciences, impossibility of empirically testing some propositions and difficulty predicting human behavior in different populations.

One attribute of theory is empirical generalization. Robust theories explaining the [process of] foreign policy [making] should hold true universally; otherwise, inconsistencies require reconsideration. Even as differences between states and citizens abound, there are few existing theories using sociocultural and religious factors to explain global politics. Acharya and Buzan restate that most extant theory derives from European model of statehood and interstate interactions. Asia, they argue, is “the site of the only contemporary non-Western concentration of power and wealth even remotely comparable to the West” that has had significant IR interactions. They also contend that “western IRT (international relations theory) is both too narrow in its sources and too dominant in its influence to be good for the health of the wider project to understand the social world in which we live.” Other regions that proportionally contribute to the non-western world in which IR interactions occur should be considered in proposing theory and the implications considered.

The terms ‘IR theory’ and ‘foreign policy’ are often used interchangeably. Some consider foreign policy analysis a sub-field of IR. Hellmann

8 Scott Burchill, “Introduction.” In Scott Burchill, Richard Devetak and Andrew Linklater, Eds., Theories of International Relations, 2nd Ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 13.

9 Milja Kurki and Colin Wright, “International Relations and Social Science.” In Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki and Steve Smith, Eds., International Relations Theories (London: Oxford University Press, 2013).

10 Other attributes include empirical verification, falsifiability, non-normative research, cumulative nature of research, its explanatory function, prediction, probabilistic explanation and parsimony (Johnson and Reynolds, 2015).

11 Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, “Why Is There No Non-Western International Relations Theory? An Introduction.” In Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, Eds., Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and Beyond Asia (London: Routledge, 2010).

12 Acharya and Buzan, “Why Is There No Non-Western International Relations Theory?” (2001), 2.

13 Acharya and Buzan, “Why Is There No Non-Western International Relations Theory?” (2001), 2.
and Urrestarazu propose “‘systemic’ IR, which provides a bird’s-eye view on the whole international system as a whole, and ‘sub-systemic’ foreign policy analysis (FPA), which zooms in on the placement and actions of states considered to be the most fundamental unit of this system.”

Palmer and Morgan propose an approach where foreign policy defies single issues; rather, it is the process of “a state constructing bundles of policies – what we will call portfolios – that, in combination, are designed to achieve things – outcomes – that the state wants.” Beach argues that “the study of foreign policy does not require a unique FPA theoretical toolbox,” but apprehending choices and decisions policy-makers arrive at has intrinsic value outside of theory. Given gaps between theories and their explanatory power of states’ foreign policies, the actions warrant study. The goal of study is not developing an Africa-centric theory; rather, its task is to understand foreign policy-making in Africa.

**Contemporary Theories of Foreign Policy**

Comparative foreign policy analysis (FPA) is an alternative explanation of foreign policy processes. That said, Smith questions whether FPA is an attempt at an empirical study of non-scientific ideas, implying that it is a pseudoscience. FPA stems from a systemic analysis of the international system, the playground for actors’ interactions. Granted, mainstay IR theories—realism, liberalism, constructivism and Marxism—were developed to explain interactions between actors in the international system in the past century, making such studies nascent. There was a concurrent idea, behavioralism, which classical realists such as Hans Morgenthau articulated in the seminal work *Politics Among Nations*. Deriving from studying and understanding human nature, Morgenthau argued that variables such as power, self-interest and morality inform human behavior, but also, that the conduct among nations.

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14 Gunther Hellmann and Ursula Stark Urrestarazu, *Theories of Foreign Policy* (Oxford Bibliographies, 2013), n.p.

15 Glenn Palmer and Clifton Morgan, *A Theory of Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 2.

16 Derek Beach, *Analyzing Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2012), 6.

17 Steve Smith, “Theories of Foreign Policy: An Historical Overview.” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 12 (1986): 13–29.
Behavioralism as applied to the broader IR discipline is confounding, considering states are functionally similar, and therefore, they over-ride understanding the actions of leaders and decision-makers. Besides Morgenthau’s work, Waltz’s *Theory of International Politics*, with three levels of analysis (individual, state and international system), provide explanations of the impact of individuals’ actions, while the third level of analysis implies international interactions, the domain of foreign policy. FPA “attempts to understand foreign policy by treating states as members of a class of phenomena and seeks to generalize about the sources, and nature, of their behaviour, focusing on the decision-making process in its varying aspects in order to produce explanations.” 18 It uses empirically testable ‘models of decision-making’ and ‘decision rules.’

Hudson examines and then aggregates existing FPA scholarship, producing several FPA ‘hallmarks.’ FPA is multi-factorial, multilevel, multi-disciplinary, integrative, agent-oriented, actor specific approach.19 Nonetheless, there is no consensus on any elements of FPA models: number, key variables and threshold of models, model robustness or which models explain the processes. Foreign policy-making is not sufficiently specified or the differences between decision rules and decision-making articulated. Table 2.1 outlines six models based on the works of Norwich University, Mingst and Arreguín-Toft, Mintz and Sofrin, and Yetiv.

The main foreign policy analysis models are Rational Actor or Rational Choice Model, organizational processes, bureaucratic politics, group-think, and prospect theory and poliheuristic models. Most of the models include all the variables, while several FPA models appear only once. The Mingst-Arreguín-Toft elite model has elements of bureaucratic politics model. Other theories include interbranch politics and political processes20; elite, pluralist and constructivist theory,21 the Bounded

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18 Smith, “Theories of Foreign Policy”, 14
19 Valerie M Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 8.
20 Norwich University, “5 Key Approaches to Foreign Policy Analysis.” *Diplomacy* (Norwich University Online, 2017). https://online.norwich.edu/academic-programs/resources/5-key-approaches-to-foreign-policy-analysis.
21 Karen A. Mingst and Ivan M. Arreguín-Toft, *Essentials of International Relations* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2016).
Table 2.1  Some foreign policy theories

| Model /Scholar(s)         | General | Norwich | Mingst & Arreguin-Toft | Mintz + Sofrin | Yetiv |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|------------------------|----------------|-------|
| Rational actor model      | X       | X       | X                      | X              | X     |
| Organizational processes  | X       | X       | X                      |                |       |
| Bureaucratic politics     | X       | X       | X                      |                |       |
| Groupthink approach       | X       | ?       | ?                      | ?              | X     |
| Prospect /loss aversion   | X       | ?       | ?                      |                |       |
| Poliheuristic model       | X       | ?       | ?                      |                |       |

Rationality/Cybernetic Model/Cybernetic Theory of decision-making and government politics, cognitive model and domestic politics.  

Jackson and Sørensen apply foreign policy analysis, bureaucratic structures and processes, the comparative approach (based on behavioral foundations of policy-making), the cognitive processes and psychology approach (which often includes the ‘evoked set’), the ‘perception and misperception’ approach, the ‘multilevel and multidimensional approach’ and a social constructivist approach to explain foreign policy-making. This is the intersubjective view of foreign policy-making.

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22 Alex Mintz and Amnon Sofrin, “Decision Making Theories in Foreign Policy Analysis,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedias (World Politics)*, (October 2017). https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.405.

23 Steve Yetiv, *Explaining Foreign Policy: U.S. Decision-Making and the Persian Gulf War* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 2004).

24 Evoked set defines situations in which “actors are prone to think that the matters that worry them and/or they are focused on, are the main focus of attention of other actors” (de Castro 2009: 34).

25 See Jervis’ 1976 work titled *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Jackson and Sørensen also address components, processes and outcomes of perception, including, e.g. cognitive consistency and interactions, assimilation of information, and common misperceptions, etc.; see also Tang (2013).
proposed by constructivists; several approaches thereof are discussed next. Jackson and Sørensen’s model, with its five elements, begins with the foreign policy analysis approach, which they argue is “traditionally the domain of diplomatic historians and public commentators.” This ‘official,’ ‘traditional’ approach reserved foreign policy and diplomacy to ‘experts’ and “leading state officials (emperors, kings, presidents, prime ministers, chancellors, secretaries of state, foreign ministers, defense secretaries, etc., and their closest advisors).” Practitioners of this approach include Henry Kissinger and George F. Kennan.

