

how we view subnational actors—interest groups, **nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)**, and businesses.

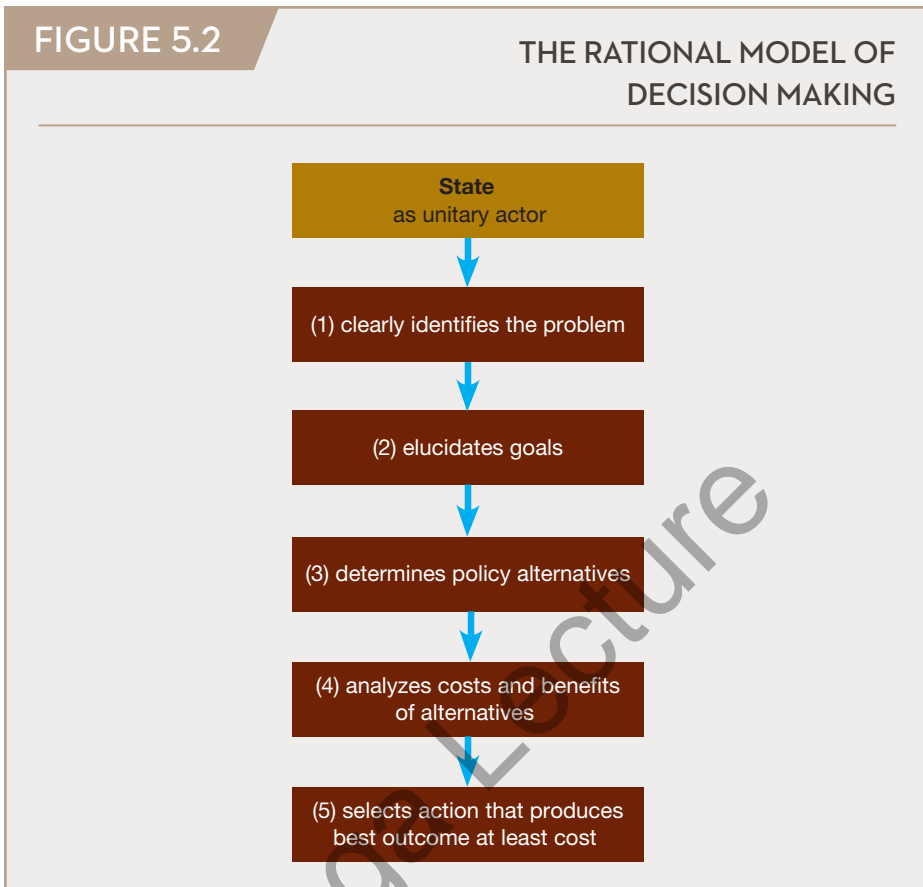
The Rational Model: The Realist Approach

Most policy makers, particularly during crises, and most realists begin with the rational model, which conceives of foreign policy as actions the national government chooses to maximize its strategic objectives. The state is assumed to be a unitary actor with established goals, a set of options, and an algorithm for deciding which option best meets its goals. The process is relatively straightforward, as Figure 5.2 shows. Taking as our case the 1996 incident in which the People's Republic of China (PRC) tested missiles by launching them over the Republic of China (ROC; Taiwan), a rational approach would view Taiwan's decision-making process about how to respond in the following manner (the numbers correspond to the numbered steps in Figure 5.2):

1. The PRC was testing missiles over the ROC in direct threat to the latter's national security.
2. The goal of both the ROC and its major supporter, the United States, was to stop the firings immediately.
3. The ROC decision makers had several options: do nothing; wait until after the upcoming elections; issue diplomatic protests; bring the issue to the UN Security Council; threaten or conduct military operations against the PRC; or threaten or use economic statecraft (cut trade, impose sanctions or embargoes).
4. The ROC leaders analyzed the benefits and costs of these options: the PRC would exercise its veto in the UN Security Council; any economic or military actions the ROC undertook were unlikely to be successful against the stronger adversary, potentially leading to the destruction of Taiwan.
5. The ROC, with U.S. support, chose diplomatic protest as a first step. Doing nothing clearly would have suggested that the missile testing was acceptable. Military action against the PRC might have led to disastrous consequences.

