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Avoiding Pathologies in Foreign Policy Decision Groups

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The joke that a camel is a would-be horse created by a committee illustrates the view that group decision-making often suffers from serious deficiencies. Over the years research on group dynamics has alerted us to various pathologies. The famous Asch experiments warned of tendencies toward conformity. Wallace, Kogan, and Bem alerted us that groups can shift individual choices towards more risky options. More recently this risky-shift pattern has been generalized as group polarization, involving a widely demonstrated tendency of groups to move toward more extreme choices in either direction (more conservative or more risky than individual choices). In his study of bureaucratic politics, Allison termed the unwanted choice occurring as a consequence of group bargaining "a resultant"—a decision that corresponds to the objective of none of the participants. These are but a few of the obstacles to quality decisions attributed to group decision processes.¹

Despite such limitations, humans rely extensively on groups as the vehicle in problem-solving situations. This reliance is as common in foreign and national security policy-making as in other fields. Parliamentary cabinets, military juntas, politburos of ruling parties, defense committees, and innumerable other governmental committees demonstrate the presence of groups as decision bodies. In brief, group decisions are a pervasive form of governmental policy-making.

Groups are not the only unit used for governmental policy-making. Sometimes the resources of a regime are authoritatively allocated on the basis of the preferences of a single, predominant leader.² At other times decisions require the involvement and consent of coalitions of multiple entities. Even though some governmental decisions are taken by leaders or coalitions, the group decision occurs with such frequency as to warrant care-

- Gather information and maintain clarity of objectives in order to recognize possible problems.
- Define the problem in accordance with all appraised information available to policy-makers.
- Identify options for affecting the problem and their possible consequences, including actions of other parties.
- Engage in an assessment of the options relative to available capabilities and conditions understood to prevail.
- Achieve timely closure on the preferred option.
- Construct an executable plan for implementation (if required).
- Monitor performance and consequences against expected results.

These task criteria should not be viewed as establishing rationality requirements. Uncertainty is recognized. There is no expectation of complete information or formalistic cost assessments. Nevertheless, group procedures that aid members in performing these tasks should contribute to the quality of decision-making; those that erode or distort the performance of these tasks have the opposite effect.

The characterization of decision tasks suggests two major categories of activities essential to group decision-making: the processing of information and the management of options.⁵ Both are essential and if either is poorly performed, decision-making is seriously eroded. Vertzberger has provided an extensive interpretive summary of the potential impediments to effective information processing.⁶ This essay focuses on the other set of processes, that of identifying, evaluating, and selecting some approach for coping or dealing with the problem at hand. Of course, the two are closely intertwined.

Opposing difficulties can beset the group's management of options. On the one hand groups can lock on a single option (sometimes flowing from an uncontested definition of the problem) and accept it uncritically. On the other, groups may be torn among several competing options and either be unable to resolve the differences and achieve closure, or they may follow a procedure for resolving differences that has little to do with the relative merits of the advocated options.

Emphasizing one or the other of these liabilities, several interpretations of group decision-making in politics have emerged. One is groupthink. Propounded by Irving Janis, groupthink entails a process in which members share a strong concern for preserving the well-being of the group and seek to minimize disruptive internal disagreements that might become divisive.⁷ The result is that members experience strong pressure to reinforce one another and concur with any option for treatment of a problem once it

appears to have some support. As a consequence, there is a tendency for premature closure before any critical assessment or comparison with other options occurs. The group thus may settle for an option with serious, and potentially detectable, defects that ought to have been recognized under more critical scrutiny. Rather than using the varying experiences, knowledge, and values that a collective body offers to strengthen inventive and evaluative capability, the protective group process shuts it down. In fact, as characterized in groupthink, individual members may not perform these tasks as well as they might in isolation.

Exactly the opposite group effect occurs in what is best described as bureaucratic politics. As envisioned by various authors, group members are representatives of outside bureaus or departments who struggle to protect and advance the interests of their agency against challenges from competitors.⁸ Because various agencies of the government have different missions that they must advance to preserve the integrity of that agency, their representatives frequently interpret foreign and security problems differently. When decision groups are composed of individuals who identify strongly with their home organization, their members tend to insist on interpretations of problems and solutions favored by their agency and vigorously resist any unbalanced concessions no matter how persuasively argued or factually documented. These conditions make group closure and agreement difficult. The result may be deadlock or compromises based on mutual concessions that more accurately reflect the interests and influence of the represented agencies than the relative merits of the options examined. Once again, but in a contrasting manner from groupthink, the process robs the group of capabilities for balanced assessment and effective closure that might make it superior to the individual working alone.

Are these traps—the opposite sides of Occam's razor—the inevitable consequences of group decision-making? Is the only justification for groups the political and psychological support they can offer, not their contribution to quality decisions? The answer should clearly be no. The damage to quality group decision-making arising from groupthink and bureaucratic politics is the result of certain group procedures triggered by the status of certain key variables. Some groups avoid the negative consequences, either by good fortune, or by an intuitive or explicit understanding of the impact of these variables. On a broader scale there is no reason why these variables cannot be clearly identified and their effects confirmed through research. Based on such knowledge corrections or interventions are possible for any group.

That is exactly what Alexander George has done in his pioneering work on multiple advocacy.⁹ He identified circumstances that can lead to premature group closure on a single option and proposed the introduction of a politically effective advocate of a competing perspective as a possible

corrective. George's efforts were designed to address a particular deficiency that can arise under some conditions in group decision-making. He acknowledged that under other circumstances, other difficulties arise. This essay attempts to establish a larger context for examination of the problem of reaching agreement in group decision-making. It seeks to build on the major underlying concern of George to bring scholarship to bear on policy-making. It also seeks to follow George and others in the task of identifying sources of major difficulties that can beset problem-solving in groups. In particular, this conceptual essay seeks to explore the effects of certain key variables in group decision processes that when operating together in a given way can lead to the negative effects on option management associated with such conditions as groupthink or bureaucratic politics. These variables can also operate in a way that averts the noted effects. Thus, the quality of decision is contingent upon the way group structure and processes influence certain core variables.

Three basic models of the management of options in decision-making groups can be drawn from the insights about how groups manage substantive disagreement over options. The three models are designated:

- Concurrence (producing a tendency to *avoid* group conflict);
- Unanimity (producing a tendency to *resolve* group conflict);
- Majority (producing a tendency to *accept* group conflict).

Concurrence is grounded in the dynamics of groupthink, in which a group, fearing that internal conflict will harm the group's well-being, latches on to an initial option and accepts it without challenge. Unanimity is a severe form of bureaucratic politics in which the distribution of power or the group's decision rules require that all members must concur in some resolution of the disagreement. Majority is similar to unanimity in the existence of sharply contested positions among group members, but it involves a different group dynamic because not everyone need agree for a resolution of the problem.

The models describe how the configuration of certain key variables affects the group's output. Although the models are not prescriptive, they provide insights into how different conditions trigger various outputs that we can judge to be more or less desirable, thus guiding our interventions.