The comparative approach to foreign policy is based on behavioralism; it systematically builds theories from analyzing large datasets. Rosenau’s analysis and synthesis of five variables, i.e., idiosyncratic, role, government, societal and systematic variables, ranked by importance and based on sort factors such as polity size were central to this approach. Jackson and Sørensen propose the bureaucratic structures and processes approach, focusing on organizational decision-making processes. Graham Allison’s *Essence of Decision*—its analysis and conclusions the subject of heated intellectual debate—is the central influence to this approach, and focuses on the relative interests, strengths and functions of different bureaucracies in the same polity, based on three premises: rational actor model/theory/approach, information and decisions reached based on the best interests of each government bureaucracy, individual decision-makers’ bargaining and decisions favoring own goals, desired outcomes and competing interests (e.g., State Department’s goals to peacefully resolve the Cuban Missile Crisis against the Defense Department obligation to win a potential war, and the Commerce Department’s preference for economic tools (embargoes and sanctions) to resolve the crisis, limiting economic harm to one’s own and regional interests.

The fourth, cognitive processes and psychology approach focuses on individual decision-makers, pathologies and fears that influence their

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26 Robert H. Jackson and Georg Sørensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

27 Jackson and Sørensen, *Introduction to International Relations* (2013), 254.

28 Jackson and Sørensen, *Introduction to International Relations* (2013), 254.

29 Jackson and Sørensen, *Introduction to International Relations* (2013), 254.

30 Jackson and Sørensen, *Introduction to International Relations*, 255.
decisions. George H. W. Bush’s reading of Neville Chamberlain’s autobiography and the Munich appeasement is seen as informing Bush’s determination to avoid another Munich after Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Conversely, Saddam’s morbid fear of assassination led him to using many body doubles, while leaders of reclusive states rarely travel outside their countries for fear of assassination plots against them. Leaders’ reactions, actions, reactions and decisions frequently reflect their perception of the ‘self,’ the ‘other,’ their pathologies, and motives, real or perceived. The fifth model is the ‘multilevel and multidimensional approach’; its central feature and contribution is the recognition that there are different approaches to explaining foreign policy, actors, relationships and interests, measured against constraints in international politics.

Besides these models, scholars have identified ‘decision rules’ related to group decision-making. They include groupthink (or polythink) which can be cohesive or fragmented; groupthink-polythink continuum, a rule characterized by scholars as a foreign policy approach rather than a decision rule, ranging from ‘completely cohesive’ (groupthink) to totally fragmented (polythink) with myriad points of views and possible deadlock.\footnote{Mintz and Sofrin, “Decision Making Theories in Foreign Policy Analysis,” (2017).} In the mid-range of the groupthink-polythink continuum is the Con-Div Group Dynamic—that is, “a balanced group dynamic in which neither groupthink nor polythink dominates.”\footnote{Mintz and Sofrin, “Decision Making Theories in Foreign Policy Analysis,” (2017), n.p.} The final decision rule is the two-group decision model, which shows elements of bureaucratic politics. Two-group decision model can function as small, select groups (e.g., elites), or larger groups within the continuum, reflecting a Prisoner’s Dilemma challenge, unless both groups are closer to the middle in the groupthink-polythink continuum.

\textbf{Rational Actor Model/Rational Choice Theory}

Rational Choice Theory stems from mostly economic approaches to decision-making, but has since found utility across disciplines: for political scientists, this includes public choice, neoclassicism (per economists), to expected utility (psychologists) and rational choices (sociologists).\footnote{Mary Zey, \textit{Rational Choice Theory and Organizational Theory: A Critique} (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997), 1}
RAM/RCT has significant crossover: psychology matters in foreign policy decision-making, so does economics. RAM/RCT was originally a conceptual framework for economic—and recently—social behavior. Some assumptions hold universally across the conception of rational choice, including decision-making to further individual welfare or ‘utility maximization.’34 Understanding the choices made by a rational actor—all actors are assumed to be rational despite often having incomplete information or other actors’ choices—is challenging.

Defining rationality is important; Breuning holds that rationality is simply the demand that the means, or the policy choices—are logically connected to the ends—or the leader’s [actor’s] goals.35 Though what to one actor might not appear rational might to another, the process of arriving at a decision can meet the rationality criteria. Although actors act in their best (rational) interests, constraints can stem from insufficient information, the environment and the effects of the decision. Assessing other actors’ responses and capabilities might influence the decision that a rational actor makes based on expected reactions. Further, decisions present social dilemmas, including shirking contribution and responsibility, the perennial free-rider problem, the moral hazard, the credible commitment dilemma, generalized social exchange, tragedy of the commons, exchanges of threats and violent confrontations.36

The foregoing medley notwithstanding, Oppenheimer provides perhaps a succinct definition of theory of rational choice, arguing that it “presumes decisions to be the result of conscious choice made by individuals to further the realization of their own preferences.”37 This definition captures consensus elements of RCT: actors’ preferences, expected utility,

34 Donald Green and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science* (New Haven: Yale, 1994).
35 Marijke Breuning, *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Comparative Introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 3.
36 Elinor Ostrom, “A Behavioral Approach to the Rational Choice Theory of Collective Action: Presidential Address, APSA, 1997.” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 92, No. 1 (March, 1998): 1–22. https://doi.org/10.2307/2585925.
37 Joe Oppenheimer, *Principles of Politics: A Rational Choice Theory Guide to Politics and Social Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 15.
instrumental rationality and transitivity in preferences, cost-benefit analysis preceding decision-making, self-interest and utility maximization.\(^{38}\) To these, Zey adds scarcity of resources and differential access thereto, opportunity costs (related to cost-benefit analysis), institutional norms which act as constraints (institutions to include family, school, church, government, other organizations), and access (or availability) of full information (considering that actors rarely possess perfect or full information to aid in decision-making).\(^{39}\)

Mintz and Sofrin outline an 8-step decision-making process. They include (i) identifying the problem; (ii) articulating and ranking goals; (iii) gathering information; (iv) identifying plausible alternatives, (v) analyzing alternatives and calculating costs and benefits for each option and the likelihood of success; (vi) selecting choices (alternatives) for maximum utility; (vii) implementing the chosen alternative; and (viii) monitoring and evaluating the chosen option; repeating the process if the selected option is sub-optimal.\(^{40}\) Challenge to optimal (if not rational) decision-making is further enhanced by repeated interactions (enter Game Theory), particularly given the constraints in information, shadow of the future (one time, or repeated interactions with other actors) and the initial choice actors make, e.g., cooperation or non-cooperation, tit for tat, defecting.\(^{41}\)

Foreign policy is primarily about interstate relations, though domestic audiences in states and actors outside them affect foreign policy-making and by extension, global politics. This discussion therefore holds that actors (states) are rational actors, as they perceive their choices and preferences.\(^{42}\) States’ preferences stem from the ‘national interest,’ their raison d’être, whose definition includes “an end that is defined by rational

\(^{38}\) Lina Eriksson, *Rational Choice Theory: Potential and Limits* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 17, and Oppenheimer, *Principles of Politics*, 14–19.

\(^{39}\) Zey, *Rational Choice Theory and Organizational Theory*, 3.

\(^{40}\) Mintz and Sofrin, “Decision Making Theories in Foreign Policy Analysis,” 2017.

\(^{41}\) Ostrom, “A Behavioral Approach to the Rational Choice Theory of Collective Action,” 1998.

