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Bureaucrats versus the Ballot Box in Foreign Policy Decision Making

AN EXPERIMENTAL ANALYSIS OF THE BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS MODEL AND THE POLIHEURISTIC THEORY

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The bureaucratic politics model and the poliheuristic theory are used to examine how political advice presented in various contexts influences choice. Organizational advisers who offer endogenous political advice are compared with situations in which the decision maker is offered advice by a separate, or exogenous, political adviser. Results show that decision makers are influenced by political evaluations in a noncompensatory manner, even when this advice is endogenously presented, and that political evaluations (and foreign policy choices) can be affected by the presence of multiple bureaucratic advisers. These findings have significant implications for how information is presented in advisory group settings.

Keywords: *Bureaucratic politics model; poliheuristic theory; political advice; decision making*

In a recent *New York Times* (Ex-aide insists 2002, 16A) article, John DiIulio Jr., the former director of the White House office of faith-based and community initiatives, stated that the White House has

a complete lack of a policy apparatus. What you've got is everything, and I mean everything, being run by the political arm. It's the reign of the Mayberry Machiavellis.

Mr. DiIulio goes on to argue that President Bush's chief political adviser may be "the single most powerful person in the modern, post-Hoover era ever to occupy a political-advisor post near the Oval Office" (p. 16A). Mr. DiIulio points to a tension that exists in how presidents evaluate information: presidents and other national security-level decision makers want to make the best choice from a policy standpoint. On the other hand, they cannot ignore the political consequences of their decisions. Furthermore, when leaders interact with advisers, they must also recognize that advisers may offer both organizationally based, policy-related information, as well as the

political ramifications of a given alternative. Our goal in this study is to determine how the presentation of political advice influences foreign policy choice.

Proponents of the bureaucratic politics model argue that foreign policy decisions are a resultant, or product, of bargaining between individuals as representatives of organizations (see, e.g., Allison 1969, 1971; Allison and Halperin 1972; Hollis and Smith 1986; Smith 1984-1985). This assumes that actors define their preferences based on their membership in a particular organization. An important implication of this model is that actors attempt to maximize their organization's influence in the policy. The recent development and application of the poliheuristic theory of decision making presents a very different picture of how advisers interact with decision makers. It offers a two-stage model in which a decision maker reduces the number of possible alternatives by employing various heuristics and then decides among the remaining alternatives using more analytical/maximizing strategies. Rather than bargain over alternatives, the decision maker, as a political actor, tends to evaluate the alternatives in political terms using the noncompensatory principle (Mintz 1993; Mintz and Geva 1997; Mintz et al. 1997).

The purpose of this study is to determine which approach best explains how decision makers evaluate information given by advisers and then choose a given option in a foreign policy crisis. This study is organized in the following way: (1) review of the two approaches, (2) development of the test itself, and (3) the methodology and results.

TWO MODELS OF DECISION MAKING

BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS MODEL

The development of the bureaucratic decision model can be attributed to Graham Allison's (1971) *The Essence of Decision* and his further work with Morton Halperin (Allison 1969; Allison and Halperin 1972). This work pioneered the conceptualization of the theory and developed its structure as a way to explain government action. This does not mean that there is wide acceptance of this model and its implications; the text was met with both praise (Holsti 1972; Rourke 1972; Wagner 1974) and criticism (Caldwell 1977; Krasner 1972). More recently, scholars have questioned the consistency of the model's internal logic (Bendor and Hammond 1992) and its generalizability to other political systems (Kasza 1987).

There are two fundamental aspects in understanding decision making in this approach: (1) how decisions are reached and (2) why actors in the decision process have specific preferences. Allison (1971, 144) makes it quite clear that

the name of the game is politics: bargaining along regularized circuits among players positioned hierarchically within the government. Government behavior can thus be understood . . . not as organizational outputs, but as results of these bargaining games.

Government actors bargain over outcomes due to their different policy goals. The high-level positions that the actors possess in the foreign policy environment allow them to participate in the bargaining game (Allison 1971, 164).

Actors will bargain over policy to maximize the influence they have in that policy area (Downs 1994; Eavey 1987; t' Hart 1990; Hermann, Geva, and Bragg 2001; Rhodes 1994). They do so to "promote the positions their organizations have taken in the past" that "are consistent with the interests their organization represents" (Feldman 1989, 13).

Each player's probability of success depends on at least three elements: bargaining advantages, skill and will in using bargaining advantages, and other players' perceptions of the first two ingredients. (Allison and Halperin 1972, 50)

In our study, we examine how the presence of multiple advisers may influence foreign policy choice.

