POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Studies in National, Comparative and International Politics

Edited by

DUSAN SIDJANSKI

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Introduction: Decision-Making Approaches

DUSAN SIDJANSKI

This volume contains the reports presented to a group of specialists at the VIIIth World Congress of the International Political Science Association (Munich, September 1970). The problem of decision-making – the phenomenon of choice, of determination – has always been a subject of philosophical enquiry. Its study has now become a feature common to various social sciences, and an approach which students of experimental psychology or group dynamics, as well as economics, econometry or management science, all make use of to some extent. [1] The angle may vary, the approach may be macro- or micro-political, but always the basic questions arise: Who are the men who make the decisions? How were they chosen, and by whom? They fulfill to be sure, the roles assigned to them by institutions, but how do their personal make-ups, preferences, or background relate to the choices they make? These questions illustrate points of interest common to different disciplines. They show how the decision-making approach can serve as a rallying point for many branches of learning, affording wide scope for multidisciplinary collaboration.

This relatively new approach is increasingly popular in political science. It regards the political apparatus as a machine for generating projects, for making choices at the level of society as a

whole, and for carrying them out. The dramatic impact of the decisional method is not, however, confined to this aspect but embraces also the factors that influence the implementation of a decision. Decisions compel individuals and groups to take positions and to act. Decisions, and especially important ones, bring to light the various forces which gave them birth. As in the turning points or crises of a man's life, when he is challenged to show his mettle by his deeds, a decision of importance forces groups and leaders to show where they stand – in other words, to choose. At such times the gap between proclaimed objectives and actual behaviour shows up vividly. An acute crisis or a decisive turn of events exposes the nature of man or of social forces; general – and hence generous – programmes may then reveal their motivations and underlying designs. The actors often drop their masks. While these occasions are not very frequent, the fact remains that a decision is a focal point around which the actions and reactions of the social actors are plotted. Whereas other approaches rely on a sector-by-sector method of analysis, here institutions, groups, leaders – in short, all the relevant factors – are involved together in the decision-making process. Their acts or pressures are no longer presented as one-way processes emanating from a group or factor and directed towards the apparatus, but become integral parts of a complex game where everyone in turn acts and is influenced.

"Decision-making is a process", as defined by Richard C. Snyder, "which results in the selection from a socially defined, limited number of problematical, alternative projects of one project intended to bring about the particular future state of affairs envisaged by the decision-makers." [2] In Snyder's analytical model – whose complexity sometimes makes it inapplicable – enquiry is focused on both the decision-making unit or nucleus and the persons responsible. For example, in the case of the invasion of Korea, which he analyzes, the major decisions throughout the week were made by an ad hoc decisional unit. Thus, the U.S. National Security Council does not loom large in the process regardless of the fact that it might be considered a natural agency. Nor was a permanent group in the State Department involved. Relationships among decision-makers during the week were mostly informal, and communication was predominantly oral and face-to-face. This suggests that a multidimensional crisis decision which

requires top-level authority necessitates the formation of a key group which can escape organizational formality and normal procedures. The pressure of the situation results in the *invention* of a special decisional unit. As shown above, the decision-makers acted with remarkable speed.

This relatively informal, high-level organizational process minimized the problem of coordination among roles and agencies. No involved processes of clearance and compromise were necessary. President Truman's leadership, viewed as an independent organizational variable, determined the membership of decisional units (except the first one) and the allocation of power and responsibility within the decision-making group. [3]

In politics, the decision centre and the moment when the decision is made are not always the same as the place and time formally defined. For example many decisions appear as outputs of parliaments. In fact, it is well known that these often amount to a mere endorsement of decisions already made elsewhere – by groups, parties, or executives. Thus, it is not an easy task to locate the real decisional units. In practice, the operation of pressure groups in particular makes it easier to locate the real decision centres on which their influences and pressures are in effect concentrated. At a later stage, the decisions's implementation gives the actual measure of its effectiveness. In other words, analysis must be concerned both with the making of the decision and with its implementation, particularly as the latter may throw light on earlier stages of the process, insofar as the decision-makers behave in accordance with their expectations as to how the decision is likely to be implemented. For instance, in Switzerland, certain economic groups accepted the "anti-cartel" legislation in the hope that its moderate or "reasonable" application would temper the severity of the text. This relationship is, of course, no secret. Important as that side is, however, we shall confine our attention to one aspect, namely the first phase, i.e. participation in the decision-making process. However, the distinction that we propose between open and closed decisions concerns both their making and implementation.