\(^{42}\) Stephen D. Krasner, *Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials Investments and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), and Steve Yetiv, *Explaining Foreign Policy: U.S. Decision-Making in the Gulf Wars* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 2011).
consideration of what leads to the benefit of the society, and by a normative choice of where the good of the whole lies.”\textsuperscript{43} It includes the strategies to advance the good, public choices necessary to maintain it, and the “obligation to protect and promote the good of the society,” and to “protect the society from outside threats.”\textsuperscript{44} Krasner holds that for preferences to be considered the national interest, “the ordering of goals must persist over time.”\textsuperscript{45} National interest “is generally viewed as embodying certain lasting values”\textsuperscript{46} resulting in “a set of transitively ordered state preferences concerned to promote the general well-being of the society that persists over a long time.”\textsuperscript{47}

Krasner’s definition requires that constituent preferences “do not consistently benefit a particular class or group, and that they last over an extended period of time.”\textsuperscript{48} Frankel links national interest to foreign policy; restated in Holloway, “foreign policy is defined as ‘a formulation of desired outcomes which are intended (or expected) to be consequent upon decisions adopted (or made) by those who have authority (or ability) to commit the machinery of the state and a significant fraction of national resources to that end,’ national interest describes the desired outcomes.”\textsuperscript{49} Ole Holsti’s definition revolves around “survival, security, power, and relative capabilities.”\textsuperscript{50} Holloway holds that, “if we see a state pursuing a certain goal or policy, over a long period of time, despite changes in leadership, and if that goal can be justified as being in the interest of society as a whole, then we have found a national interest.”\textsuperscript{51} This mirrors Krasner’s 3-component national interest definition consisting

\textsuperscript{43}W. David Clinton, \textit{The Two Faces of National Interest} (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1994), 52.

\textsuperscript{44}Steven Kendall Holloway, \textit{Canadian Foreign Policy: Defining the National Interest} (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2006), 52, and Joseph Frankel, \textit{National Interest} (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1970), n.p.

\textsuperscript{45}Krasner, \textit{Defending the National Interest}, 44.

\textsuperscript{46}Krasner, \textit{Defending the National Interest}, 44.

\textsuperscript{47}Krasner, \textit{Defending the National Interest}, 45.

\textsuperscript{48}Krasner, \textit{Defending the National Interest}, 43.

\textsuperscript{49}Holloway, \textit{Canadian Foreign Policy}, 12.

\textsuperscript{50}Ole R. Holsti, “Theories of International Relations.” In Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson, Eds., \textit{Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations}, 2nd Ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 54.

\textsuperscript{51}Holloway, \textit{Canadian Foreign Policy}, 12.
of (i) objectives related to general societal goals; (ii) persistence over time; and (iii) a consistent ranking of importance.\textsuperscript{52}

African countries do have some overall national goal, often insufficiently articulated. Some interests are historical, circumstantial and others are formulated in reaction to system stimuli. For example, a web search of ‘Kenya’s national interest’ is uninspiring. According to a Maina Chege’s blog entry on Quora, it boils down to ‘trade.’ Goldman’s list of ‘the most vital of these national interests’ include “preservation of territorial integrity, establishment of peace and security within the nation, maintenance of law and order, consolidation of a developed, mature and versatile political system and assurance of national development.”\textsuperscript{53} On the National Interest (Kenya) page which features three articles last updated in 2013, the Al-Shabaab menace, militancy in the East African region, and the ICC’s post-election violence cases account for Kenya’s national interest. Wario articulates it as bilateral and multilateral relationships, trade and security actions that enhance Kenya’s capacity to improve its citizens’ lives.\textsuperscript{54} The first official written 34-page foreign policy document was issued in 2014, 51 years after independence.

Although focusing Iraq, Breuning’s discussion on the logic of Saddam’s incursion into Kuwait shows how irrational preferences can be pursued. Saddam had other avenues of intimidation or coercion, including “amassing troops on the border to underscore a threat. […] He could have gone to the Arab League or the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to address his grievances. He could have called for a summit meeting with the leaders of Kuwait […] He could even have decided to do nothing at all.”\textsuperscript{55} The premise of foreign policy-making suggests a deliberative process, but decisions are often made by an individual or small group of elites in groupthink conditions. Some foreign policy decisions (e.g., Saddam’s 1990 invasion of Kuwait or Idi Amin’s invasion of Tanzania in 1978) are questionable and irrational. Breuning holds that with some decisions, “it can be quite difficult to figure out whether a foreign policy decision was based on sound analysis and careful

\textsuperscript{52}Krasner, \textit{Defending the National Interest}, 44.

\textsuperscript{53}Goldman, David, “GoK Must Protect National Interests.” \textit{National Interest} (Web) (January 20, 2015), n.p.

\textsuperscript{54}Wario, Hukka, “Security Main Pillar of National Interest,” \textit{The Star} (January 9, 2015).

\textsuperscript{55}Breuning, \textit{Foreign Policy Analysis}, 7.
thought.” Whether in Africa’s absolute autocracies or liberal democracies such as Botswana, RAM/RCT tenets are generalizable; every actor perceives some benefit in the actions they take, even though one’s actor’s rationality does not necessarily apply to all actors or situations. Rationality is relative.

African leaders’ self-interest is often conflated with foreign policy, conveniently feeding the argument that leaders’ political survival is intertwined with nations’ interests. Fearing loss of power, adulation, personal wealth and privilege, rationality dictates that holding on to power is more likely if leaders’ interest and national interest is conflated. Leaders point citizens to perceived threats to the state and themselves, procuring support especially in Africa’s post-colonial states. Complex foreign relations are entrusted to leaders, completing the loop of state-leader-foreign policy. Kenya’s ICC case illustrates this: when hauled to The Hague, Kenya’s Ocampo Six embarked on a cross-country, cross-continent campaign suggesting bias and labeling the ICC ‘the court for Africans.’ The effort to end the prosecutions was wrapped in sovereignty; when Uhuru Kenyatta was elected president in 2013, claims of neo-colonialism gained traction and African countries, which shared Kenya’s view, urged disbanding the ICC, mass withdrawal of signatures, refusing to cooperate and cessation of disproportionate targeting of African leaders.

**Organizational Processes Model**

Foreign policy-making as a function of organizational processes model was first advanced by Graham Allison in *Essence of Decision*, analyzing the Cuban Missile Crisis. The model’s central premise is that foreign policy decisions are a product of bureaucracies, people, processes, capacities and limitations within a group rather than rational processes and outcomes. In the US, the Department of Defense must always prepare for war, the State Department plans for peace and diplomacy, both counter to each other. Decision-making is then a function of bureaucracy with vested interests. The theory focuses on “decision-making in general, and on the role of the decision-making units – particularly small groups – in this process.”

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56 Breuning, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 5.
57 Walter Carlsnaes, “Foreign Policy.” In Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse-Kappen, and Beth A. Simmons, Eds., *Handbook of International Relations* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2002).
Allison adds that presidents do not usually make foreign policy choices without deliberation. Yet, as is the case with outliers, the 45th US president repeatedly articulated instinct and smarts as basis of exempting him from rigors of bureaucratic decision-making processes even when it hurts the US, its interests and allies.

Systems work better when their elements work in tandem. For example, if the US president travels to meet with troops in a warzone, different elements must work together. Taber argues that “the foreign policy-making system is distributed among a variety of organizational, small group, and individual actors” even though some actors may not directly contribute to foreign policy-making, as part of their work. Organizations do function based on standard operating procedures (SOPs), goals, traditions, cooperation and organizational priorities. Leaders, however, can signal their perceived priorities—for example, some presidencies designate US ambassadors to the UN as a Cabinet-level position while others do not.

Cooperation among bureaucracies tasked with competing missions is common. Finally visiting an active warzone after more than a year in office, US President Donald Trump griped that he flew in a “darkened plane with all windows closed, with no light anywhere; pitch black,” despite spending $7 trillion in the Middle East and going in has to be under this massive cover, with planes all over and all of the greatest equipment in the world, and you do everything to get in safely.”61 Despite his Twitter feed “going dark” and arousing suspicion, such visits to warzones are carefully choreographed. During President Obama’s Iraq visit in 2009 in the middle of a sandstorm that interrupted travel from the airport to the Green Zone, with the Iraqi PM at his residence, challenges transporting him to the airport and the Secret Service’s concern over the security of Baghdad, President Obama visited Camp Victory, adjoining

58 Charles Taber, “The Interpretation of Foreign Policy Events: A Cognitive Process Theory.” In Donald Sylvan and James Voss, Eds., Problem Representation in Foreign Policy Decision-Making (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 30.