The strategy for explicating these models is to pose a sequence of empirical questions that seek to characterize key features of the structure and process of any decision-making group. The questions are used by the analyst to determine the status of key variables; they are not questions that policy-makers would ask. Each answer establishes the value of some variable postulated to be essential in determining how the group procedure affects the management of options. The sequence of questions, each of which

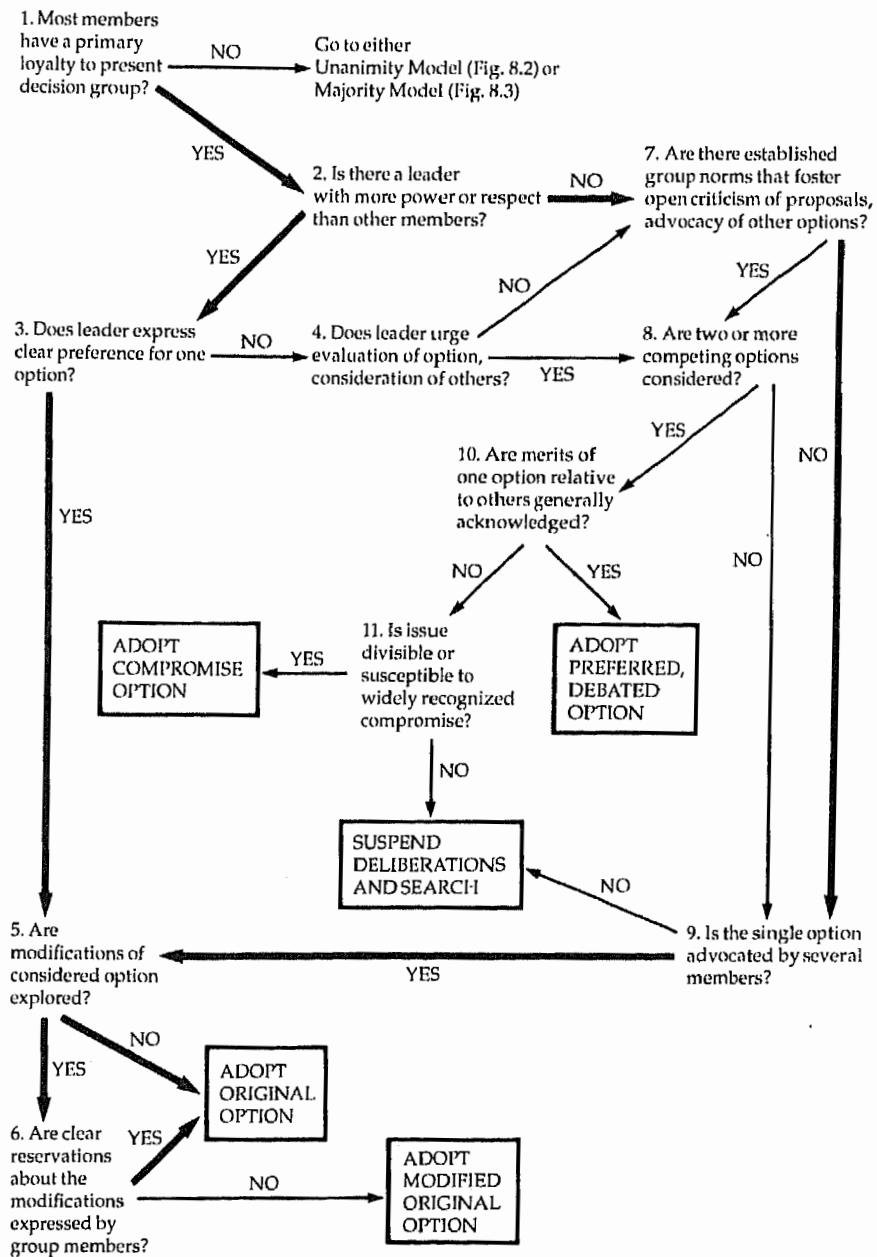


FIGURE 8.1 Decision tree for concurrence model
 NOTE: Bold path indicates most likely course if groupthink prevails.

trasts with President Reagan who appears to have delegated to others his authority on some foreign policy issues.) Nevertheless it is instructive to note the impact of Bush as leader in that situation as given in at least one account. At a critical meeting in the White House Situation Room on October 30, 1990, attended by President Bush, Secretary of State Baker, Secretary of Defense Cheney, National Security Advisor Scowcroft, and Chairman of the Joints Chiefs Powell, the issue was whether to continue with the defensive posture in Saudi Arabia or greatly expand the buildup to permit offensive action.

Bush and Scowcroft seemed primed to go ahead with the development of the offensive option. Baker, less anxious and more cautious ... was no longer reluctant. Listening, Cheney saw no willingness on Bush's part to accept anything less than the fulfillment of his stated objective, the liberation of Kuwait. ... Powell saw that patience was not the order of the day ... now he sensed that he had less permission to speak up.¹²

This account illustrates how President Bush's expressed preference for war rather than continued blockade discouraged another group member (General Powell) from expressing reservations. Presidents can be particularly persuasive leaders. Their advocacy of a given option makes challenges by advisors more difficult.

At the White House Tuesday Lunch Group meetings during the Vietnam War, President Lyndon Johnson is widely reported not only to have expressed his own position but to have challenged and sometimes belittled those who disagreed.¹³ As a result, decisions of that group bear the hallmark of premature closure and acceptance of the first option advanced. Even if an assessment of the proposed option occurs and modifications are advanced, they are likely to be offered as fine-tuning or instrumental adjustments that do not challenge the basic premises or logic of the original option and, therefore, do not disrupt the apparent well-being of the group (see Figure 8.1, Question 5). Even then, if group members question the modifications, the revision is likely to be dropped to preserve the original option (Question 6). Regardless of whether the original option or some modest variation of it is adopted, the quality of decision-making has been adversely affected by the group structure and process.

Research suggests that a strong leader may be the most decisive factor in determining whether evaluation and multiple options occur.¹⁴ If there is no leader, or the leader declines to play a facilitator role, then group norms become central. The existence of norms permitting openness and group debate is important. Are there accepted norms that make it appropriate for members to challenge each other's ideas or suggest alternatives without the behavior being construed as attacking other members or the well-

When most group members have a primary loyalty to the group, then by definition they place a high value on its continuation and well-being, and they want to preserve their own good standing in the group. This commitment creates a predisposition to guard against activity that may threaten the group, such as divisive disputes among members, or may reduce their acceptance by the group, such as by expressing views that appear to be at odds with those of others in the group.

The control variable that differentiates the concurrence model from the other two is the focus of the primary loyalties of group members. This is reflected in Figure 8.1, which reveals in response to the first question that if most members' primary loyalty is to the current decision unit, then we enter the concurrence mode; if not, we shift to one of the others.

Questions 2, 3, and 4 in Figure 8.1 determine whether there is a strong, dominant leader and, if so, what role that person plays with respect to the consideration of options. When a strong leader presides, that person's role powerfully influences whether the tendency toward premature choice—to which the loyal/cohesive group is quite susceptible—prevails or is averted. If a leader uses the influence of his position to encourage critical assessment of a course of action and invites comparison with possible alternatives, then premature closure on the first option is less likely. By contrast, should the leader quickly advocate a personal preference, the likelihood of serious evaluation by the group greatly declines.

The argument for this effect of a leader on the group process is straightforward. The leader's behavior (advocating a preference or encouraging others to advance and evaluate alternatives) provides others with cues about what is expected of them. They are disposed to follow that signal either out of respect and admiration for the leader, recognition of the leader's power to reward and punish, or acknowledgement that the leader is responsible for determining and maintaining group procedures. Members who have a primary loyalty to the group are particularly concerned with its well-being and can regard disagreement with the group leader as potentially disruptive, unless it has been made very clear that challenges are welcomed. Sensitive group members who disagree strongly might cautiously question the leader's position and search for a reaction. A less sensitive group member who raises objections may be checked by other group members or the leader himself. One additional reason for the leader's impact is his usual ability to control the agenda and other group procedures and thereby discipline dissent and provide further signals as to appropriate behavior.

The top advisors to President George Bush during the prelude to the Persian Gulf War likely did not constitute a small policy-making group in the sense used here because President Bush was by law and by personal practice a predominant leader, who made the choices himself. (This con-

being of the group? In his revised edition, Janis is explicit about the key role of such group norms, noting a condition for groupthink is "the lack of norms requiring methodical procedures for dealing with the decision-making task." Except for new groups assembling for the first time, all groups have norms about their *modi operandi*, the appropriate behavior of members, and procedures for processing information. Ridgeway suggests that cohesive groups, such as exist in the concurrence model, are especially likely to have a detailed subculture with well-established norms.¹⁵ Thus in Figure 8.1 if there is no leader or if that person refrains from personal advocacy of a preferred option, then the norms of the policy-making body will have a powerful effect on whether critical debate takes place on options (Question 7).