In addition to the many advantages which this approach is generally credited with, we believe that it has the merit of bringing together other approaches used in political science: all political

institutions can be looked upon as top-level decision centres and all political parties and pressure groups as autonomous decision centres in a polyarchical society, while the leaders – as the persons who actually take the decisions – participate in or influence their formation. In short, these various elements – focal points of decision, pressures, influences, roles played, and positions taken – centre around the idea of the decision viewed in terms of its components. While reintroducing the dynamic and evolutionary factor, the decision-making process brings all of these elements into play in an attempt to capture dynamic reality.

So many advantages imply some risks. The few drawbacks mentioned here as examples will, it is hoped, temper the excess of uncritical enthusiasm and give a more balanced picture of the value and significance of the method. First of all, it need hardly be recalled that political life is not made up exclusively of decisions. It is, therefore, risky to concentrate wholly on decisions or on exceptional conflict situations at the expense of imperceptible but lasting changes. These being difficult to discern and, like minor or day-to-day decisions, wholly unspectacular, it is understandable that the study of a revolution should be found more tempting than that of an uneventful historic process. But it is certainly true that, as with pathological cases in medicine, the study of turbulent times is conducive to an understanding of normal or peaceful phases, even if it does not explain them entirely. But the problem here is more complex: Political decisions are often based on attitudes – diffuse and implicit factors – as much as on rules – explicit and unequivocal procedures. [4] In this context, "rules" and "procedures" may be replaced by "decisions" and "explicit acts", and what we are saying is that such decisions and explicit acts are by no means the sole reflection of political reality. C. Wright Mills actually considers the absence of decisions to be just as significant as their existence.

"The power elite is composed of men whose positions enable them to transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men and women; they are in positions to make decisions having major consequences. Whether they do or do not make such decisions is less important than the fact that they do occupy such pivotal positions: their failure to act, their failure to make decisions, is

itself an act that is often of greater consequence than the decisions they do make". [5]

Exclusive concentration on decisions overlooks a wide fringe of political reality. A crisis situation and the feverish atmosphere associated with it, mass demonstrations, the pressures of public opinion, the flavour or climate of a period, and imperceptible changes – all of these are essential political factors, even though they are not always reflected in decisions. As Jean Meynaud observes, decisional analysis can give a fragmented picture of political events. If carried to extremes, or simply isolated from other methods, the decisional approach can only result in dissecting and breaking down the political process, magnifying the active, the perceptible, and the striking at the expense of other relevant factors, and giving, in effect, a mere caricature of political reality. The political fabric is really made up of a succession of clean breaks – i.e. decisions – alternating, combining or coexisting with imperceptible trends, which together with the decisions, contribute in different degrees to shaping or colouring political life. A decision, therefore, can be studied only within the context of a political process where its true proportions can be clearly seen and where it can be analyzed in association with the less perceptible attitudes and developments which link it to reality. Such are, briefly stated, the merits as well as the shortcomings of a dramatic methodological approach whose guiding thread, woven around a nexus of actions, runs through the various sectors of political life. This vantage point affords a more complete picture than could be provided by any single or sectoral approach, situated as it is at the crossroads where wills, forces, factors, and influences intersect and on which the spotlight of analysis can be focused most vividly.

However, in spite of the positive and enriching contribution of the decisional approach, its progress so far has been largely restricted to the pragmatic level and has lacked theoretical support. While such authors as David Easton and Karl Deutsch have tried to develop a conceptual framework (the former through his "system analysis of politics" and the latter through the application of cybernetic concepts), both of them – however valuable their contribution has undoubtedly been – stress processes or channels of communication at the expense of an overall theory covering both procedure and substance.

There is a further problem, not yet wholly solved: there are as many ways of accounting for political decisions as there are authors. The time, therefore, may well have come to attempt a classification of decisions based on a full inventory and classified arrangement of all the categories suggested in the literature. The following is an example of a few *criteria for classifying decisions.*

1) *Necessity and opportuneness.* (*a*) according to degree of necessity, necessary versus optimal decisions – as regards the decision-making process. (*b*) according to degree of opportuneness, opportune versus inopportune decisions.