59 Felicia Sonmez, “Trump’s Iraq Visit Prompts Concern Over Operational Security,” The Washington Post (December 26, 2018).

60 This figure issues from the president. Few estimates suggest that the US spent that much money on the two wars.

61 Sonmez, “Trump’s Iraq Visit Prompts Concern Over Operational Security,” n.p.
the US Embassy.\textsuperscript{62} “Everyone that day – meteorologists, mechanics, Secret Service, and military guards – properly followed their organization’s routines and procedures, designed to ensure the safety of the president and other American personnel.”\textsuperscript{63} Doing their jobs in the face of intervening factors, bureaucracies can succeed and even cooperate to achieve a common goal.

For some scholars, the organizational behavior model is the “basis of the perspective on the organization,”\textsuperscript{64} a limited element of the organizational process constraining variety and flexibility. Strategic interactions between decision-makers in an organization contribute to foreign policy, particularly where bureaucracies are well organized and the chain of authority and succession is clear. In the US, the president, the Vice President, the Secretaries of State, Energy, Defense and Homeland Security are members of the US National Security Council. Other countries have a clear hierarchy: Kenya’s President, deputy president, Cabinet Secretaries for defense, foreign affairs, Interior and Co-ordination of National Government, Attorney General, Chief of Kenya Defense Forces, Director-General of the National Intelligence Service and Inspector-General of the National Police Service are members of the National Security Council.\textsuperscript{65} In other countries, it is opaque: Who, for instance, is the potential heir to North Korea’s Kim Jong-un?

The role, work and outcomes of foreign policy decision-making are often clear; through the organizational process, organizations show themselves to be purposeful and habitual actors that shape human behavior (conceptually, through organizational essence, structure and culture), the outputs they produce, and that their actions are foreign policy outputs, not products of a unitary state, but as very conscious, self-guided entities.\textsuperscript{66} The process facilitates integration and coordination of government

\textsuperscript{62}Nikolas Gvosdev, Jessica Blankshain and David Cooper, \textit{Decision-Making in American Foreign Policy: Translating Theory into Practice} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

\textsuperscript{63}Gvosdev, et al., \textit{Decision-Making in American Foreign Policy} (2019), 126.

\textsuperscript{64}Melania-Gabriela Ciot, \textit{Negotiation and Foreign Policy Decision Making} (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge, 2014).

\textsuperscript{65}Standard media Editor, “National Security Council Has Agenda in Plain Sight,” \textit{Standard Media (Digital)} (June 4, 2015). https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2000085165/national-security-council-has-agenda-in-plain-sight.

\textsuperscript{66}Gvosdev, et al., \textit{Decision-Making in American Foreign Policy} (2019), 127.
functions to insure success but also security for functions of state, defense, foreign policy, etc., this requires collaboration of various elements, people, places, ideas, process and activities, although counter-arguments point to the government politics model.

Process-wise, foreign policy decisions are not “merely the outcomes of organizations following standard operating procedures. They are ‘resultants’ of various bargaining games among bureaucratic players within the government.” The origin of bureaucratic politics model is the behavioral approach. This approach may lend itself to better analysis through the lenses of western countries—and application of management of a decision-making group that informs Allison’s *Essence of Decision* during the Cuban Missile Crisis. In the run-up to the 2003 Iraq War, the crisis group did not necessarily produce a different outcome. Even in other developed countries, it is unclear that this is the regular foreign policy decision-making process. In leading democracies, electoral systems reward political parties and their agendas; winning coalitions do not always continue policies pursued by outgoing opposition governments.

Foreign policy-making in post-independence Africa fell to groups with global exposure: in Nigeria, it was the Prime Minister’s office, ministries—External Affairs, Defense, Finance, Economic Development, Commerce and Industry, Information, Education and Parliament. Low-level decisions could be carried out by lower-level functionaries. Even though there was bureaucratic support—in research, travel, communication, briefings and initiating contacts, bureaucracies simply supported positions staked by elites, especially presidents, although sources of foreign policy divisions actions can be trivial. This is illustrated by a 2018 accusation leveled against Tanzania by Kenya, of burning 5000 one-day-old chicks. A meeting between Presidents Kenyatta and Magufuli declared the problem

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67 Bruce Russett, Harvey Starr and David Kinsella, *World Politics: The Menu for Choice* (Boston: Cengage, 2010), 117.

68 Patrick J. Haney, *Organizing for Foreign Policy Crises: Presidents, Advisers, and the Management of Decision Making* (Ann Arbor: UMich Press, 2002).

69 Haney, *Organizing for Foreign Policy*, 2.

70 Ufot Bassey Inamete, *Foreign Policy Decision-Making in Nigeria* (London: Associated University Press, 2001), 20.

71 The East African, “Tanzania Destroys Another 5000 Kenya-Sourced Chicks,” *The Daily Nation* (February 13, 2018). [https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Tanzania-destroys-another-5-000-chicks/1056-4303090-r1idwuz/index.html](https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Tanzania-destroys-another-5-000-chicks/1056-4303090-r1idwuz/index.html).
solvable, tasking their respective foreign affairs ministries with its resolution.

If bureaucracies participate in making foreign policy elsewhere, do they do so in Africa? Many African countries have perfected the art of replicating bureaucracies that mirror western countries,’ but subvert the proper functioning and adopt the worst elements of such bureaucracies. Sure, one can get a passport but a bribe might help, obtaining licenses can also benefit from greasing palms, citizens are assaulted by lawmen on streets and mail frequently fails to reach addressees. Organizationally, countries replicate institutions but not the efficiency to be found in other regions. Policies are often ill-informed. Despite colonial influence and the Cold War realities, African countries had “the privilege of shaping the foreign policy decision-making structures and processes of a newly independent country.”72 Granted, economic dependency, new statehood, limited foreign policy-making experience and expertise, the Cold War and territorial disputes all around the new stats limited African countries’ effectiveness and success.

**Bureaucratic Politics Model**

Bureaucracies that run functions of states, including foreign policy-making, have persisted as long as societal organization: as basic units of cities and bureaus, as city-states, as principalities and now, as sovereign nations. Small, sovereign states (Monaco, Palau, Kiribati and Liechtenstein), non-state polities such as the Vatican, and even absolute monarchies and autocracies such as Saudi Arabia and North Korea maintain functional foreign policy bureaucracies. Bureaucracies exist at different levels: state, companies, businesses, secret societies and churches; all are central to societal function. States’ bureaucracies date to the earliest iteration of the modern sovereign state, convened from 1644 to 1648 to sign the Treaty of Westphalia. History suggests that the first six months resolved who sat where.73 Bureaucracies can be traced further back to Moses, when he “organized the tribes of Israel for their departure from

72 Inamete, *Foreign Policy Decision-Making in Nigeria*, 20.

73 Derek Croxton, “The Peace of Westphalia of 1648 and the Origins of Sovereignty.” *The International History Review*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (1999): 569–592. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/40109077](https://www.jstor.org/stable/40109077).
Pharaoh’s rule, he organized them into a simple bureaucracy.” Romans organized fighting forces into centurions, and into legions. Olajide notes that this model “does not perceive there to be a unitary factor; rather it considers many actors to be players – players who focus not on a single strategic issue.”

A bureaucracy is a “hierarchical arrangement of authority of the field or industry”; “tier or step, and therefore, it signifies the hierarchical arrangement of officialdom or management in the field or industry” and stems from the French word for desk, “bureau.” From the 1300s, “the king’s administrators brought their financial records to a special room …and laid them out on brown woolen cloth, known as la bure.” In the realm of foreign policy today, this entails running government “through large paraphernalia,” giving rise to ‘bureaucratic politics,’ which can be traced back to Graham Allison’s previously alluded to Cuban Missile Crisis analysis. Clifford reiterates Allison’s analysis of bureaucracies that dealt with the crisis: standard operating procedures of the various actors (the US Navy, the CIA and the US Air Force followed their SOPs and decision-making processes, arriving at each bureaucracy’s “outcomes” (doves and hawks) and their versions of the national interest.