As shown in Figure 8.1, the concurrence model suggests that if the leader urges the group to engage in critical evaluation or there are strong group norms to the same effect, then multiple options are more likely to emerge and be comparatively evaluated (paths 4 to 8 and 7 to 8). We must be clear why we expect this to be so. As Cyert and March and others have suggested, in most human problem-solving bodies the consideration of alternative solutions is likely to be sequential.¹⁶ To deal with a problem, we tend to search until we find one idea that we believe would be better for coping with the problem than the status quo. Because of the various costs of searching and winning support for policies in collective bodies, we tend not to seek out additional options unless the original one is found to have faults and liabilities. With more minds at work and some with possibly less attachment to the original idea than the one who proposes it, a group should be more likely to pick up on possible weaknesses of an initial proposal—provided they are encouraged to engage in such activity. They are then more likely to advance a second or Nth option that seems to avoid the previously noted difficulties (but which, of course, may have other liabilities). Even with norms or the active encouragement of a leader, a group—particularly when faced with an extremely vexing problem (and especially if operating under severe threat and time pressure)—may not identify alternatives to the original proposal (path 8 to 9 in Figure 8.1) and thus may not escape the groupthink syndrome (the highlighted path on the right side of that figure).

Even if multiple options are tabled in a policy-making group, there can be no assurance that the most appropriate solution will be chosen. Given the uncertainty, complexity, and value conflicts that often surround policy issues, it may be exceedingly difficult to determine which option is desirable or least undesirable. (The danger of the group not being able to reach closure in such cases cannot be ignored.) However, within a cohesive group where members are most likely to listen to each other's comments because of their attraction to and respect for the group, the chances for

quality decision-making are improved when multiple options are considered. A key question then is whether, when faced with multiple options, most members will come to see one as preferable (Question 10). Whether members will reach such agreement based on the relative merits of the options—as opposed to some internal group dynamic (such as the status of other members who prefer one alternative)—cannot be determined without consideration of other group properties.¹⁷ The conditions for thoughtful evaluation have been created. Of course, if strong divisions remain as to which is the preferable option, then members who value a group's well-being are likely to seek a compromise that everyone can nominally support (Question 11). Failing that, deliberation is likely to be suspended while search for additional information is undertaken.

Unanimity Model

The unanimity model derives its name from the requirement that all members must agree for action to be taken in the name of the group. Unlike the concurrence model, its members have no "built in" disposition for agreement based on the mutual attraction of shared primary loyalty to each other. In fact, when the primary loyalty of members resides outside the decision group, circumstances may arise that result in extensive conflict. Because the group lacks the internalized commitment to minimize or avoid disagreements, such groups find it necessary to adopt an explicit rule or procedure for resolving conflicts when they arise. In this model the adopted decision rule is unanimity, that is, everyone in the group must agree on the selected course or, stated in the negative, every member has a veto and can block a proposed solution. The rule requires a group to overcome or resolve its disagreements, but it can produce long delays as the members struggle to settle their differences and achieve closure. If meaningful agreement remains elusive, the group produces either deadlock or vague generalizations that disguise unresolved divisions. In brief, the potential pathology in the unanimity model results from what is widely described as the decision processes of bureaucratic politics.¹⁸ As with the concurrence model, there are key variables that create contingencies which either reinforce the bureaucratic process and its dismal outcomes or avert it.

The unanimity model captures the sequence of interaction among variables that can produce the most extreme form of bureaucratic politics. Among the frequently mentioned factors that contribute to its occurrence, three seem essential: (1) multiple entities (i.e., outside organized constituencies) are represented by members of the group; (2) members of the group are roughly equal in power; (3) available options for coping with the

problem are perceived as having sharply different effects on the well-being of the represented entities.

This is a slight modification of the conditions specified by Huntington as triggering what he characterizes as a legislative process (i.e., bargaining, coalition building, compromise) as contrasted with an executive one (in which one person at the top of a hierarchy has the authority to make a clear choice).¹⁹ When a legislative process occurs in a decision-making group, it can be described as bureaucratic politics.

The absence of an executive leader with the power to select among competing options necessitates negotiations among members. When all members are approximately equal in power (in that all of them must consent for the group to reach a decision), then a basic condition for unanimity exists. This condition of power-sharing in the group may result from one of several different factors. In some formally constituted policy groups, the rules establishing the group may stipulate the requirement that every member may exercise a veto. (For example, in creating the intergovernmental governance arrangement for the Antarctic, some key nations make unanimity a requirement for their participation.)²⁰ Alternatively, unanimity may result from the necessary conditions for implementation. Each of the members may control part of the resources necessary for executing the group's decision. (This appears to have been the situation with regard to various Iranian groups involved with the decision on whether to release the American hostages.) If strong outside opposition to the group's decision can be expected, that can serve as a pressure for complete consensus within the group for action. Finally, if members anticipate interacting with one another over an extended period, unanimity may be established to maintain harmony and civility within the group. In contrast to unanimity, a majority rule used regularly by a group considering multiple issues can lead to circumstances in which an excluded (and offended) minority on one issue can subsequently become part of the majority on another matter and seeks to take revenge on anyone now in the minority that had previously been in the abusive majority.

For any of these reasons a group may follow a unanimity rule and thus fit this model. A unanimity rule may be impractical in large groups, but may become workable in groups with few members. An informal unanimity rule appears to have governed the collective leadership in the Communist Party Politburo in the Soviet Union during much of the Brezhnev period. In countries such as Japan and China, as well as the Soviet Union, cultural norms may reinforce the tendency of some policy groups to seek a consensus of all members if substantive disagreement has occurred.²¹

Figure 8.2 depicts a decision tree for unanimity showing the major contingencies producing different outcomes depending on the state of key variables. In addition to the question of primary loyalty to the group, the

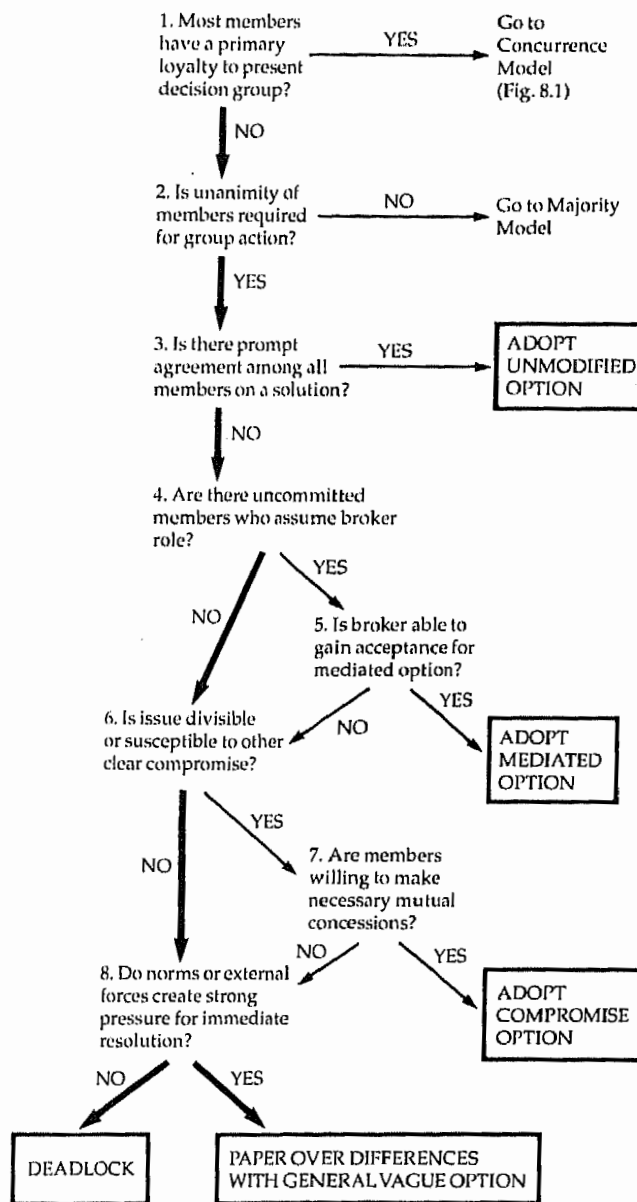


FIGURE 8.2 Decision tree for unanimity model
 NOTE: Bold path indicates most likely course if bureaucratic politics prevails.