2) *The time factor.* (*a*) degree of urgency, urgent versus non-urgent decisions. (*b*) degree of speed, prompt versus slow decisions.

3) *Motivations and choice.* (*a*) type of motivation, economically, ideologically or power-motivated decisions. (*b*) degree of rationality, rational versus irrational decisions. (*c*) degree of intervention, intervention – system based on finality – versus retroaction – system based on causation. (*d*) extent of choice, closed (i.e. yes-or-no) decisions versus progressive decisions.

4) *Nature and content.* (*a*) degree of complexity, complex versus simple decisions. (*b*) decisional field, public sector versus private sector – autonomy of subsystems.

5) *Weight of decisions.* (*a*) degree of importance, important or vital decisions versus minor decisions. (*b*) impact of the decision, fundamental versus derivative decisions.

6) *Effects.* (*a*) degree of generality, general versus particular decisions. (*b*) degree of reversibility, reversible versus irreversible decisions. (*c*) degree of compulsion, compulsory (imperative) versus optional (indicative) decisions. (*d*) degree of fidelity, conformity versus nonconformity of the effect. (*e*) degree of implementation, implemented versus nonimplemented decisions. (*f*) degree of social change, decisions resulting in reform – revolutionary or reformist decisions – versus administrative ones.

7) *Decision-making process.* (*a*) degree of information, public versus secret decisions. (*b*) degree of participation, closed, mixed or open decisions.

This last criterion cuts across the previous six, which it also supplements by introducing the concept of extent and nature of

participation. Thus, for example, decisions whether necessary or optional, urgent or non-urgent, ideologically or economically motivated, can all be classified as closed or open. Taking into account the growing importance of the aspect of participation in decision-making, we shall give some more details on this last distinction.

By closed decisions we mean those which are made and implemented solely by or within public authorities or official circles, without any outside participation. In contrast, open decisions are the result of a process in which the authorities responsible consult elements representing the various social forces or informed elites.

Thus the decision-making process is said to be closed when the authorities, excluding all interested parties and persons not members of the official apparatus, take the decision themselves; instead of seeking advice or having consultations outside government circles, they withdraw among themselves to do their own thinking. As for the implementation of a decision, it is said to be closed when it is imposed by the authorities alone, without help from other forces, as in the case of forced implementation. This underscores the close relationship between the making and implementation of a decision: the more dependent its implementation on wide mass participation, and the more it tends to exceed the authorities' means of enforcement, the more the authorities try to associate the masses or their representatives with the preparation and making of the decision, so as to secure in advance the widest possible measure of active support. This, of course, does not mean – aside from exceptional cases – that closed decisions eliminate the pressure of groups entirely; on the contrary, they stimulate them insofar as their results may affect the interests of such groups, but, as a rule, a closed decision is one taken and implemented in a self-contained circuit. One of the most significant examples is the set of U.S. decisions related to its intervention in Vietnam. [6] On the other hand, decision-making and implementation are open whenever the authorities consult interested or representative groups, *independent* experts, certain sectors of the population – or indeed the whole population as in the referendum in France on Algeria – in the various stages of preparation and implementation. As a rule, when implementation requires the effective and willing support of groups or citizens – as in the case of the measures to cope with an overheated economy in Switzer-

land, or the *indicative* plan in France – the decision is the outcome of a more or less lengthy process of preparation, with extensive consultations, aimed at securing the loyal support of those mainly affected. This, however, is not uniformly true. A decision may be closed in its formative stages, like a conventional war declaration, but open at the stage of implementation, when the active participation of the population is needed under penalty of national collapse, as it is under conditions of *democratized* warfare. Nuclear warfare, on the other hand, being the affair of a small army of specialists, depends on closed decisions, both in its preparation and its practice. The majority of the people can only react passively to the consequences of an airtight decision in which they have had no part and whose implementation lies solely in the hands of the supreme national authority. Thus the effects of technical progress in modern societies are not all in the same direction: depending on the area in which it operates – e.g. economic policy or use of nuclear weapons – it can have opposite effects by accelerating the trend towards one or the other of these two types of decision-making.