Bureaucracies operate based on three elements: resources, goals and environment, and help states formulate foreign policy. They craft and

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74 Donald F. Kettl, “Public Bureaucracies.” In R. A. W. Rhodes, Sarah A. Binder and Bert A. Rockman, Eds., The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 366.
75 Kettl, “Public Bureaucracies,” 2006.
76 Olajide Aluko, “Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy Decision-Making in Nigeria.” In Timothy M. Shaw and Olajide Aluko, Eds., Nigerian Foreign Policy: Alternative Perceptions and Projections (London: Macmillan, 1983), 78.
77 Ram Nath Sharma and S.S. Chandra, Advanced Industrial Psychology, Volume 1 (New Delhi: Atlantic, 2004), 105, and Kettl, “Public Bureaucracies,” 366.
78 Sharma and Chandra, Advanced Industrial Psychology, 105.
79 Kettl, “Public Bureaucracies,” 366.
80 Sharma and Chandra, Advanced Industrial Psychology, 105.
81 J. Garry Clifford, “Bureaucratic Politics.” In Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson, Eds., Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations, 2nd Ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 91.
82 Peter S. Cleaves, Bureaucratic Politics and Administration in Chile (Berkeley: UC Press, 1974).
implement strategies including “maintaining (and defending) institutional identity or distinct competencies” protect turf respond to reputational threats, sustain and even increase funding available to them, improve staffing levels, access state-of-the-art technologies, avoid blame, highlight benefits of their strategies versus others, and guard against restructuring, reform or disbanding. Even in the same state, they compete vigorously for pre-eminence in decision-making, particularly in areas that overlap, e.g., the US State Department versus Defense Department. They go through the RCT/RAM model but also recognize constraints imposed by competing bureaucracies, leaders’ preferences in the case of signaling (e.g., diplomacy versus military intervention).

Bureaucracies are perceived to be “oriented toward the achievement of multiple organization goals,” theirs and others. They cooperate with others if cooperation can improve their own position and outcomes. They aim to be effective, pursue self-preservation strategies and aim to demonstrate their indispensability to the foreign policy establishment. Vietnam’s Communist Party showed this as “they sought to hide their true capacities and to bargain with the bureaucratic organ supervising them to get the lowest possible quotas for delivery to the state.” Other nefarious bargaining strategies include bribing officers to cover shoddy work. In many cases, well-structured, bureaucracies have specific competencies; USAID administers foreign aid, but DoD might be better suited to build schools in restive areas of Afghanistan.

African countries’ widely acknowledged poor governance and corruption complicate the formulation and pursuit of foreign policy goals, and raise questions about government efficacy, e.g., in Kenya’s 2020 COVID-19 funds use. Donors peg foreign aid and FDI to good governance, but an even bigger issue is the threat of corrupt bureaucracies that may allow

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83 Tobias Bach and Kai Wegrich, “Blind Spots, Biased Attention, and the Politics of Non-Coordination.” In Tobias Bach and Kai Wegrich, Eds., The Blind Spots of Public Bureaucracy and the Politics of Non-Coordination (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 15.

84 Turf is defined as “an organization’s formal jurisdiction and its internal mission or identity” (Bach and Wegrich, “The Blind Spots of Public Bureaucracy,” 16).

85 Bach and Wegrich, “Blind Spots,” 2019.

86 Cleaves, Bureaucratic Politics and Administration in Chile, 310.

87 Gareth Porter, Vietnam: The Politics of Bureaucratic Socialism (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 129.

88 Porter, Vietnam, 1994.
procurement and use of fraudulent travel documents. Kenya’s experience with the Westgate Mall shooting is a case study. State stability can be affected and impacts might spill over into other countries. Foreign policy decisions thus made may defy rationality and cater more to self-interest. From a politics perspective, corruption produces negative outcomes other than for the beneficiaries and yet, their unintended consequences may affect even the beneficiary. The rationality that goes into bribe-taking may ultimately outweigh the spectrum of costs and benefits thereof.

Poor governance diverts resources away from the greatest need. The past twenty years have seen the rise of Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati wal-Jihad (or Boko Haram), a militant group in Nigeria. Their tactics led to governments around the world pledging and sending military aid in excess of US$400 million to Nigeria’s government. Even the most virulently anti-Africa US president pushed through a deal worth $600 million, to support Nigeria’s military including sale of military aircraft. Even with this increased funding, human rights abuses, suspicious counter-terrorism strategies and corruption continue to debilitate Nigeria’s relations with the world and affect the prospects for eliminating Boko Haram. The allegation that former President Goodluck Jonathan’s National Security Adviser, Sambo Dasuki allegedly “stole more than $2 billion that should have been designated to purchase weapons and other equipment to fight the group,” shows the impact of self-interest over the collective good.

The challenges of parsing African countries’ foreign policy-making and the effectiveness of bureaucratic politics rest on the assumption that bureaucracies work, are effective and make policy. This is not always true. Strong executive leadership, weak institutions and little oversight, ineffective judicial systems, weak domestic audiences and lack of checks and balances mean that executives single-handedly make decisions. The power to appoint and (dis)appoint bureaucrats without due process, recourse or sanction mean bureaucrats are beholden to countries’ leaders and their whims. In countries such as North Korea, where familial relations are indispensable, regimes are unstable and one’s uncle can be executed with

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89 Claire Felter, “Nigeria’s Battle with Boko Haram,” CFR Backgrounder, Council for Foreign Relations (2018).

90 Siobhán O’Grady, “In Nigeria, $2 Billion in Stolen Funds Is Just a Drop in the Corruption Bucket,” Foreign Policy (November 18, 2015), n.p. https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/11/18/in-nigeria-2-billion-in-stolen-funds-is-just-a-drop-in-the-corruption-bucket/.
an anti-aircraft gun, foreign policy-making is whimsical and the domain of the dear leader; the bureaucracy implements decisions.

**Groupthink Approach**

Groupthink remains largely untested as a theoretical proposition and efforts thereof have been regarded as “little more than the appropriation of Janis’ [the theory’s proponent] terminology to retell already well-known stories of poor decision making.”\(^{91}\) It has become a primary evaluation tool in the foreign policy toolbox, partly because governments’ bureaucracies are charged with functions such as trade negotiations, administering foreign policy programs and advisory roles. As foreign policy-making organs, groups are not a global phenomenon, mostly found in countries with robust bureaucracies. Groupthink is associated with poor decision-making in institutions: a school or department meeting, a board meeting or a group of presidential aides trying to find a path out of the morass of nuclear missiles placed in Cuba. “Despite its popularity […] social scientists routinely complain that groupthink is a poorly specified and largely untested theory.”\(^{92}\)

Groupthink is “a process of rationalization that sets in when members of a team begin to think alike. It can be fostered by an organization’s culture or managers who do not tolerate dissent.”\(^{93}\) Poor decision-making and inaction become self-reinforcing. “Usually, the more complex an issue, the more likely groupthink can take over; people are less likely to disagree when they don’t have all the facts”\(^{94}\) or when dissent might exclude members from the membership of a valued group. Bordens and Horowitz concur with Sims, adding that “a group becomes driven by consensus seeking; members do not want to rock the boat.”\(^{95}\) This results in bad decisions made by the group, “when they become more concerned

\(^{91}\) Paul Kowert, *Groupthink or Deadlock: When Do Leaders Learn from Their Advisors?* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), 98.

\(^{92}\) Kowert, *Groupthink or Deadlock*, 97.

\(^{93}\) Ronald R. Sims, *Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility: Why Giants Fall* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 115.

\(^{94}\) Sims, *Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility*, 115.