Rosati (1981) articulates the original argument when he describes the relationships that exist between actors and the organizations they represent. The first is that for any single issue, the foreign policy decision group has numerous individuals and organizations, each with various differences in goals and objectives. This assumes that no preponderant individual or organization exists within the group. As such, the president is only one of many "chiefs" in the decision-making process. In such cases, "no one individual alone has the ability to routinely determine the position of the government on a class of foreign policy issues" (Hermann, Hermann, and Hagan 1987, 315).

Others argue that there are ways for the decision maker to retain influence over subordinates, eliminating their manipulation of information (Bendor, Taylor, and Van Gaalen 1987). This is done through the use of incentives and multiple information sources as checks on bias. In their analysis of the bureaucratic politics model, these authors argue that the president can exercise authority over the group. This authority is derived from the president's status and the power inherent in the position. The question that has plagued the bureaucratic politics model (Bendor and Hammond 1992) is how the president makes his decisions.

Without specifically referring to the president, Allison and Halperin (1972, 43) argue that

players make governmental decisions not by a single rational choice, but by pulling and hauling. (*This by no means implies that individual players are not acting rationally, given their interests.*) (emphasis added)

Thus, the decision maker (i.e., the president) whom we model is one who may act rationally given the decision environment and his or her particular interests.

For the purposes of this study, we follow the revisionist argument of the bureaucratic politics model, which posits that the president is not engaged as a member of the bargaining group but retains decision authority. The famous case of Abraham Lincoln's statement to his cabinet—"Gentlemen, the vote is 11 to 1 and the 1 has it"—clearly illustrates this position (Hermann, Hermann, and Hagan 1987, 315). Hollis and Smith (1986) and Smith (1984–1985) have offered a similar argument in their studies of the Iran hostage crisis. They illustrate that although the information was developed with organizational biases, President Carter ultimately had to choose between the policy options.

Although such revisionist arguments may simplify the “pulling and hauling” that may take place, such simplification may be more plausible and offers an operationalization of the propositions of the model. Therefore, we are not testing a fully specified version of the bureaucratic politics model; instead, we are simply trying to determine the differential impact of organizational/bureaucratic advice versus political advice on foreign policy decisions. In other words, we are more interested in explaining foreign policy choice than in the bargaining/policy formation (i.e., process) aspects of the bureaucratic politics model. We are currently engaged in research that addresses the bargaining/strategic and interactive components of the policy formation process.¹

The second fundamental aspect of the bureaucratic politics model is that actors within the bargaining game represent organizationally formed preferences (Drezner 2000; George 1980). Allison and Halperin (1972) argue that individuals in positions within organizations have preferences over alternatives that are determined by the individual’s psychological characteristics and the nature of the position itself.

Given the face of the issue that he sees, each player must calculate how the resolution of the issue may affect his interests. This defines his *stakes* in the issue at hand. In light of these stakes he then determines his *stand* on the issue. (Allison and Halperin 1972, 49)

Furthermore,

participants define national security according to the interests of the organization to which they belong. Career officials naturally come to believe that the health of their organization is vital to the nation’s security. (Halperin 1972, 66)

The bureaucratic politics model provides the best theoretical grounds for how policy options are evaluated according to one’s organizational preferences. Because the actors attempt to maximize their organizations’ goals, the decision maker has assumptions about the evaluation of alternatives. Hollis and Smith (1986, 275), in applying the bureaucratic politics model to President Jimmy Carter’s decision to pursue a rescue mission in Iran, argue that organization “allegiances are so striking that one might even surmise that, had the participants switched positions, they would also have switched preferences.”

Decision makers will have stereotypes of the advisers based on their organization, given the advisers’ inherent biases. These

stereotypes enable decision makers to fit a broad range of events into well-defined, narrow categories and thereby contribute to the speed and economy of mental effort, at the cost of nuance. (Vertzberger 1990, 126)

1. Such research would certainly benefit from the literature on both behavioral game theory (e.g., see Camerer 2003; Nagel 1995) and recent theoretical developments in the poliheuristic theory (e.g., see Mintz 1999; Mintz and Astorino-Courtois 2001) that incorporate strategic interaction among various decision makers.

This can be expected in foreign policy situations because of the large amount of information and complex environment. The decision maker may believe that defense agencies will favor military action, and diplomatic agencies will favor diplomatic alternatives. These

stereotypes initiate and guide the process of remembering and interpretation in ways that provide the individual with stereotype-confirming evidence more readily than with stereotype-disconfirming evidence. (Hamilton 1981)

Hence, “stereotypes are rigid cognitive constructs that are extremely difficult to disconfirm” (Vertzberger 1990, 127).