Crises such as the preceding example have a unique set of characteristics: decision makers are confronted by a surprising, threatening event; they have only a short time to make a decision about how to respond; often a limited number of decision makers are involved in top-secret proceedings; and there is little time for substate actors to have much influence. In these circumstances, using the rational model as a way to assess the other side's behavior is an appropriate choice.

In a noncrisis situation, when a state knows very little about the internal domestic processes of another state—as the United States knew little about mainland China



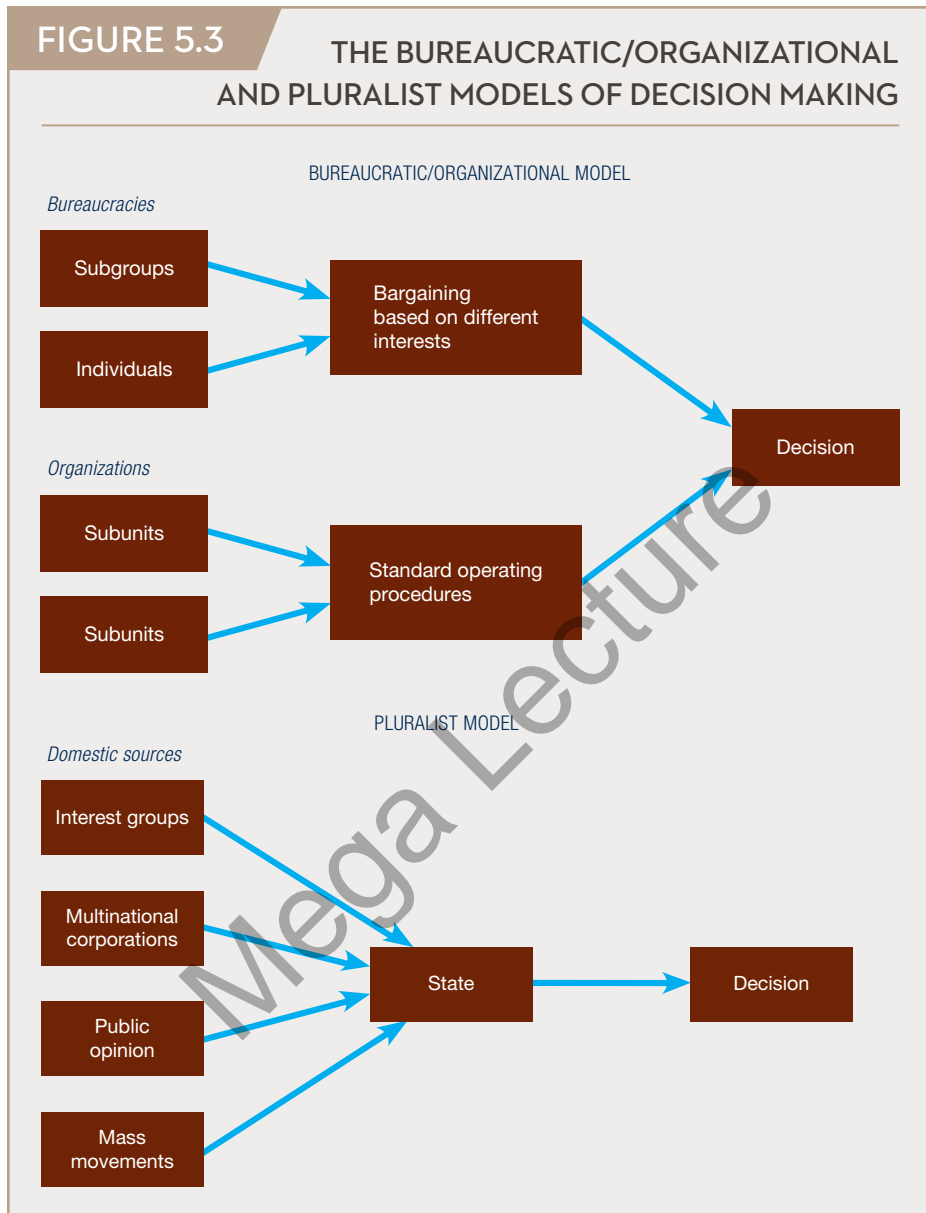
during the era of Mao Zedong—then decision makers have little alternative but to assume that the other state will follow the rational model. Indeed, in the absence of better information, most U.S. assessments of decisions the Soviet Union took during the Cold War were based on a rational model. Only after the opening of the Soviet governmental archives following the end of the Cold War did historians find that, in fact, the Soviets had no concrete plans for turning Poland, Hungary, Romania, or other East European states into communist dictatorships or socialist economies, as the United States had believed. The Soviets appear to have been guided by events happening in the region, not by specific ideological goals and rational plans.²¹ The United States was incorrect in imputing the rational model to Soviet decision making, but in the absence of complete information, this was the least risky approach: the anarchy of the international system means a state assumes that its opponent engages in rational decision making.