ence if the issue is divisible or some other kind of prominent, middle-ground solution as Schelling describes for tacit bargaining.²² The active search for a generally agreeable compromise—even without a broker—becomes a prominent process because of a likely quality of the dynamics in groups where every member has a veto. When members are aware that any resolution of a problem requires the consent of all, they are attentive to the positions of each member and engage in vigorous efforts to find options that bridge differences.²³ In other words, the condition of unanimity encourages members to listen to one another and to seek solutions that everyone can accept, unless one or more members prefer deadlock to any position other than their own. Although such a compromise process need not ignore the substantive merit of each party's preferred position, it is likely that the emphasis will be on finding a mutually acceptable option rather than debating the relative merits of each proposal's apparent fit with perceived reality.

The first test of any compromise is whether it obtains the nominal support of all members. (At least no member can openly oppose it, which is not the same as active support.) In groups whose members feel strong outside loyalties, the acceptance of a compromise may depend on more than the personal judgment. Members must assess its impact on any outside entity to which they give primary allegiance. Should some group members be actual representatives of an outside organization, they may need to consult with associates in that constituent body before deciding.²⁴ Question 7 determines whether all members accept such a solution.

In the absence of some acceptable substantive compromise, a group requiring unanimity for action is going to face superficial compromise or deadlock. As noted in Question 8, a policy group may regard stalemate as unacceptable. They may face a crisis situation that they perceive is likely to deteriorate in a manner unfavorable to them if nothing is done. The group may also recognize that if they fail to act, their authority may be reduced; in fact, some other policy unit may assume responsibility in a fashion no member of the present group would wish. If such circumstances exist, the group is likely to seek some way to paper over differences—avoiding any major commitments that foreclose any of the advocated options—with a policy option cast in vague, general terms that permit members to interpret the option in their own way. Such a nonspecific agreement that resolves nothing or that is based on nominal concessions that avoid resolution of the main issue is one of the dangers described by analysts of bureaucratic politics. In the absence of pressure for some kind of accepted agreement, the group comes to the other horn of the bureaucratic politics dilemma and remains deadlocked.

The highlighted path in Figure 8.2 discloses the configuration of decision structures and processes that yields outcomes frequently associated

with bureaucratic politics. It is this path that Valenta suggests the Brezhnev politburo followed during the spring and summer of 1968 when faced with the Czech movement for greater autonomy under Dubcek.²⁵ Some members of the politburo appear to have advocated a negotiated settlement with Czechoslovakia, while others favored military suppression. Brezhnev, in this interpretation, appears not to have taken a position for some time and to have declined to assume the broker role. The opposing positions were not susceptible to a split-the-difference solution. For months the politburo remained deadlocked. When outside events (the forthcoming autumn meeting of the Czech Communist Party) forced them to act, they first chose to meet collectively with the Czech leadership and then with the other Warsaw Pact members—general actions that foreclosed no future choices. Only when Brezhnev shifted from the neutral to the hard-line position was invasion possible. Figure 8.2 suggests, however, that groups operating with a requirement for unanimity and having members with outside primary loyalties need not end in these bureaucratic politics type outcomes. Brokers or the availability of acceptable compromises are critical mediating variables. When the solution is a compromise, an essential issue is whether the agreement represents a better comprehension of reality than the initial views of contending members, or only a response to group dynamics.

Majority Model

When opinions differ sharply in a policy group where unanimity is not required for action, the dynamics of problem-solving can be quite distinctive. The basic task is forming a majority position and dealing with the excluded minority. The potential pathology in such a group process is that members will focus their attention exclusively on those members whose position seems closest to their own in order to construct an effective majority. In courting those with similar positions, members may ignore others whose views are more distant from their own; in fact, some of the familiar dysfunctional qualities of group conflict may be likely to occur between those in a majority and those excluded. (This tendency is most unlikely in a group requiring unanimous decisions because everyone realizes that the perspectives of all members must somehow be considered before any choice can be made.) A process not unlike that associated with groupthink may affect the subset of the group comprising the majority in which they reinforce one another's convictions and convince one another of the merits of their approach. If an emerging majority in a group disregards arguments decidedly different from its own, it foregoes the potential reality-testing that could enhance the quality of decision-making. Of course, this does not have to occur. As we shall see, key variables in this model are the

level of effort needed to assemble a working majority and the nature of the opposition or minority within the group.

As used in this analysis, "majority" designates the subset of the total group membership who are associated with the prevailing group position. What proportion of members is necessary for a majority varies from group to group and from issue to issue. An arithmetical majority established by the group's rules may be fifty percent plus one, two-thirds, three-fourths, etc. Sometimes the numerical proportion may be less critical in determining a majority than whether certain key members are included. We must also recognize that the actual numerical majority of a group may be indifferent to an issue or, in the face of great uncertainty, simply undecided. In such cases one or several individuals who have intense convictions may have their position prevail with the nominal support of a few others. Great uncertainty about an issue may also cause groups to seek an "oversize" majority, one that includes more members than the group rules require, to provide members with greater assurance.

Figure 8.3 is a diagram of the majority model. As with the previous models it begins with the same initial questions to establish which type of group decision-making is operating. The third question, also found in the unanimity model, determines whether the members of the group reach a quick consensus on their initial consideration of the problem. As has been noted, they are likely to accept uncritically a quickly identified common solution. We assume that the absence of a prompt consensus means there is a division in the group over the treatment of the problem. Differences among members can represent varying degrees of uncertainty and doubt as well as opposing strong convictions.

Question 4 in the model concerns the nature of the division within the group. Is there a clear majority favoring one treatment of the problem—in whatever way the group defines majority—or are there various positions advocated, none of which have sufficient support to comprise a majority? (A position can be an expression of uncertainty and a recommendation to continue to search to discover what is happening.) The presence or absence of a recognizable majority represents a fundamental choice point in the model. If a majority exists, then attention and energy within the group may be directed toward those in opposition—the minority. If no such majority exists, then all efforts will be devoted toward building a winning coalition.

The longer and more difficult the task of achieving a recognized majority (and the more concessions eventual members of the majority must make to form a coalition), the less energy and patience they will have after that point has been reached to consider any minority views. By contrast, if the majority favoring a course of action is formed rather easily without major concessions by its members, then they may be more disposed to ad-