POLIHEURISTIC THEORY OF DECISION MAKING

The poliheuristic theory of decision making was developed as an alternative to both the classical rational actor models originally developed in the 1940s and cybernetic decision making. Poliheuristic theory focuses on both the process and outcome of decision making (Mintz and Geva 1997).

The term *poliheuristic* can be broken down into the roots *poly* (many) and *heuristic* (shortcuts), which alludes to the cognitive mechanisms used by decision makers to simplify complex foreign policy decisions. (Mintz et al. 1997, 554)

Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock (1991, 19) state that

heuristics are judgmental shortcuts, efficient ways to organize and simplify political choices, efficient in the double sense of requiring relatively little information to execute, yet yielding dependable answers even to complex problems of choice.

These shortcuts are used in a number of different “decision strategies,” which determine a procedure that will best match the desired results (Beach and Mitchell 1978).

The poliheuristic theory of decision making involves a two-stage decision process. In the first stage, the decision maker screens the available alternatives using a decision heuristic to alleviate the cognitive load by reducing the number of alternatives in the decision environment. This involves a “nonholistic search where a selection of ‘surviving’ alternatives is typically being made across dimensions prior to the completion of the consideration of all alternatives along all dimensions” (Mintz et al. 1997, 554). The second stage involves the evaluation of the remaining/surviving alternatives using more analytic/maximizing types of decision rules (Mintz and Geva 1997; Mintz et al. 1997).

Previous literature (Christensen 2002; Mintz 1993; Mintz and Geva 1997; Mintz et al. 1997; Redd 2002) indicates that decision makers use noncompensatory strategies when processing information prior to choice. The compensatory principle posits that decision makers make trade-offs in the evaluation of alternatives. A high score on one alternative can compensate for a low score on another. Alternatively, the non-compensatory principle states that high scores will not compensate for low ones.

There exists a choice strategy whereby “if a certain alternative is unacceptable on a given dimension . . . then a high score on another dimension cannot compensate/counteract for it, and hence the alternative is eliminated” (Mintz 1993, 598). This differs from utility-based compensatory models in which alternatives are additive and can be combined “to produce an overall value for each alternative” or “alternatives are compared on each dimension and differences across dimensions are summed” (Mintz 1993, 597). In such noncompensatory cases, the decision maker uses only relevant and nontrivial criteria and information on those alternatives within a given choice environment.

Mintz (1993, 601) argues that “an alternative that is likely to damage the political prospects of the leader is rejected before evaluating the ‘score’ on the other dimensions.” Poliheuristic theory argues that “decision makers will use an attribute, or dimension-based process instead of an alternative-based approach to processing information” because it further reduces the level of complexity in the evaluation of information (Redd 2000, 55). Foreign policy decision makers (e.g., American presidents) will evaluate policy alternatives according to the political and military ramifications of that policy. These political evaluations include electoral support because leaders desire to stay in office (Mintz and Geva 1997) but can also include public opinion, the leader’s popularity, and domestic opposition (Redd 2000). For example, in Redd’s (2000, 187) evaluation of Clinton’s use of force in Kosovo, “the president was determined not to act in foreign affairs until it was politically expedient and necessary for him to do so.” The upcoming elections and public approval led Clinton to evaluate the alternatives in a noncompensatory fashion along the political dimension.

A further assumption of the poliheuristic theory is that the presentation of information will affect how this information is evaluated and what choices are made. Mintz et al. (1997) found that in an experimental setting, the nature of the presentation of information violated earlier held beliefs about information acquisition. These authors tested the effects on the decision process of static versus dynamic choice sets. Respondents who were presented with static choice sets were given all the alternatives and dimensions (all information) at the beginning of the experiment. In the dynamic setting, these respondents were presented only three alternatives, but after a given amount of information was accessed, a fourth appeared. The authors found that such changes in presentation affected information acquisition and that in dynamic situations, decision makers were more likely to disregard new information due to sunk costs (Mintz et al. 1997, 556). Redd and Geva (2001) found that variations in the presentation of information affected foreign policy choice. Specifically, they presented information in an alternative- versus dimension-based format.

MODEL TESTING

We posit that it is possible to examine the often-competing explanations of foreign policy decision making offered by these two models. Past research has indicated that both of these approaches are relevant in the debate, and our purpose is to compare these competing explanations.