The Bureaucratic/Organizational Model and the Pluralist Model: The Liberal Approaches

Not all decisions occur during crises, and not all decisions are taken with so little knowledge of domestic politics in other countries. In these instances, foreign policy decisions may be products of either subnational governmental organizations or bureaucracies—departments or ministries of government—the bureaucratic/organizational model, or decisions taken after bargaining conducted among domestic sources—the public, interest groups, mass movements, and multinational corporations—the pluralist model (see Figure 5.3).

In the first case, **organizational politics** emphasizes an organization's standard operating procedures and processes. Decisions arising from organizational processes depend heavily on precedents; major changes in policy are unlikely. Conflicts can occur when different subgroups within the organization have different goals and procedures. Often particular interest groups or NGOs have strongly influenced those different goals. In models of **bureaucratic politics**, members of the bureaucracy representing different interests negotiate decisions. Decisions determined by bureaucratic politics flow from the push and pull, or tug-of-war, among these departments, groups, or individuals. In either political scenario, the ultimate decision depends on the relative strength of the individual bureaucratic players or the organizations they represent.

In the second case, pluralist models, societal groups may play very important roles, especially in noncrisis situations and on particular issues, often economic ones. Societal groups have a variety of ways of forcing favorable decisions or constraining adverse decisions. They can mobilize the media and public opinion, lobby the government agencies responsible for making decisions, influence the appropriate representative bodies (e.g., the U.S. Congress, the French National Assembly, the Japanese Diet), organize transnational networks of people with comparable interests, and, in the case of high-profile heads of multinational corporations, make direct contacts with the highest governmental officials. Decisions made will reflect these diverse societal interests and strategies—a result that is particularly compatible with liberal thinking. Both trade and environmental policy are prominent examples of the bureaucratic/organizational model of decision making at work in noncrisis situations. Bureaucracies in the ministries of agriculture, industry, and labor in the case of trade, and environment, economics, and labor in the case of the environment, fight particularly hard within their own governments for policies favorable to their constituencies. Substate groups develop strong relationships with these ministries to ensure favorable outcomes. When time is no real constraint, informal bureaucratic groups and departments are free to mobilize. They hold meetings, hammering out positions that satisfy all the contending interests. The decisions reached are not always the most rational ones;



rather, the groups are content with **satisficing**—that is, settling for a decision that satisfies the different constituents without ostracizing any, even if the decision they reach is not the best possible outcome.

Liberals especially turn to this model of decision-making behavior in their analyses because, for them, the state is only the playing field; the actors are the competing interests in bureaucracies and organizations. The model is most relevant in large democratic

countries, which usually have highly differentiated institutional structures for foreign policy decision making and where responsibility and jurisdiction are divided among several different units. But to use this model in policy-making circles to analyze or predict other states' behavior, or to use it to analyze decisions for scholarly purposes, one must have detailed knowledge of a country's foreign policy structures and bureaucracies.

The pluralist model is also compatible with liberal approaches. No one doubts the power of the rice farmer lobbies in both Japan and South Korea in preventing the importation of cheap, U.S. grown rice. No one denies the power of U.S. labor unions in supporting restrictions on the importation of products from developing countries. No one doubts the power of AIPAC in influencing much of U.S. policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. The movement to ban land mines in the 1990s is yet another example of a societally based pluralist foreign policy decision, a process reflecting democratic practices.