The distinction between open and closed decisions is not the same as that between public and secret ones. In fact, open decisions in which external groups participate are often secret, and nearly always they are limited to a fairly small circle of people; they are secret in the sense that they are withheld from the public and the press. Hence, the term *Anonymous Empire* is used by Finer to define the decision-making apparatus: a mechanism at once complex, secretive and powerful through which cooperation – sometimes degenerating into symbiosis – takes place between governments and parliaments on the one hand, and pressure groups on the other (particularly professional associations). Jean Meynaud has drawn attention to the interpretation of these two factors in the government process in Switzerland, [7] which far from constituting an exceptional case typifies a widespread present-day trend in western democracies. This is not to say that all open decisions are the work of anonymous bodies: some are made by official institutions such as economic councils and state planning systems.

As for closed decisions, while they are almost invariably secret and impenetrable, there are exceptions. For example, in the case

of the accession of various countries to the partial nuclear-test-ban treaty, the first phase is closed and secret, while the second – without which the decision remains incomplete – is, even though confined to the closed institutional circuit of parliaments, nevertheless public.

This first approximation to a distinction between closed and open decisions can obviously be neither rigid nor categorical. The line separating the two is sinuous and often blurred; it may indeed be imperceptible. In practice concrete decisions may be located at any point along a continuous line separating the two extreme positions. Apart from a very few clear-cut cases, most decisions are part closed and part open, and the mix can vary depending on the stage reached in the process. Thus, a decision which is initially closed can become open at a later stage. Similarly, closed decision-making can be followed by open implementation, in which all parties concerned will be associated to a greater or lesser extent. Nevertheless we can consider that, by and large, no decision exhibiting any degree of *openness* should be considered as closed. This suggests that a single decision ought to be classified according to whether the closed or open element in a decision is the more important – *closed, open* and *mixed* decisions.

Applied to studies contained in this volume, this criterion may give rise to some of the following comments. By definition, two studies escape this kind of classification: the general approach of Charles Roig, and the analysis of education policy outcomes by Groth and Wade. The latter does not focus on the process, and therefore excludes the participation factor. The two studies on international organizations (by Alger and by Cox and Jacobson) are principally devoted to processes involving official actors and representatives. Alger's analysis is dedicated essentially to decision outputs of official bodies; Cox and Jacobson's report analyzes the participation or the influence of nonofficial actors, such as national and international pressure groups which may be associated with the decision-making. Even if Presthus' article does not go into the various forms of the process, it gives valuable information on the atmosphere in which interaction between pressure groups and Canadian M.P.s takes place. The study on Ghanaian elites distinguishes between governing and nongoverning elites, a distinction which could be compared to closed and open decision-making,

even if the cut does not correspond entirely. The case of national defense in Switzerland fits perfectly the category of closed decision-making which tends to associate some external actors.

The papers collected here illustrate the variety of research approaches covered by the blanket title *Analysis of Political Decisions*. Their common objective, of course, constitutes a unifying principle, but they vary widely in their vantage points and in the manner in which they tackle problems of political decision-making. Even so, the full range of possible approaches is not covered, since neither the mathematical dimension nor the content analysis technique are represented in this collective work; it does afford a fair sample of the wealth of viewpoints found in the literature. Nor, in the absence of an overall theory of decision-making, do these various approaches constitute a coherent whole; they remain separate efforts in spite of their common object.

The purpose of Charles Roig's study is to raise the basic conceptual issues. He begins by making a distinction between Snyder's conception, which he describes as *intra-systemic*, based on observation of decision-makers operating within a system and reflecting or summing up the influence of various factors, and the analysis suggested by Easton, whose decision-making system reproduces at the level of the overall political process the idea of a black box into which inputs are fed and out of which come outputs constituting decisions, all within the framework of an environment. In reality, as it turns out, these two approaches supplement each other and constitute in effect, as Roig points out, a system of interaction. It is also worth pointing out that these interactions weave and unfold around the decision, which is the common, central point of interest.