We argue that it is possible to create an experimental study wherein the theoretical premises of these two models can be tested. Specifically, we generate a choice set in which decision makers choose between organizational/bureaucratic advice versus political evaluations. Moreover, previous studies have also presented substantive dimensions as a single thematic basis (or criterion) underlying the evaluation of an alternative (see, e.g., Mintz and Geva 1997; Mintz et al. 1997; Redd 2002). For example, the secretary of defense would be responsible for presenting an evaluation about the feasibility of a given military operation. However, it is certainly plausible—and probable—that this same secretary of defense could also offer advice pertaining to the economic or political ramifications of pursuing a given alternative.

In this study, we test the implications of presenting political advice as a single and separate dimension as opposed to presenting political advice as part of the organizational/bureaucratic evaluation of the various alternatives.² Therefore, we attempt to compare foreign policy choices as a function of no political advice versus endogenous versus exogenous political advice (see Appendix B). We submit that this is a stronger test of the poliheuristic proposition concerning the importance and noncompensatory influence of political factors in foreign policy choice.

Mintz et al. (1997, 555) argue that the complexity of decision environments shifts decision makers' strategies from

more complex, more demanding, compensatory tradeoff reasoning (associated with the alternative-based strategy) [to] less complex, less demanding, noncompensatory rules (associated with a dimension-based strategy).

The bureaucratic politics model does not specify a particular mode of information processing. Our decision to test for the effects of alternative- versus dimension-based presentation of information arises not only because of poliheuristic theory propositions but also because of how political advice was incorporated into the choice set. In the endogenous condition, the political advice was contrary to the organizational/bureaucratic evaluations of sanctions and the use of force (see Appendix B). Therefore, we proposed that decision makers would be better able to directly compare political advice with organizational/bureaucratic advice when the information was presented in an alternative-based procedure than when it was presented by dimension.

HYPOTHESES

Because we are comparing two different models, we provide specific hypotheses for each:

Hypothesis 1a: According to the poliheuristic theory, the political environment will significantly affect decision makers' foreign policy choices. Specifically, when political advice

2. We also include a condition in which no political advice is offered.

is presented, we should see a significantly lower proportion of decision makers selecting the “accurate” choice.³

Hypothesis 1b: Furthermore, we expect to find that when political information is presented exogenously versus no information, fewer respondents will select the accurate choice.

Hypothesis 1c: We expect to find that when political information is presented endogenously versus no information, fewer respondents will select the accurate choice.

Hypothesis 1d: Finally, we expect to find that when political information is presented exogenously rather than endogenously, fewer respondents will select the accurate choice.

Conversely, according to the bureaucratic politics model, we should see a significantly higher proportion of decision makers selecting the “accurate” choice, regardless of endogenous or exogenous political advice.⁴

Hypothesis 2: According to the poliheuristic theory, decision makers’ foreign policy choices will be significantly affected by the presentation of information in the choice set (i.e., alternative vs. dimension based). We should see a lower proportion of respondents choosing the accurate choice when presented information in the choice set in a dimension-based manner because they are less able to compare the numerical evaluations of alternatives in an additive fashion.⁵

Hypothesis 3: We should see an interaction effect between the presentation of information and the presence of political advice. According to the poliheuristic theory, we should see a significantly lower proportion of respondents choosing the “accurate” alternative when presented information in a dimension-based manner and the political advice is exogenous.⁶

Our argument is as follows: according to the poliheuristic theory, when decision makers process information first along the political dimension and encounter the political adviser’s negative evaluation of the use of force, they reject that option based on a noncompensatory calculation.

EXPERIMENT

A fictional foreign policy scenario was used to introduce the alternatives and advisers’ positions (dimensions) to the respondents. Similar to past research on advisers, the scenario involved a military dispute between two small island countries that began over control of a large uranium field, during which foreign citizens were taken hostage

3. Payne, Bettman, and Johnson (1993) discuss the “accuracy” of decisions in terms of evaluating the quality of choice. Therefore, following Payne, Bettman, and Johnson, we discuss the choices made in this experiment in terms of adherence to or deviation from an “accurate” or “best” decision. Based on the organizational evaluations, the third alternative (use of force) was considered the “best,” or “accurate” (see Appendix B).

4. Recall that the use-of-force alternative was given a negative political evaluation.

5. Unfortunately, the bureaucratic politics model does not directly address dimension- versus alternative-based processing. However, we could say that decision makers who are processing information along dimensions would be more attuned to the organizational aspects of the evaluations because the dimensions are labeled accordingly. Therefore, we would expect a higher proportion of respondents to select the accurate choice because both military advisers prefer the use of force.