\(^{95}\) Kenneth Bordens and Irwin A. Horowitz, *Social Psychology*, 2nd ed. (New York: Psychology Press, 2012), 321.
with keeping up their members’ morale rather than with reaching a realistic decision.”96 This is a vetting of values and getting along, rather than getting things done.97 ‘Sheeple’ disrespects sheep and explains the tendency to follow tragically charismatic leaders to the proverbial hell with its road paved with good intentions. Do individuals think better than in groups, or produce better solutions, outcomes and efficiencies? Per Schafer and Crichlow,

Decision-making groups are social entities. They are composed of multiple individuals. They have different types of leaders, with varying degrees of power, who seek to use the groups in a variety of ways. The groups develop their own norms and rules. Other norms and rules may be imposed upon them. They expand and contract. They may alter their behavior in the face of new information.98

Group-based decision-making can have positive outcomes, but formation of “high quality” groups may be limited by notion that its behavior approximates the lowest level of intelligence in the room. “Groupthink results in the group becoming ‘dumber’ than the individual decision-maker.”99

Bureaucracies can convene groups to give legitimacy to a predetermined outcome or a decision. Schafer and Crichlow identify ‘bad processes’ but identify legitimate questions of groups: leaders’ personality, openness to advice and guidance. Group size and type might be a constraint in decision-making. Is it a one-time, ad hoc group, a task-force, a shadow group or a permanent working group? Does the group have a ‘day job,’ i.e., is it a career-oriented group, or one that is convened for a specific task, given to disband at the conclusion of the particular task? Groups can solve problems with production, deliver (mostly) justice through juries and fight wars together. They are better, even more efficient at “choosing, judging, estimating, and problem solving than are individuals.”100 They research faster, share tasks efficiently, treat

96 Bordens and Horowitz, Social Psychology, 321.
97 Sims, Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility, 2003.
98 Mark Schafer and Scott Crichlow, Groupthink Versus High-Quality Decision Making in International Relations (New York: Columbia, 2010), 19.
99 Derek Beach, Analyzing Foreign Policy (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 126.
100 Donelson R. Forsyth, Group Dynamics (Belmont: Cengage Learning, 2009), 315.
Anecdotaly, groups can reach better decisions than individuals. If groups are terrible, horrible, no-good at making decisions because they fall prey to groupthink, values-affirming, consensus-seeking and sheeple temptations, among other iniquities, but they also are able to absorb and consider more information/inputs, generate more solutions, possibilities, are more efficient, can research better, solve problems (including the missionary-cannibal dilemma) more efficiently than individual, can they do both? If groupthink is poorly specified, untestable and needs refining or discarding, should it be considered in foreign policy strategies? George responds affirmatively, arguing for subjecting “as best as one can Janis’s prototheory into a broader framework for studying various pathologies of the policy-making process.” Paul t’Hart and Kroon did precisely this, redefining and reconfiguring it so that it is not just ‘concurrence-seeking’ and by parsing the intensity of concurrence-seeking in groupthink (premature, excessive or rigid).

The persistent question is whether there are (a) groups charged with foreign policy-making, (b) whether the group provides input into the decision made or (c) whether the group is functional or for show, and like a certain US president, instinct achieves outcomes than deliberative process that finds viable alternatives rather than concurring with the worst decision possible. Literature shows that there are positive and negative outcomes to decision-making groups and there are other issues to keep in mind. Some activities include securing and maintaining the information chain distribution, secretive nature of deliberations (secrecy, deniability) and critical information.

An analysis of foreign policy decision-making processes in African countries would be invaluable, to determine if groupthink, or groups,

101 Forsyth, Group Dynamics, 2009. Forsyth argues that Marjorie Shaw, in 1932, found groups to solve problems better and faster, including the missionary-cannibal dilemma problem (or the goat-leopard-hay problem).

102 Alexander George, “From Groupthink to Contextual Analysis of Policy-Making Groups.” In Paul t’Hart, Eric Stern and Bengt Sundelius, Eds., Beyond Groupthink: Political Group Dynamics and Foreign Policy-Making (Ann Arbor: UMich Press, 1997), 43.

103 George, “From Groupthink,” 1997.
or even theories help explain their foreign policy. From currently available studies, it is unclear (a) that such information is publicly available for analysis or (b) that there are identifiable groups that deliberate issues of international import in many African countries. One might, however, examine such information as might be available in meetings, delegations, etc.; but absent specific training in the issues and art of diplomacy, would it be remiss to suggest that foreign policy-making is largely whimsical, devoid of group activity, and simply based on the preferences of the country’s leader?

**Prospect/Loss Aversion Theory**

In introducing prospect theory (also often conflated with loss aversion theory), Kahneman and Tversky proceed from decision-making theories, adapted from economics (especially rational choice model—choices, preferences, transition, cost-benefit analysis, decision, repeat), while McDermott, Fowler and Smirnov trace its origins to a more ‘primitive’ “risk-sensitive optimal foraging theory to generate an explanation for the origin and function of context-dependent risk aversion and risk-seeking behavior.” 104 Prospect/loss aversion stems from situations where “preferences systematically violate the axioms of expected utility theory.” 105 Decision-making is “a choice between prospects or risks” 106 the former is “a contract that yields an outcome given a probability between zero and 1.” 107 Expected utility issues from three possibilities: expectation (utility of outcomes), asset integration (and resultant benefits) and risk aversion (preference of certain outcomes). 108

Per Levy, prospect/loss aversion “posits that individuals evaluate outcomes to deviations from a reference point rather than with respect to net asset levels; that their identification of this reference point is a

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104 Rose McDermott, James H. Fowler and Oleg Smirnov, “On the Evolutionary Origin of Prospect Theory Preferences.” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (2008): 335. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022381608080341.

105 Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, “Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision Under Risk.” In Leonard C. Ziemba and William Maclean, Eds., *Handbook of the Fundamentals of Financial Decision Making* (Singapore: WSP, 2013), 99.

106 Kahneman and Tversky, “Prospect Theory,” (2013), 99.

107 Kahneman and Tversky, “Prospect Theory,” (2013), 99.

108 Kahneman and Tversky, “Prospect Theory,” (2013).
critical variable, that they give more weight to losses than to com-
parable gains, and that they are generally risk-averse with respect to gains
and risk-acceptant with respect to losses.” Levy’s explanation rests on
three ‘legs’; gains and losses (not net assets); treatment of gains and
losses in two ways (for gains, risk aversion and for losses, risk acceptance)
and a discerning treatment of losses versus gains (losses felt more than
gains); and that people attach value to gaining and possessing things, and
dislike losing than failing gain things (endowment effect). McDermott
holds “that risk aversion is more likely in the domain of gains and that
risk-seeking behavior will tend to occur in the domain of losses.”

Levy considers prospect theory an experiment in which people have
some certainty of gaining or losing money. Behaviorally, people would
make different choices if no financial gain is possible. Levy outlines the
key concepts in the principle surrounding expected utility and direc-
tion of its increase/decrease, the monetary attribution of these changes
and the level of possibility of risk acceptance/aversion based on how
much they are willing to accept risk. Some outcomes are financial, but
decision-making in foreign policy is not always tied to better financial
positions. Other benefits may include peace dividend with restive neigh-
bors or improving one’s security. Foreign policy behavior is not measured
in economic terms, gains or motivations. Despite Almond’s Mood Theory
or economic gains, states may choose non-economic benefits but assure
peace.

On prospect theory’s application to IR, Levy notes debate in “the
theoretical literature on [American], comparative and international poli-
tics” that often pits social psychology against experimental economics.
Contextually, Ross’s 1984 argument shows the USSR willing to defend,
not extend its overall gains. Levy adds:

109 Jack S. Levy, “An Introduction to Prospect Theory.” Political Psychology, Vol. 13,
No. 2 (June, 1992), 171.
110 Levy, “An Introduction to Prospect Theory,” (1992).
111 Rose McDermott, Risk-Taking in International Politics: Prospect Theory in American
Foreign Policy (Ann Arbor: UMich Press, 2001), 13.
112 Levy, “Applications of Prospect Theory to Political Science,” (2003), 215.
113 Levy, “Applications of Prospect Theory to Political Science,” (2003).
political leaders might also be led to status quo choices because of reputational interests or domestic pressures, but the values of these other variables might be shaped by loss aversion. Political leaders might be more concerned to prevent a decline in their country’s reputation or credibility than to increase it by a comparable amount or more worried about the costs of falling dominoes than hopeful about the gains from inducing other states to align with them.114

The terms and conditions of prospect theory are not necessarily inapplicable to African countries, even though foreign policy-making outside of major issues of liberation, regional cooperation and continental unity is done by elites.