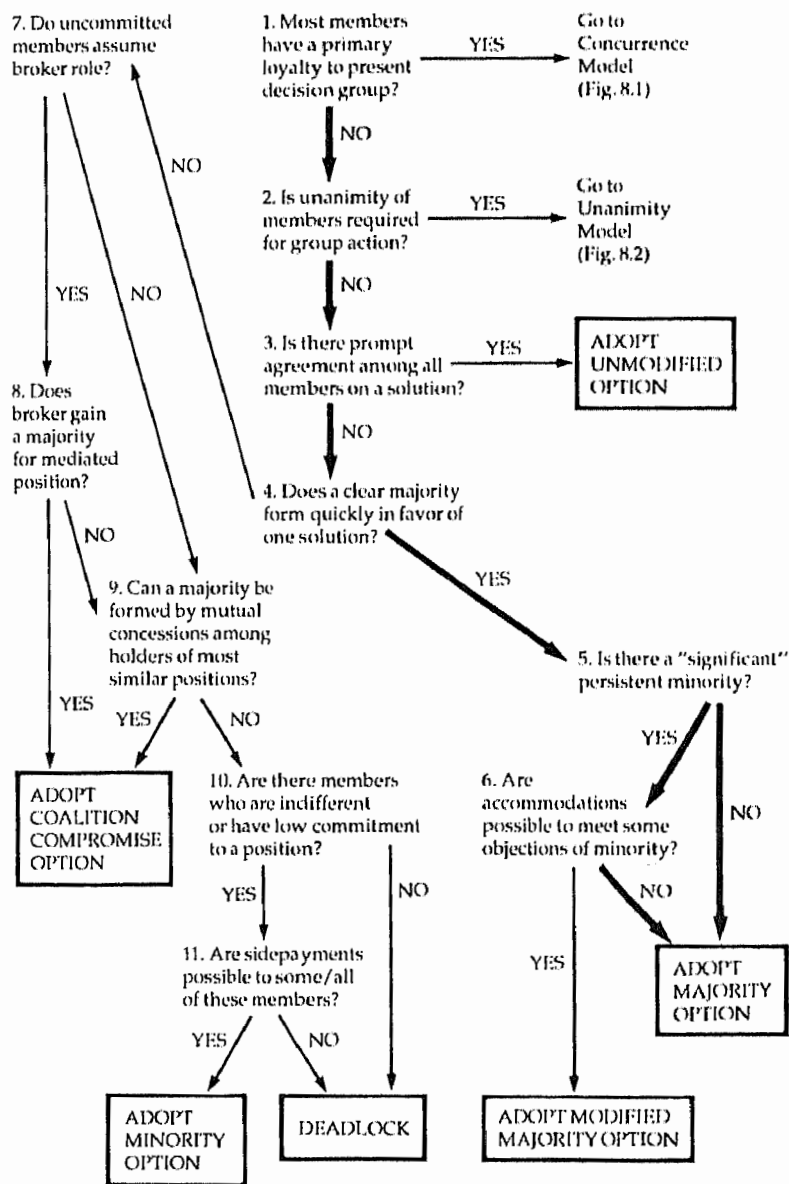


FIGURE 8.3 Decision tree for majority model
 NOTE: Bold path indicates most likely course if uncontested majority prevails.

dress those left out. Whether that predisposition is actualized depends on the nature of those holding minority views. If their position is well articulated; if they are consistent in making their point; if their number includes respected group members; if the antagonism between them and the majority has not become too emotional and personal, then the majority will be more likely to make some accommodation.²⁶ This is the query posed in Question 5, which arises if there is a clear majority promptly formed.

If those holding minority views lack the characteristics needed to engage effectively a majority that otherwise is disposed to enter a dialogue, then no accommodation occurs and the majority position prevails. Even if those in opposition have the qualities that cause a serious exchange with the majority, accommodation is uncertain. This is the focus of Question 6 in Figure 8.3. Among the variables that influence the likelihood of accommodation of minority views are whether the differences between the opposing viewpoints are divisible (dollar amount, troop levels, length of time, etc.); whether the differences require completely contrary action; whether majority members can anticipate being in a future minority in the group on an issue of importance to them; and the persuasiveness of each side's arguments. Because members of in-groups of this kind have a primary loyalty outside the group, accommodation may depend on the expectation that any involved outside constituencies will accept a bargain.

When these variables make it possible, some accommodation of minority views will yield a group outcome involving a modification of the original majority position. Even in such cases, the outcome will more closely approximate the view of the majority than the minority because the former has the power to force closure on the issue without any concessions. If no agreement can be reached with minority viewpoints, then the majority simply prevails. As displayed in Figure 8.3, no difference is noted between such an outcome and the one that occurs if there is no active dialogue between the group's majority and minority. This lack of distinction may hide the effect on the majority of such an exchange even if they do not currently alter their views. Group discussion requires the majority to look more closely at the arguments for their position. It may make them more susceptible to change in the future if their option does not succeed.

Let us go back to the fundamental question as to whether a majority position forms rather quickly in the group (Question 4). It is important to consider how a majority might be formed if one does not immediately emerge from the initial sharing of views among group members. One valuable aid if available is the presence of one or more individuals who are in a position to serve as a mediator or broker. As described in the unanimity model, the broker if uncommitted to any contending position can pose questions to opposing members that may reveal further information or structures of reasoning. The broker may also be able to table an original or modified op-

tion that gains a majority of support. If one or more members can play such a leadership role, it goes a considerable distance toward assuring that different points of view are explored. Question 7 in Figure 8.3 determines whether such a role is present and Question 8 asks whether such efforts result in the creation of a majority. Multiple factors influence the likelihood of a broker's success including the mediator's skill and standing with other members and the extent to which partisan group members all have strong, intense positions opposing one another.

If a broker is not present or if such efforts fail, it does not mean a majority cannot be formed. The members of the group can engage in acts of persuasion, exploratory compromises, and the creation of new options in attempts to form a majority that is close to their own preference. (This appears in Figure 8.3 as one moves to Question 9.) Any members without a strongly expressed preference will be a major focus of such efforts. In essence, group members with a preference seek to fashion a winning coalition (majority) around their position.

A considerable literature seeks to specify how winning coalitions are formed.²⁷ In problem-solving groups like the ones specified in this model, it may be reasonable to expect members to form coalitions that require them to make the least possible modification of their own position. Each member with a strong preference, therefore, will attempt to create a coalition with those who have no expressed views or whose views are closest to their own. They can also be expected to construct a coalition with members with whom they have worked satisfactorily on other issues and with members having high status. Question 9 asks whether the conditions for creating such a winning coalition exist. If the answer is yes—after some struggle and deliberation a majority coalition emerges—then their collective view prevails. As noted, if the process of forming such a coalition requires considerable time, energy, and concessions, then further negotiation with the excluded members is unlikely.

If no majority coalition arises, Question 10 turns our attention to the possible presence of members who, even after considerable deliberation, remain indifferent or hold positions with low intensity. When no such persons are present at this stage in the process, then stalemate occurs and the group outcome is deadlock. The presence of such relatively disengaged members, however, offers another way to form a majority that includes them. Those group members who have intensely held positions may be able to offer their indifferent colleagues side payments. These entail no modification of the current proposal, but instead involve agreements to provide the indifferent members with something else they want (support on another issue, rewards, or simply indebtedness for future obligations). If enough such side payments are possible to bring indifferent members into a winning coalition, then the group action will in effect be a minority

position in that only a minority actually prefer that outcome (see Question 11). In the absence of successful side payment arrangements, the group again falls into deadlock.

Features of the majority model are reflected in Israeli decision-making at the time of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. In the spring of 1967 the Israeli government became increasingly alarmed about the military preparations and belligerent actions of Egypt. During May, Egypt initiated a blockade of the Straits of Tiran and began sending troops across the Suez Canal into the Sinai. On May 23, the Israeli coalition cabinet (with ministers from five political parties) began a series of meetings to deal with the rapidly evolving problem. On that date the Ministerial Committee on Defense, led by Prime Minister Eshkol, debated whether to engage in immediate military action or delay in order to consult with the United States. The unanimous decision was to defer military action and engage in consultation.

From the perspective of the majority model, what happened several days later as the situation became even more ominous is more relevant. On May 25 Jordan and Syria mobilized forces, the military buildup in the Sinai accelerated, and the Israeli government intercepted Egyptian orders to air units to prepare for the initiation of an attack. The Israeli cabinet began meeting on May 27 and continued deliberations through the night. In the early morning of the next day, the cabinet was deadlocked. Ministers were evenly divided between advocacy of an immediate attack and delay in support of an international effort to break the blockade. With respect to the majority model (unanimity was not required for action), there certainly was no quick majority (Question 4 in Figure 8.3). Nor was it possible during the long night of debate to form a winning coalition. All ministers appeared to feel strongly about this most critical issue of national security (Questions 7, 9, and 10). As anticipated by the model, the Israeli cabinet deadlocked.