This paper's chief contribution lies in the reasoned distinction it makes between the historic and the systematic method. In the former case, the stress is on *chronological* sequence – the process as it can actually be observed. A more or less systematic analysis of the system is nevertheless possible through the use of certain techniques, e.g. content, actors, phases of the process, and outcome. The *systematic* method, on the other hand, relies on logical sequence, the three stages of decision-making being (1) knowledge (information retained, scientific and nonscientific knowledge), (2) the formalities (methods and objectives of forecasting, followed by norms), and (3) implementation (real objectives and means and real behaviour patterns). The final phase is that of control (validity, ideological, and routine) which completes the loop. Each of these two models must be clearly understood if confusion is to be avoided and the two combined.

This general theoretical study of decision-making is followed by three national case studies – an empirical one by Robert Presthus on "Interest Groups and the Canadian Parliament", a study by Sanjeeva Nayak entitled "An Analytical Model of Hegemonical Tension among Ghanaian Elites" (1957–1966), and one by Paolo Urio on "Decision-Making in National Defence in Switzerland".

The originality of Presthus' research project lies in his having carried out some 2,200 interviews with random sampling in Canada and the United States with pressure group executives, legislators, and higher civil servants. The interviews of the sample of 140 M.P.s in Ottawa permitted testing various hypotheses related to interaction theory, legitimacy, and influence of pressure groups (labour, professional, educational, social-recreational, etc). The first finding concerns personal contacts, which are extensive among all parties: 70 percent of the M.P.s see pressure group representatives frequently (twice a week) or occasionally (twice a month). Concerning the functions of pressure groups, two appear as privileged: mobilizing public opinion and providing information. While the latter is, of course, usual, the former is somewhat surprising. What is meant, in fact, is not so much resorting to public opinion as a means of pressure, as giving expression to it – albeit in a fragmentary way – and channelling it.

Another significant finding disclosed by the study is that a large majority of M.P.s do not regard the activities of lobbyists as a form of improper pressure, but only half of them consider lobbying as healthy for democracy. The data generally fail to support the hypothesis that interaction and legitimacy are positively associated, but do confirm the association between legitimacy and perceived influence. This last finding may well reflect the M.P.s' desire to justify or legitimate the influence exerted on them by pressure groups. Overall, Presthus' research findings confirm the importance of pressure groups in the Canadian political process.

Nayak's approach is focused on political power and elites in Ghana. The elites are perceived as divided into governing and

nongoverning elites, who aspire and attempt to replace the ruling elite. His study is thus concerned not with the decision-making process but with the men who make the decisions and wield political power. The model comprises concentric circles of different elites which operate in groups, and its centre of gravity is Nkrumah and his people's party. The principle that governs Nayak's classification is the proximity of each elite group to the commanding heights of the polity. The United Party, immediate competitor and presumed successor, occupies the second circle. The auxiliaries of the governing elite (Trade Union Congress, student organization, farmer's council, Ghanaian women and young pioneers) are placed in the third circle. Their objective is to crush the common enemy, the United Party. This party includes among its supporters, traditional rulers, entrepreneurs, voluntary associations, and religious groups. They are placed in the outer circle. After describing the context and ideological tendencies, Nayak analyzes the pattern of hegemonical tension among the various components of the model and the actual evolution of the process. Having neutralized the UP, the CPP then concentrated on other political parties. When, by 1960, Nkrumah surmised that the opposition was no longer a threat, he reorganized his strategy to deal with the groups in the outer circle. After having established its control over traditional rulers, the government attacked intellectuals and the university, entrepreneurs and the agricultural sector. In 1965, Nkrumah finally set out to tame the police and the army. The latter, especially, had a number of grievances against the CPP and resisted the efforts of the party to politicize it. The conflict with these two forces was what, in all probability, provoked the coup d'etat in 1966. Thus Nayak analyzes the struggle for political power among Ghanaian elites.