The default assumption of prospect and other foreign policy theories is one of a mostly competitive, zero-sum games, winner-take-all assumptions, rather than cooperation. Kahneman and Tversky posit loss as the default; the primary goal is loss-avoidance. If gains can be spread around, competition needs not the inevitable default. Stein’s gem titled Why States Cooperate proceeds from a worst-case scenario of potential nuclear war with attendant possibilities of a nuclear winter, necessitating de-escalation, collective, cooperative decision-making for survival given Mutually Assured Destruction prospect. Indeed, after 1962’s CMC, there was some détente, de-escalation and better communication between the US and USSR. Even for China, 16 neighbors evoke prospects of cooperation rather than conflict unlike say, Eswatini.

**Poliheuristic Model/Poliheuristic Choice Theory**

Foreign policy-making is generally a response to actions and reactions of other actors and the expression of one’s preferences. Rational choice explains some of the process; others are guided by loss aversion. The poliheuristic theory of foreign policy decision-making was first articulated in 1993 as the third foreign policy theory (the others were von Neumann/Morgenstern RAM/RCT and the Simon/Steinbruner

114 Levy, “Applications of Prospect Theory to Political Science,” (2003), 236.
cybernetic approach).\textsuperscript{115} Taylor-Robinson and Redd’s definition of poliheuristic (choice) theory concerns decision-making processes based on environmental or situational factors and the decision-maker’s cognitive processes (the why and the how).\textsuperscript{116} The term, \textit{poly} (many) and \textit{heuristic} (shortcuts) “(i.e. strategies) decision makers utilize in attempts to simplify complex decision tasks”\textsuperscript{117} follows Beach and Mitchell’s 1978 definition as “a set of procedures ‘that the decision maker engages in when attempting to select among alternative courses of action, and a decision rule that dictates how the results of the engaged-in procedures will be used to make the actual decision.’”\textsuperscript{118}

Mintz holds that poliheuristic theory “postulates a two-stage decision process in which the menu for choice is narrowed initially by a noncompensatory analysis that eliminates options by the use of one or more heuristics (cognitive shortcuts). Remaining alternatives are then evaluated in an attempt to minimize risks and maximize benefits.”\textsuperscript{119} Mintz synthesizes two key findings of the model (i) use of more than one decision rule by leaders to arrive at a decision and (ii) evaluation of gains and losses in political terms, especially domestic politics.\textsuperscript{120} “The poliheuristic decision-making theory highlights the cognitive mechanisms that mediate foreign policy choices and behavior. The theory incorporates

\textsuperscript{115} Alex Mintz and Nehemia Geva, “The Poliheuristic Theory of Foreign Policy Decisionmaking.” In Nehemia Geva and Alex Mintz, Eds., \textit{Decisionmaking on War and Peace: The Cognitive-rational Debate} (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1997).

\textsuperscript{116} Michelle M. Taylor-Robinson and Steven B. Redd, “Framing and the Poliheuristic Theory of Decision: The United Fruit Company and the 1954 U.S.-Led Coup in Guatemala.” In Alex Mintz, Ed., \textit{Integrating Cognitive and Rational Theories of Foreign Policy Decision Making} (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

\textsuperscript{117} Taylor-Robinson and Redd, “Framing and the Poliheuristic Theory of Decision,” 80.

\textsuperscript{118} Taylor-Robinson and Redd, “Framing and the Poliheuristic Theory of Decision,” 80.

\textsuperscript{119} Alex Mintz, “How Do Leaders Make Decisions? A Poliheuristic Perspective.” \textit{The Journal of Conflict Resolution}, Vol. 48, No. 1 (February, 2004): 3. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002703261056.

\textsuperscript{120} Alex Mintz, “Applied Decision Analysis: Utilizing Poliheuristic Theory to Explain and Predict Foreign Policy and National Security Decisions.” \textit{International Studies Perspectives}, Vol. 6 (2005): 94–95.
the conditions surrounding foreign policy decisions as well as the cognitive processes themselves (i.e., the why and how of decisionmaking), thus addressing both the contents and the processes of decisions.”

Elsewhere, Allison’s argument of the rational, organization and bureaucratic politics as models upon which explanations of decisions should be based is noted. Mintz proposes “combining the cognitive and rational schools to form the poliheuristic decision model.” The poliheuristic theory is considered a decision model. The basis of the two-stage poliheuristic choice model is “the cognitive psychology school of decision making with elements of the rational choice school,” streamlined include only immediately clearly ‘available’ options and information. Limited availability of and full access to information limits options and produces sub-optimal outcomes. Further, state actors often have varying motivations and regularly make spurious decisions. The Cold War demonstrated this, with leaders such as Mobutu who, being pro-west, conflated his survival with the country. Similar strategies manifest elsewhere; for Bush (43’s) White House’s foreign policy decision-making, there was “a tension … in how presidents evaluate information: presidents and other national security-level decision makers want to make the best choices from a policy standpoint. On the other hand, they cannot ignore the political consequences of their decisions.”

The explanatory power of theories—always a key measure of a theory’s robustness—the poliheuristic theory of choice has a broader decision-making coverage range of explanation. The model applies to “single decisions, group decisions, sequential decisions, and decisions in strategic settings.” It focuses on processes and outcomes of decisions, why and how world leaders make decisions. Despite its broad explanatory range, it differs from RAM/RCT because “whereas the RAM assumes that all

121 Mintz and Geva, “The Poliheuristic Theory of Foreign Policy Decisionmaking,” 80–81.
122 Alex Mintz and Karl DeRouen Jr., Understanding Foreign Policy Decision Making (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 78.
123 Mintz, “How Do Leaders Make Decisions?” 4.
124 Eben J. Christensen and Steven B. Redd, “Bureaucrats Versus the Ballot Box in Foreign Policy Decision Making: An Experimental Analysis of the Bureaucratic Politics Model and the Poliheuristic Theory.” The Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 48, No. 1, The Poliheuristic Theory of Foreign Policy Decision Making (2004), 69.
125 Mintz, “How Do Leaders Make Decisions?” 4.
possible options are carefully assessed, Poliheuristic theory suggests that politically unviable options are eliminated out of hand.”

The question of who makes foreign policy in Africa persists. Can one discern the extent to which foreign policymakers in African countries are familiar with, or bound by these foreign policy decision-making theories? Scholars synthesize how, after eliminating other explanans, leaders prioritize residual options, as the hyperbounded decision-making environment necessitates focusing on a narrow set of policy alternatives and decision dimensions. A two-stage decision process is used, and domestic politics are key consideration in the decision-making. Multiple heuristics are involved, decisions are non-compensatory, (they do not take all attributes into account)—or “a low utility on the critical dimension cannot be compensated by a higher score on another dimension; [...] if an alternative scores an unacceptable low utility on one critical dimension (e.g., the political dimension), that alternative will be eliminated immediately, even if it may have a high score on another dimension (e.g., the military dimension). This indicates that the relationship across various attribute dimensions is nonadditive, non-compensatory.” Lastly, most foreign policy decisions are considered in an interactive (strategic) setting, are sequential and build on an initial decision, e.g., the Monroe Doctrine.

Foreign policy decisions made by African leaders on continental issues show deliberation, but it is unclear if decisions are made in Addis Ababa, daring other African countries and foreign policy-making apparatus to oppose them, as was evident in individual states’ versus AU’s reaction to NATO’s 2011 Libya intervention. Although states are primary actors with invariable preferences, where actors (states) seek to maximize power,

126 Derek Beach, *Analyzing Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 119.
127 Alex Mintz and Karl DeRouen Jr., *Understanding Foreign Policy Decision Making* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 79–80.
128 Peter Rittgen, “Goal Commitment and Competition as Drivers for Group Productivity in Business Process Modeling.” In Armin Heinzl, Peter Buxmann, Oliver Wendt and Tim Weitzel, Eds., *Theory-Guided Modeling and Empiricism in Information Systems Research* (Heidelberg: Physica-Verlag, 2011).
129 Xinsheng Liu, *Modeling Bilateral International Relations: The Case of U.S.-China Interactions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 31.
130 Mintz and DeRouen Jr., *Understanding Foreign Policy Decision Making*, 80.
security and utilize self-help strategies to secure themselves and their interests, the decisions they make aren’t always based on some set of uniform decision-making strategies, decidedly, not the poliheuristic choice theory.