On the morning of May 28, 1967, with his cabinet stalemated, Prime Minister Eshkol proposed a recess until 4:00 p.m. In the interim, Eshkol received a letter from President Johnson cautioning against unilateral action by Israel and indicating his encouragement about the international effort to break the blockade. Apparently based on this, Eshkol changed his position from attack to delay. The prime minister was able to bring with him four of the other five members of his Labor Party that had voted earlier for attack, thus creating a majority for delay. As anticipated in the model, the new majority appears not to have spent much time in the afternoon meeting pressing the several who did not concur. (In terms of Figure 8.3, the answer to Question 4 has now shifted from no to yes; and Questions 5 and 6 lead us to the result of "Adopt Majority Option.") As Stein notes: "Although the cabinet reached a decision, the contradictions and ambiguities

among the different definitions of the problem were not resolved."²⁶ In fact, a reconstituted cabinet reversed that decision in a few days.

Conclusion

Following George's example of applying social science scholarship to the problem of quality decision-making, we have sought to identify variables that could be present in any policy group that influences the decision.²⁷ George described a particular problem that can arise in collective policy-making and proposed an intervention strategy—an independent advocate. There are no prescriptive interventions offered in the present essay, but the purpose is to suggest variables that could be manipulated in an effort to improve decision-making.

Our basic argument has been that group structures do not automatically create pathologies in decision quality. Whether this happens depends on the status of certain key variables, which vary depending on the type of decision group. It is the state of key variables (e.g., the role assumed by the leader, the presence of a broker, the nature of any minority) that shape the group output. The contingency analysis, reflected in the decision trees of Figures 8.1-3 and their associated theoretical underpinnings, establishes different paths that produce varying results.

Although we have suggested how different group structures and processes lead to various outputs, we have not yet fully indicated how those options might differ with respect to decision quality. In Table 8.1 all the options from the three models are grouped into four categories. These categories reflect the aspects of quality decision-making (the seven criteria described at the outset) that have been the concern of this essay. Thus an option classified as falling in category 1 of Table 8.1 (uncritical acceptance without evaluation) probably violates the decision criterion of defining the problem in accordance with all available information and it certainly falls short on assessment of the options. Similarly, an option group in category 4 fails the timely closure and implementation criteria.

The options in the top category of Table 8.1 all involve the uncritical acceptance of an option shortly after it is introduced in the group. There is always a chance that such an option will be the best available course of action (perhaps the only viable one). Acute time pressures, for example, may make this rapid consensus desirable.

As argued in this essay, however, such processes forego the potential positive capabilities that can be obtained in collective decision-making where members with differences in experience, values, cognitive styles, and often expertise might be brought to bear. The quick consensus in a group may suggest the operation of a widely noted process of polarization, in which the preferred group option is more extreme than most mem-

TABLE 8.1 Quality of Decision Implications for Options

<i>Group Action</i>	<i>Options from Models^a</i>	<i>Potential Difficulties for Decision Quality^b</i>
1. Uncritical complete acceptance of option without evaluation	Original or unmodified option (C, M, U)	Ignore available information; faulty problem identification; unidentified options and consequences; incomplete assessment; less vigorous monitoring
2. Deliberated option accepted with reservations by some	Preferred, debated option (C) Majority option (M) Minority option (M) Modified option (C)	All of the above to lesser degree, except monitoring should be vigorous
3. Substantially modified or new option broadly accepted	Compromise option (C, U) Compromise coalition option (M) Modified majority option (M) Mediated option (U)	Distortion in assessments of options, capabilities, and environment (to build acceptable compromise); less vigorous monitoring
4. No option accepted	Stop and search (C) Deadlock (M, U) General, vague option (U)	No timely closure; implementation impossible; unfocused monitoring

^aC = consensus model; M = majority model; U = unanimity model.

^bDrawn from criteria for quality decisions in essay's introduction.

bers would have selected individually.³⁰ We assume, therefore, that whether outputs in this first cluster result from groupthink or simple coincidence of preferences, they are typically not good for quality decision-making. Alternative means of dealing with the problem are not considered and evaluation of the selected option is foregone.

The second cluster of options in Table 8.1 all specify outcomes that were chosen after some group debate. From the perspective of engaging a group's evaluative potential, these reflect a gain in decision-making quality, other things being equal. Most of these options assume some continuing division in the group even after a decision is reached. If personal animosity has been minimized, the split decision may have some special strengths. Those whose position prevailed have a strong motivation to see that it is implemented. Those who continue to have some reservations are more likely to monitor the effects of the action and alert the group in the future if significant discrepancies arise between the expected and observed effects of the policy decision. Thus, there is a built-in subgroup likely to report negative feedback.

In the third category of outputs, the selected option is the result of serious mutual concessions among contending parties in the group. (This includes the possibility of opposing advocates both yielding their initial position for an invented new option.) In all likelihood these options are more cautious than those in the second category.

With respect to quality group decision-making, the issue is whether the compromise option is a better fit with reality than the initial position of any of the contending members. The compromise or the invented option may respond to the situation better than any of the group's original proposals. Unfortunately, a compromise may say more about the power and internal dynamics of the group than about an enhanced awareness of the confronted problem. Moreover, as students of bureaucratic politics observe, a compromise option may not be sufficiently attractive to any set of group members for them to be highly motivated to oversee its careful implementation. Distinguishing between these two kinds of compromises likely requires an examination of the content of the group's exchanges.³¹

Finally, the fourth category in Table 8.1—deadlock, search, or papered-over differences—represents failure to achieve substantive closure. Thus, one of our criteria for quality decision-making is violated. Of course, if time permits and the search is actively pursued, then it may be an appropriate response to ambiguity and stalemate. But if the group remains indefinitely deadlocked or resorts to generalities that do not resolve differences, then the decision-making quality suffers.

In general, those paths in the decision trees that lead to the outputs in categories 1 and 4 of Table 8.1 fail to meet one of the criteria for quality decision processes. Because it is difficult without further information to dis-

tinguish the reality orientation of compromises found in the options listed in category 3, we might expect on balance the quality criteria more consistently met by options noted in category 2, other things being equal.

We have characterized the group outputs from the decision models in terms of their impact on decision quality. They can also be interpreted in terms of certain characteristics of behaviors associated with the different options. Those options in category 1 of Table 8.1 might reasonably be expected to lead to unqualified, more dogmatic behaviors that are more accepting of risk. In the category 1 options the prevailing position is unchallenged in the group and in fact its merits are confirmed by any group decision. By the same logic, we might expect strong expressions of affect (whether hostile or friendly) to be conveyed in the policy actions. Among the options in category 2—and even more so in category 3—debate and consideration of differing points of view may often result in some greater degree of caution or qualification. This should be manifested in the level of commitment and in the expression of support or disapproval of others. Clearly, the options in category 4 may result in some moderate expressions of affect, but no commitment.

As must inevitably be the case in the consideration of models, some things are excluded. Here we have highlighted only how groups handle potential or actual disagreement (including the denial of disagreement). Some potentially influential factors affecting other aspects of the quality of decision-making have been neglected. Not the least of these is the way groups process information. As the expectations of the prevailing group members are either confirmed or not by their policies, group dynamics can powerfully influence whether major discrepancies are recognized.

We have sought to show how and why the status of certain key variables can shift group decision-making from one result to another. These results or options have been hypothesized to have substantially different consequences for the quality of group decisions.

Notes

1. S. E. Asch, "Effects of Group Pressure Upon the Modification and Distortion of Judgments," *Groups, Leadership and Men*, H. Guetzkow, ed. (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Press, 1951), 177-190; M. Wallach, N. Kogan, and D. Bem, "Group Influences on Individual Risk Taking," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 65 (1962), 75-86; H. Lamm and D. G. Meyers, "Group Induced Polarization of Attitudes and Behavior," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, L. Berkowitz, ed., Vol. XI (New York: Academic Press, 1978); G. T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971).