Urio's study is concerned with a field of enquiry quite different from rational decision-making. In Switzerland advanced techniques are now applied to the choice of combat aircraft as a result of the Mirage crisis, which led not only to the strengthening of parliamentary control and to reform of the Department of Defence, but also to the revision of the decision-making process and techniques. The process was subdivided into seven main phases, from the definition of the conception of national defence and general planning to the choice, upkeep, and inspection. It appears

clearly from Urio's article that the actual process is in keeping with modern techniques of analysis and evaluation, and that it applies methods such as PERT, system and tree analysis, operational research, and cost-efficiency analysis. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that despite the use of these techniques, it has not yet been possible to take a decision which could meet the general consensus. Their use leaves a margin for political choice but also for political controversy. The effect has been to bring out into the open the whole problem of a nonprofessional parliament, whose members are no longer able to master and control complex decision-making processes, and to pose squarely the question of thorough reform of the parliament and its working methods. Recently, despite the publication of a technical report recommending the purchase of the U.S. Corsair instead of the French Mirage-Milan, the Federal Council decided, after some hesitation, to postpone its choice of a combat plane. Political and budgetary considerations as well as concern for the inflationary rate weighed more heavily in the balance than "rational" choice criteria.

The second series of articles consists of international studies, including a comparative survey by Alexander J. Groth and L.L. Wade on "Educational Allocations and Political Regimes"; a general report on "Decision-Making in International Organizations" by R.W. Cox and H.K. Jacobson; and finally a further specialized analysis on "Decision-Making in Public Bodies of International Organizations: ILO, WHO, WMO, UN" by Chadwick F. Alger.

Unlike the other articles, the Groth and Wade study focuses on decision outputs in education: while levels of economic development impose some constraints upon what particular societies might achieve in terms of educational outcomes, the type of political regime heavily influences the variance between the possible minimal and maximal outcomes.

Their classification of political systems includes four categories: Affluent Democracies (15 countries), Poorer Democracies (15), Communist systems (11), and Autocracies (26). In order to compare the outcomes of their policies, the authors adopted a quantitative measure expressed by school enrollment and a qualitative one conceived as a student/teacher ratio. The analysis of the first indicator confirms that, to the extent that economic development is associated with educational enrollments, the associations are closer in the poorer nations regardless of political system. Thus, in

the poorest group of nations – the Autocracies – educational policy outcomes and economic development are strongly associated at every level of education. Enrollments in the Poorer Democracies and Communist countries are moderately associated with per capita national income. The association is weak to slightly negative at all levels in the Affluent Democracies. In general, the analysis suggests that the influence of political, rather than economic differences, seems to be overwhelming. Apparently the resource constraint is not always the controlling element in public policy development.

From the qualitative student/teacher comparisons, it appears that the Communist countries actually outperform the Affluent Democracies in pre-primary education and equal them in primary: they are also in a better position than Poorer Democracies at the same level of economic development. At the secondary level, Poorer Democracies provide 1 teacher for 17 students and show a better level of educational quality than the Affluent Democracies. And while Autocracies (20.5) again rank last among the four systems, they are only marginally below the Communist states (21.9). It may be recalled that enrollments at the secondary level in Poorer Democracies exceed those of the Communist states. Judging from enrollment ratios, the authors observe that secondary education in all but the wealthiest nations remains an elite activity. At the third or advanced level, there is no significant difference among any of the types of political systems. The authors propose two explanations: the nature of higher education, or more likely, the elitist character of higher education in all types of political systems.

The variability of student/teacher ratios is least in the Communist states at the primary and secondary level, pointing out once again the relatively similar structure of public choices in those states. The variability is next lowest in the Affluent Democracies. A rough summary index relating resource constraints to educational quality is moderate in all systems (Poorer Democracies 0.43, Communist states 0.55; and Autocracies 0.42), except the Affluent Democracies (0.08). This moderate relationship between economic development and student/teacher ratios suggests, according to the authors, that national political systems have considerable autonomy, over and above resource constraints, in providing one aspect of quality education. Public choice seems to be highly dependent upon political and other noneconomic factors. National decision-makers appear to have substantial latitude in which to shape policy and are not as tightly confined by resource constraints as is sometimes suggested.

From analytical study we move toward synthetic presentations of approaches, typologies, and hypotheses on decision-making in international organizations. The paper written by Cox and Jacobson contains a wealth of suggestive observations. In addition to a definition of two ideal types of organizations – forum organization and service organization – they propose a taxonomic analysis. In order to be able to consider patterns of decision-making and the distribution of influence, it is useful to classify decisions by issue-areas.