**Domestic Audience Costs**

Although domestic audiences and their role in foreign policy formulation hasn’t quite risen to the level of uncontested theoretical explanation, domestic audiences, i.e., actors exerting influence on elites’ decision-making, they exist, they have influence and their contribution is subject to debate. Domestic audience costs are considered “political costs that leaders incur when they back down in a crisis.” There are different types of audience costs; “the side with a stronger domestic audience (e.g., a democracy) is always less likely to back down than the side less able to generate domestic audience costs (a nondemocracy).” ¹³¹ Domestic audience costs are mostly found in republican states where government persistence can be linked to domestic, and especially foreign policy preferences, but in autocracies they can be expressed by being deposed from leadership. Immanuel Kant’s *Perpetual Peace* held “that monarchs are more willing to fight each other because they are safely removed from the awful costs. Citizens, on the other hand, are far less likely to take up arms since they would bear the costs themselves.” ¹³² All countries have some version of domestic audiences able to exact some cost, but such costs in autocracies are considered lower than those of democracies. ¹³³

Domestic audience costs discussions often brings about the issue of crisis behavior through Fearon’s analysis of a leader’s proclivity to back down during a crisis they precipitate. Leaders can attack, back down or escalate a crisis, but if they back down, they suffer domestic audience costs.

¹³¹ Stephen Walt, “Rigor or Rigor Mortis? Rational Choice and Security Studies.” In Michael E. Brown, Owen R. Coté Jr., Sean M. Lynn-Jones and Steven E. Miller, Eds., *Rational Choice and Security Studies: Stephen Walt and His Critics*, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000), 29.

¹³² Charles Lipson, *Reliable Partners: How Democracies Have Made a Separate Peace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 18.

¹³³ Michael Tomz, “Democratic Default: Domestic Audiences and Compliance with International Agreements,” Draft manuscript (APSA 2002).
costs—and are considered ineffectual in foreign policy. Tomz posits two questions, fundamental to developing theories of domestic audience costs: “would constituents disapprove if their leader made false commitments, and by what means would disapproving citizens hold their leader accountable?” The challenge for Africa’s context is the domestic audiences and whether foreign policy decisions constitute a consideration to rewarding or punishing leaders based on foreign policy, assuming elections occur in the first place. Although it hasn’t necessarily been studied, one imagines an inverse relationship between affluence and concern for foreign policy issues, particularly in Africa.

As informed as citizens might be, there are questions of how much citizens of African countries know, or care about their countries’ foreign policy preferences. Many do not have access to unfiltered information; even in advanced economies where citizens have greater freedoms, the citizens may not know enough about policies to make rational choices. One cannot forget the 30 percent support by 2016 Republican primary voters of US’ bombing of the fictional kingdom of Agrabah, from the movie Aladdin. One expects that in Africa, citizens rarely have (a) access to information, (b) well-researched, non-partisan information and (c) ability to evaluate all possibilities before arriving at an informed position on foreign policy expected of their representatives.

Domestic audiences’ policy positions and preferences may be overstated: international agreements are so complex that most voters may best conceive them in terms of personal loss. Such agreements are rarely that simple. Tomz also argues that elections are rarely determined by foreign policy concerns outside of war. Key voting primers and concerns are economic, health, well-being, and rarely, foreign policy. Tomz adds that even well-informed voters may favor positions adopted by leaders even when those hurt them, e.g., US-China trade war which decreased soybeans sales, with a detrimental effect on farm produce prices and jobs if positions are presented as patriotism. Importantly, democracies as a whole

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134 Natasha M. Ezrow and Erica Frantz, Dictators and Dictatorships: Understanding Authoritarian Regimes and Their Leaders (New York: Continuum, 2011), 147–149.

135 Michael Tomz, “Domestic Audience Costs in International Relations: An Experimental Approach.” International Organization, Vol. 61, No. 4 (Autumn, 2007): 823. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818307070282.

136 Jana Kasperkevic, “Poll: 30% of GOP Voters Support Bombing Agrabah, the City from Aladdin,” The Guardian (December 18, 2015), n.p.
differ in domestic politics, which may be divided between parties; support expressed for foreign policy positions may reflect specific segments and less conflictual issues GATT/WTO rules.\footnote{Stephanie J. Rickard, “Democratic Differences: Electoral Institutions and Compliance with GATT/WTO Agreements.” \textit{European Journal of International Relations}, Vol. 16, No. 4 (2010): 711–729.} As Brexit, JCPOA, Paris Climate Agreement and TPP withdrawals showed, perception that states are unitary actors is severely tested, while DPRK’s moves to denuclearize, peace with South Korea and a potential peace agreement did not produce significant dissent.

That there are domestic audiences in African countries is without doubt; how much their preferences influence foreign policy is unclear. Foreign policy strategies are not always subject to public debate. Kenya’s 2011 military intervention in Somalia and especially the loss of nearly 300 troops at El Adde in 2017 and the overall goals o KDF’s mission in Somalia remain murky and muted. Somalia and Kenya have had skirmishes, while accusations against Kenya’s treatment of its Somali community make the enterprise touchy. But Kenya is a democracy; domestic audience costs are plausible. However, ethnicity and history, over and above foreign policy or even ideology, are perhaps the most pertinent explanans of foreign (and domestic) policy-making. Without alleging the tiger trap, one expects the same to hold across Africa.

**Conclusion**

Most of the current knowledge, literature, scholarship, mistakes, misconceptions and work on foreign policy-making, decision-making, crises, themes, analyses, prescriptions and exceptions were conceived, raised, grew up, are aging and will retire in Washington and Western Europe. The past 200–500 years show why; it is a slight deviation from Paris, London, Berlin and Rome, yet together these regions account for less than 10% of the world’s population and resources. The current billions are in China, India and Africa. Not even expletive-laden references are likely to change the trajectory of the next century, particularly now that Europe has entered a period of non-violent conflict culture. It is useful to focus on the unknowns of foreign policy in the Global South.

Little evidence or scholarship shows applicability of western-derived IR theories to Africa and much of the Global South. Theories explaining
other political phenomena have many asterisks: democratic politics, constitutional republics, human rights, economic development theories—have not worked in Africa. Western capitalism’s perceived success has still to concede that its foundations of slavery and colonialism, while African socialism and state harmony as the preferred national ideals confound an individualist Judeo-Christian western civilization. African socialism, *ubuntu* and *ujamaa* get the communist-socialist label, even though ‘it takes a village to raise a child.’ Outside western, Westphalian states and statehood, scholarship neglects to study and develop theories, analysis and perceptions from the empires (and tomb) of Shin Din or the Great Wall of China as they have with Athens and Sparta, the Delian League and the Peloponnesian Wars. As Brazil, Russia, India and China gain greater visibility as BRICs, one cannot overlook 20% earth’s landmass, 40% of global population, and 70% of the so-called failed states and their future.

Regarding Africa, the Rumsfeldian question is useful: What are the known knowns, the known unknowns and the unknown unknowns of foreign policy-making in Africa? Can scholars develop sound, empirical, testable, predictable, parsimonious scholarship on these processes? Absent Africa-based foreign policy analyses, theories and strategies, can other theories of the functionally similar states provide insight into this nascent field? Although the foregoing seems to make a counterintuitive argument regarding western theoretical approaches, here one defaults to the classic INUS condition. We are going to theorize and better understand Africa-centric foreign policy decision-making strategies and thus theory if we first consider the most pertinent issues the continent has faced and resolved. This is the task proposed and accomplished by the next several chapters.

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