2. See Margaret G. Hermann, "Leaders and Foreign Policy Decision-making," in this volume.

sonality and Social Psychology, 37 (1979), 1314-1324; C. R. Leana, "A Partial Test of Janis' Groupthink Model," *Journal of Management* 11 (1985), 5-17.

11. Janis, *Groupthink*, 2nd edition, 176.
12. B. Woodward, *The Commanders* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 318-19.
13. C. L. Cooper, *The Lost Crusade* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1970); L. Berman, *Planning a Tragedy* (New York: Norton, 1982).
14. Flowers, "A Laboratory Test of Some Implications of Janis's Groupthink Hypothesis;" Ripley, "Rethinking Groupthink."
15. Janis, *Groupthink*, 2nd edition, 177; C. L. Ridgeway, *The Dynamics of Small Groups* (New York: St. Martin's, 1983), 106-107.
16. R.M. Cyert and J. G. March, *A Behavioral Theory of the Firm* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963).
17. M.F. Kaplan and C. E. Miller, "Group Decision Making and Normative Versus Informational Influence: The Effects of Type of Issue and Assigned Decision Rule," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 53 (1987), 306-313, report that groups making decisions about judgmental (deciding the moral, valued, or appropriate position) rather than intellectual (attempting to discover the true or correct answer) issues are more likely to advance arguments about positions of group members and the attainment of consensus, whereas in the intellectual issues their arguments are more likely to focus on evidence. Moreover, an emphasis on appeals to social norms occurs most often when groups use unanimity rather than majority rule. Thus it would appear that the danger of appealing to group norms in selecting among options remains a threat to quality decision-making given the judgmental nature of most high-level political decisions.
18. Although Allison, Halperin, and Kanter are most frequently associated with the development of the bureaucratic politics perspective, many have contributed to this explanation of political decision-making. Among the critiques of bureaucratic politics are arguments that it ignores the decisive role that can be played by an authoritative policy leader (e.g., the President of the United States), that it focuses more on the implementation of decisions rather than the actual choice, that it is applicable to only a few countries other than the United States, and that it is difficult to investigate empirically. Although the bureaucratic politics literature does embrace phenomena at various stages of the decision process, we have concentrated on characteristics that can be associated with the act of choice by a group. As applied here, the central hypothesis is that either deadlock or general, nonspecific agreements are likely in groups where members do not have a primary loyalty to the group; power is more or less equal among members; and all must concur in a choice (anyone can veto an option). Allison, *Essence of Decision*; M. H. Halperin and A. Kanter, eds., *Readings in American Foreign Policy* (Boston: Little Brown, 1973); Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*. For a critique of bureaucratic politics, see R. J. Art, "Bureaucratic Politics and American Foreign Policy," *Policy Sciences*, 4 (1973), 467-490.
19. Huntington, "Strategic Planning and the Political Process," 289.
20. M. J. Peterson, *Managing the Frozen South* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 84.

coalition literature, see K. Murnighan, "Models of Coalition Behavior: Game-Theoretic, Social Psychological, and Political Perspectives," *Psychological Bulletin* 85 (1978), 1130-1153.

28. J. G. Stein, "Real Time and Psychological Space," in J. Hagan, C. F. Hermann, and M. G. Hermann, *Leaders, Groups and Coalitions* (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

29. George, "The Case for Multiple Advocacy in Making Foreign Policy," 751-785.

30. Polarization is the term used to describe the shift of a group's preference further in the direction of the pole towards which members were already tending. It was initially recognized as a tendency of individuals to shift toward a riskier decision when working in groups as contrasted with their prior personal choice. As research continued on the phenomenon, the conclusion is that the shift can be in any direction of shared group preference—not necessarily toward a riskier option. This pattern is also known as group polarization or group induced polarization. Several competing theories have been advanced to account for this shift which McGrath, p. 82, concludes from extensive empirical research, "appears to be very general over tasks and measures."

31. Nevertheless, it may be possible to infer that when there are one or more disinterested group members to guide the compromise between the contending parties, the eventual agreement is more likely to be sensitive to perceived reality conditions. The disinterested or mediating group member may be more alert to the merits of the arguments, while the advocates are more concerned with maintaining as much of their position as possible. Based on this reasoning we might expect the mediated majority option to be somewhat better than the others in the third category of Table 8.1.

ful consideration of its effects on foreign policy choices.³ Because group decision-making is commonplace in foreign policy processes of most governments, the means of avoiding or correcting any major pathologies associated with that form of policy-making deserves thorough consideration and research.

In exploring the effects of making governmental policy in groups, it is appropriate to review the reasons groups are frequently used in difficult problem-solving such as foreign policy. Policy-makers can find psychological and political support in group decision-making. Particularly if the problem is complex and unfamiliar and information is uncertain, then policy-makers may seek the advice and reassurance of a group to reduce the personal stress of decision. Should the approval of others be essential for the ratification and implementation of the decisions, then those who must choose may also seek to involve the ratifiers and implementers in the decision. Thus group support increases the power to execute the chosen course. These motivations for group decision-making are instrumental; they ease the task but they do not directly contribute to the quality.

Under certain conditions groups can improve the quality of individual decision-making. To do so, groups must overcome deficiencies likely to arise in individual decision-making. Compared to a single person, a group should be able to provide additional information and interpretations, recognize and assess the effects of contextual factors more clearly, offer and evaluate more solutions, maintain task focus, and reduce the likelihood of errors in reasoning linking the problem to the anticipated effects of a possible coping strategy. The ideal group should expand the information base and act to reduce the bias and incomplete understanding of any single individual. It is more difficult to show the improvement in results of an effective group compared to an individual when there is no standard or outcome against which to contrast performance. Under conditions in which problems have a correct answer, however, research has shown that sound group performance can surpass that of most individual group members acting alone.⁴

Obviously, no human process can assure quality decision outputs—particularly when the problem, as usually happens in foreign and security policy, has no right answer. (Indeed our understanding of the preferred outcome in many cases may change with time or different perspective.) Nevertheless it is important to have some understanding of the kind of procedures that should enhance the quality of decision-making in assessing various performances and their possible cause. With that in mind, the following tasks can constitute partial criteria whose performance is essential to increase the likelihood of a high quality decision.

can be answered from informed observation, leads to an outcome—that is, some momentary response by the group to the policy problem under consideration. The sequence of questions can be depicted as a decision tree; each path through the tree that is delineated by a sequence of answers then represents a theoretical argument on how a given combination of variables produces a result for the group. Explicating the logic for each path is an important theoretical task for this essay.

Concurrence Model

The concurrence model suggests how certain procedures intended to avoid disagreements, if unchecked, result in a group commitment to a minimally evaluated option. Three key variables—group loyalty, leader role, and group norms—appear pivotal in determining whether this output can be averted. The highlighted paths in Figure 8.1 trace two sequences that, if followed, are likely to produce a groupthink-type result.¹⁰ Of course, the other paths in Figure 8.1 linked to other outputs (each one shown in a box) avoid the consequences of groupthink. The task is to show what causes a group to go in one particular direction.