The taxonomy of decisions in international organizations proposed by Cox and Jacobson divides them into seven categories: *representational* decisions affect membership; *symbolic* ones constitute tests of alignment of opinions; *boundary* decisions concern the organization's external relations; *programmatic* decisions are related to the strategic allocation of the organization's resources among different types and fields of activity; *rule-creating* decisions define norms bearing upon matters within the substantive scope of the organization; *rule-supervising* ones concern the application of approved rules by those subject to them; and *operational* decisions relate to the provision of services by the organization or the use of its resources in accordance with approved rules, policies or programs. Patterns of interaction among actors within international organizations may be described – as the authors do for eight agencies – for each of these decision-types.

Having pointed out some differences between international and national bodies Cox and Jacobson note their preference for a broad definition of international organization: a system of interaction including all of those who directly participate in decisions taken within the framework of the organization, and in addition all officials and individuals who in various ways actively determine the positions of the direct participants. This definition includes national elements or forces, government departments, and interest groups; it also includes other subsystems, such as the International Chamber of Commerce or multinational corporations. Finally, the

actors – as conceived in this study – are individuals who participate directly in the decisions of the international organization. An actor's capacity to exercise influence depends primarily on his position and his personal attributes. Starting from these basic concepts, the authors propose a multi-approach analysis of coalitions, voting, and many important variables. The environment is considered to be composed of a number of relevant variables; for example, it is assumed that there is some relationship between the power of a state in international affairs generally and its power in international organizations. The second major variable is the distribution of states according to their economic and political characteristics. The types of politics – competitive, mobilizing and authoritarian – are significant, as well as the patterns of conflicts and alignments on major world political and ideological issues. In addition, as each organization has a specific environment so, it may be argued, has each issue-area or even – at the limit – each decision. The result of such a set of analyses should be a description and an explanation of the structure of influence in international organization.

Chadwick Alger presents some preliminary findings from his quantitative research on decision-making in ILO, WHO, WMO, and the UN for three selected years – 1955, 1960, and 1965 – dealing with 5147 decisions. The decisions are subdivided into five categories by subject – administrative, budget-finance, elections and appointments, procedural, and program; and in three categories relating to discussion – no discussion, agreement, and some disagreement.

Some general findings could be pointed out. In the UN procedural decisions represent more than half. Program decisions are much more numerous in service organizations, with the exception of WMO. The percentage of decisions made without discussion gradually increased over the three years, with 69 percent in 1955, 74 percent in 1960, and 76 percent in 1965. When debate does take place it is highly concentrated on program issues (57 percent); it seems plausible that discussion can be avoided if the decisions are well prepared by informal negotiations. The same can be assumed regarding voting procedure: of the 5147 decisions, 4027 were made without voting (78 percent). Decision-making without voting increased from 73 percent in 1955, to 78 percent

in 1960, and 84 percent in 1965. Roll call voting seldom occurs in the three specialized agencies; it also represents only 14.6 percent of decisions taken in the General Assembly and 21.8 percent in the Security Council where all votes are automatically roll call votes. Their limited number suggests that difficulties may arise in relation to roll call votes and that there is a need to complete this analysis by coding positions taken in debates.

The author concludes that there is an increasing trend towards consensual decision-making in international organizations. Voting is avoided, due generally to the preparatory work of groups and committees and to a good system of informal communications and negotiations.

The study presented by Alger is a good example of a way in which the decision-making process can be analyzed by using quantitative techniques, in combination with other approaches.

NOTES

[1] Cf. D.W. Miller and M.K. Starr, *The Structure of Human Decisions* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967). This work constitutes a survey of various aspects of the decision-making approach.

[2] R.C. Snyder, H.W. Bruck and B. Sapin, *Foreign Policy Decision Making: An Approach to the Study of International Politics* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), p. 90.

[3] R.C. Snyder and G.D. Paige, "U.S. Decision to Resist Aggression in Korea" in Snyder, *Foreign Policy Decision Making*, pp. 242, 243.

[4] François Bourricaud, "Science politique et sociologie" (*Revue française de science politique*, 8, 2, June 1958), p. 261.

[5] C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Galaxy Book, Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 3, 4.

[6] *The Pentagon Papers* (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1971).

[7] Jean Meynaud, *Les organisations professionnelles en Suisse* (Lausanne: Payot, 1963). The author takes into consideration primarily open decisions, and examines only those closed decisions which were influenced by the pressure of professional groups.