The bureaucratic/organizational and pluralist models require considerable knowledge of a country's foreign policy processes and are most applicable in noncrisis situations. Time is needed for bureaucracies to be called to the table, for organizations to bring their standard operating procedures, and for societal groups to organize. In a crisis, where time is of the essence and information about a country's foreign policy apparatus is absent, the rational model is the best alternative.

An Elite Model: A Radical Alternative

While both realists and liberals acknowledge that states have real choices in foreign policy, no matter which model explains their behavior, radicals see fewer real choices. In the radical view, capitalist states' interests are determined by the structure of the international system, and their decisions are dictated by the economic imperatives of the dominant class. Internal domestic elites have been co-opted by international capitalists. So in the elite model that radicals favor, multinational corporations play a key role in influencing the making of foreign policy.

A Constructivist Alternative

Constructivists hold that foreign policy decisions are based on two major factors. First is the country's strategic culture: the decision makers' interpretation of a country's historical experience, including philosophies, values, institutions, and understandings of its geography and development. Australia's strategic culture encompasses the geography-history trade-off: whether policy should be set by Australia's place in Asia-Pacific or by its history, its ties with Britain and the English-speaking world. Canada's strategic culture is shaped by its search for independence from the United States and its policies, made more problematic by geographic proximity and economic interdependence.

THEORY IN BRIEF		CONTENDING PERSPECTIVES ON STATE POWER AND POLICY		
	REALISM/ NEOREALISM	LIBERALISM/ NEOLIBERAL INSTITUTIONALISM	RADICALISM/ DEPENDENCY THEORY	CONSTRUCTIVISM
NATURE OF STATE POWER	Emphasis on power as key concept in international relations; geography, natural resources, population especially important	Multiple power sources; tangible and intangible sources	Economic power organized around classes	Power subject to norm socialization
USING STATE POWER	Emphasis on coercive techniques of power; use of force acceptable	Broad range of power techniques; preference for noncoercive alternatives	Weak states have few instruments of power	Power is tool of elites for socializing societies through norms
HOW FOREIGN POLICY IS MADE	Emphasis on rational model of decision making; unitary state actor assumed once decision is made	Bureaucratic/organizational and pluralist models of decision making	States have no real choices; decisions dictated by economic capitalist elites	Decisions based on norms that regulate policy sector
DETERMINANTS OF FOREIGN POLICY	Largely external/international determinants	Largely domestic determinants	Largely external determinants; co-opted internal elements	External determinants in combination with domestic civil society

Second is the leaders' interpretation of the salient international norms. Acknowledging that leaders are socialized into the dominant international norms, they are inclined to build policies through processes open to domestic and international civil society, the mass media, and international partners. Foreign policy decisions are determined by leaders' beliefs that their actions are congruent with the international norms

they have appropriated. Decisions may not be the same, as strategic cultures differ.²² In short, constructivists take a holistic view of decision making, and the domestic and international factors are enmeshed.

Each alternative model offers a simplification of the foreign policy decision-making process. Each provides a window into how groups (both governmental and nongovernmental) influence the foreign policy process. But these models do not provide answers to other critical questions. They do not tell us the content of a specific decision or indicate the effectiveness with which the foreign policy was implemented.

Challenges to the State

The state, despite its centrality in international affairs, is facing challenges from the processes of globalization, religiously and ideologically based transnational movements, ethnonational movements, transnational crime, and fragile states (see Table 5.2). In each of these processes, new and intrusive technologies—e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, cell phones with cameras, direct satellite broadcasting, and worldwide television networks such as CNN—increasingly undermine the state’s control over information and hence its control over its citizens, nongovernmental groups, and their activities. Both the Persian Gulf states and China have fought losing battles trying to “protect”

TABLE 5.2

CHALLENGES TO STATE POWER

FORCES	EFFECTS ON THE STATE
Globalization—political, economic, cultural	Undermines state sovereignty; interferes with state exercise of power; exacerbated by the rise of new media.
Transnational religious and ideological movements	Seek loyalty and commitment of individuals and groups beyond the state; change state behavior on a specific problem or issue.
Ethnonational movements	Seek own state; attempt to replace current government with one representing the interests of the movement.
Transnational crime	Challenges state authority.
Fragile states	Threaten lives of persons within states and security of other states in international system.