The group output we associate with groupthink is premature closure on a course of action. (In Figure 8.1, the output box is labeled “Adopt Original Unevaluated Option.”) A group experiences premature closure when it accepts the first suggested option for coping with a problem without a serious evaluation of its potential limitations or a careful comparison with any other advanced options. In advancing the framework for groupthink, Janis considers various antecedent conditions that contribute to the process of prompt concurrence-seeking and premature closure. Among them are situational properties (e.g., high stress; group isolation) and structural features (e.g., a common social and ideological background for members), but he contends that one necessary condition is substantial group cohesion. “Only when a group of policymakers is moderately or highly cohesive can we expect the groupthink syndrome to emerge. . . .”¹¹

A related concept that enables us to differentiate among the three models is group loyalty. Loyalty is the individual’s sense of attachment or allegiance to the collective entity. A primary loyalty involves a resolve to support the group and its objectives even when this entails some specific sacrifice of other commitments. When all members of a group have a primary loyalty to the unit there is mutual attraction or high cohesion—a variable widely used in theory and research on group dynamics. Although there is a conceptual linkage between cohesion and loyalty, we employ the concept of primary loyalty to give us the ability to differentiate whether in a given situation a person’s basic commitment is to the present group or something else. This is a critical key to understanding group processes.

pivotal variables concern the presence of a broker and the divisibility of the issue under consideration. The first two questions at the top of the figure present variables that distinguish this model from the concurrence and majority models. The necessary conditions for the unanimity model are that the primary loyalty of group members reside outside the group (Question 1) and that accepted rules or norms require all group members to consent to a proposal before it can be adopted (Question 2). The third question determines whether all group members share a common preference for the treatment of an issue when the matter is first considered. If the answer is yes, reflecting an apparent coincidence of interest among members, then that position is quickly accepted. Experienced group members, aware that the group needs unanimity and that it can be severely tested and perhaps disabled by deep divisions, will count their good fortune in this occasion of shared views and accept the option uncritically. Ironically, the result, although probably not frequent, is identical to that in group-think (see the concurrence model).

If there is no prompt agreement, members must differ on the preferred course. Not all members may have a personal or organizational stake in the outcome of the issue; that is, they may not be advocates. Such individuals may elect to serve as mediators or brokers and exercise power by forging an acceptable solution. In Figure 8.2, Question 4 asks about the presence of brokers. A particular dynamic results from the presence of individuals playing such a role in a group that must find a solution acceptable to all. Other members are more likely to respond favorably to an apparently neutral colleague who advances a solution to a disagreement than they are to a proposal from someone previously seen as an advocate of an opposing position. Moreover, the broker is more likely to be able to question others closely about the relative merits of their options and ask for evidence of their interpretation of reality. Brokers/mediators may be able to persuade the advocates of a seemingly less appropriate option to yield. The presence of a broker increases—but does not insure—that the logic and consequences of considered options will be debated by the group.

Question 5 in Figure 8.2 probes whether the broker's solution is acceptable. The power and status of the individual serving as broker as well as the perception of whether he or she is truly impartial will be important in determining acceptance. Whether the mediated solution meets the perceived needs of any outside body to which various members feel strong allegiance also will affect the likelihood of adopting the broker's solutions.

If the broker's efforts fail, or if there is no uncommitted group member, or if such persons decline to play the broker role, then we face the situation that triggers Question 6. Even without a broker, there may be a basis for compromise between the differing positions, such as splitting the differ-

3. Together with several others, the author continues research comparing the effects of predominant leaders, single groups, and multiple autonomous actors (coalitions) in foreign policy-making. See M. G. Hermann, C. F. Hermann, and J. D. Hagan, "How Decision Units Shape Foreign Policy Behavior," in C. F. Hermann, C. W. Kegley, Jr., and J. N. Rosenau, eds., *New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 309-338; M. G. Hermann and C. F. Hermann, "Who Makes Foreign Policy Decisions and How," *International Studies Quarterly*, 33 (1989), 361-388; J. D. Hagan, C. F. Hermann, and M. G. Hermann, eds., *Leaders, Groups and Coalitions: Decision Units that Shape Foreign Policy* (forthcoming). To distinguish groups from the other units for authoritative policy-making, a group is here defined as an entity of two or more people all of whose members interact directly with all other members and who collectively reach a decision.

4. For a review of research on group versus individual performance, see J. E. McGrath, *Groups: Interaction and Performance* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1984), especially Chapter 6.

5. It should be noted that this division neglects the vital tasks of implementation and the monitoring of any resulting decision. These are critical additional arenas, but are often assigned to a different unit than the one engaged in the policy choice, hence, they are not considered here.

6. Y. Y. Vertzberger, *The World in Their Minds* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

7. I. L. Janis, *Groupthink*, 2nd edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982); I. L. Janis, *Victims of Groupthink* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972).

8. S. P. Huntington, "Strategic Planning and the Political Process," *Foreign Affairs* 28 (1960), 285-299; Allison, *Essence of Decision*; M. H. Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1974).

9. A. L. George, "The Case for Multiple Advocacy in Making Foreign Policy," *American Political Science Review* 66 (1972), 751-785; A. L. George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980). See also the chapter in this volume by Robert Keohane.

10. The work of Janis on groupthink has triggered considerable research and extensive critiques. It has been argued, for example, that the exact nature of groupthink and its causes have not been adequately specified. In this essay we have interpreted groupthink in a definable if narrow manner as the condition of premature closure by a group on a means of coping with a problem (an option) that results from high group cohesion reinforced by leader behavior and/or approving group norms. Premature closure is the selection of an option by a group without serious evaluation of that option or comparison to other possible options. For critiques of Janis groupthink, see J. Longley and D. G. Pruitt, "Groupthink: A Critique of Janis' Theory," *Review of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1 (1980), 74-93; B. D. Ripley, "Rethinking Groupthink," (Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Political Science, The Ohio State University, 1989); P. Hart, *Groupthink in Government* (Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger, 1990). For examples of empirical research, see M. L. Flowers, "A Laboratory Test of Some Implications of Janis's Groupthink Hypothesis," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 35 (1979), 888-896; P. E. Tetlock, "Identifying Victims of Groupthink from Public Statements of Decision Makers," *Journal of Per-*

21. H. Gelman, *The Brezhnev Politburo and the Decline of Detente* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984); F. Gaenslen, "On the Consequences of Consensual Decision Making," unpublished paper (University of Vermont, 1989).

22. T. C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960).

23. R. Hastie, S. D. Penrod, and N. Pennington, *Inside the Jury* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983); C. E. Miller, "The Social Psychological Effects of Group Decision Rules," in P. B. Paulus, ed., *Psychology of Group Influence* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1989).

24. Although the typical bureaucratic politics argument assumes that members of the group are always representatives of a specific outside entity, we have not adhered rigorously to that requirement in these models. The initial question in each case is whether members have a primary loyalty to the present decision group. If they do not, their primary commitments are elsewhere, but not necessarily to an organized entity. They may be strong-willed individuals who insist on their own interpretation of reality or who have an overriding commitment to a principle or policy. Insofar as the dynamics within the decision group are concerned, however, they are hypothesized to be similar regardless of where the primary loyalties lie—so long as they are not with the group.

25. J. Valenta, *Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia, 1968* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).

26. J. M. Levine and R. B. Ruback, "Reaction to Opinion Deviance," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 14 (1980), 73–81; S. Moscovici, "Innovation and Minority Influence," in S. Moscovici, G. Mugny, and E. Van Avemaet, eds., *Perspectives in Minority Influence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

27. Sociology, social psychology, and political science all have contributed to a substantial theoretical and empirical literature on coalition formation and the division of rewards among winning coalitions—the subset of members who are included in the prevailing position. A focus on policy-making groups appears closer to the social psychological tradition in its concern with coalitions among individuals rather than organizations or social movements. We also are more concerned with transitory coalitions that form to resolve an immediate issue rather than a more enduring parliamentary coalition expected to rule for a period of time during which the coalition government would deal with a broad range of issues. Unfortunately, the application of the social psychological research to the present task is limited by several factors. First, most of that scholarship ignores ideological differences among potential coalition partners. As J. E. McGrath, *Groups: Interaction and Performance* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1984) notes, when ideological differences are included in the study, "there seems to be a decided tendency toward coalitions of minimal ideological distance." Second, loyalty and tradition can be important values among political leaders. Individual policy-makers who have worked together effectively in the past may be predisposed to form a coalition again, even if it is not the minimum size coalition or the one maximizing personal gain. Third, even with group norms establishing the terms for a winning majority, members may seek larger than minimum size coalitions for political reasons or as a result of uncertainty. If these factors prompt oversize coalitions, they may also contribute to the difficulty of establishing an acceptable one. For a broad view of the