6. The bureaucratic politics model provides no theoretical expectations for the interaction of these two factors.

(see also Redd 2000; Mintz et al. 1997). Three alternatives were presented to the decision maker: do nothing, international sanctions, and use of force (remove the invading nation). The experimental matrices and scenarios are described in Appendixes A and B. Following previous experimental simulations (e.g., Mintz et al. 1997; Redd 2002), the introduced advisers refer to relevant policy dimensions. The advisers include the secretary of state, the secretary of defense, and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the endogenous presentation, with the chief of staff added in the exogenous case. The advisers provided both a written and numerical evaluation of each alternative. In each scenario, every adviser assigned values (from -10 to 10) for each of the three alternatives.

In the endogenous political advice condition, the political evaluations of the alternatives were framed as neutral, positive, or negative.⁷ The “do-nothing” option was additively neutral in political terms, the “sanctions” option was positive, and the “use of force” option was negative. Moreover, the political advice was contrary to the organizational advice offered by the two military advisers (see Appendix B). Setting up the matrices in this manner in a sense forces decision makers to choose between heeding the organizational/bureaucratic advice versus the political advice in the endogenous condition. In the exogenous political advice condition, a separate political adviser evaluated the alternatives, with the advice being commensurate with the endogenous conditions, such that the evaluation of “do nothing” was neutral, “sanctions” was positive, and “use of force” was negative.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

Respondents consisted of 108 undergraduate students at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee.⁸ They were recruited from several political science courses. The participants were randomly assigned to one of six experimental conditions.

7. In the “no political advice” condition, no political advice of any kind was included in the advisers’ written evaluations.

8. Previous experimental/simulation research in international affairs also used human respondents to test specific decision hypotheses (see Beer et al. 1987; Boettcher 1995). Zinnes (1966) and Hermann and Hermann (1967) replicated World War I decisions in a simulation study using human respondents. Mintz, Geva, and Redd (1995), using the foreign policy decision board platform, obtained similar results using both college students and Air Force commanders (see also Mintz et al. 1997). Of course, we are not asserting that students operating in an experimental setting equal the high-level, real-world context of foreign policy decision making. Instead, we are arguing that experimental simulations of these actual, real-world foreign policy settings can provide insights into how advisers can influence national security-level decision making (see Mook 1983 for a discussion of the external validity of experimental studies). See Tetlock (1983) and McDermott (2002) for a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses associated with experimental research in the social sciences.

DESIGN

A 3×2 between-groups factorial design was employed. The factors are (1) presentation of political information (none/endogenous/exogenous) and (2) the order in which information is presented (alternative vs. dimension based).

VARIABLES

The independent variables within this study include the nature of how political information is presented on the foreign policy alternatives and the order in which information is presented to the decision maker. The dependent variables in this experiment include the choice that the respondents made, as well as whether they made the "best" choice. The choice that is additively "best," given the organizational evaluations over all alternatives, is "use of force," whereas the politically "best" choice is "sanctions."

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

One of six Microsoft PowerPoint presentations was made to the respondents. These presentations have some distinct advantages: the researcher can control the information content that is presented to the respondents, all participants are given the same information, and the researcher has the ability to control the time that each participant has in viewing alternatives and making selections.

RESEARCH MATERIAL

Manipulation of Political Evaluation

Political advice was presented in three different manners: (1) no political information was supplied to respondents; (2) in the endogenous condition, the two military advisers and the diplomatic adviser supplied specific political advice in addition to their organizational/bureaucratic evaluations of the alternatives; and (3) in the exogenous condition, a separate political adviser evaluated the three alternatives.

Manipulation of Presentation of Information

Respondents in the alternative-based condition were shown a visual diagram explaining that the information would be presented one alternative at a time. Those in the dimension-based condition were shown a corresponding diagram with the appropriate changes in the presentation of information, that is, by dimension (see Appendix C). When participants had finished reading the instructions and the specific international scenario, they were subjected to the first manipulation. Specifically, they were told how the information pertaining to the decision would be presented (by alternative or by adviser/dimension). From this point, an automated presentation of the items (in one of these two modes) was begun. Hence, all respondents were exposed to all 9 or 12

items, although the order in which they viewed the information differed in accordance with the levels of this factor (alternative or dimension based).

PROCEDURE

The experiment was administered to a group of university students. Respondents were told that they would be presented with evaluations of all alternatives for the scenario by each adviser. The respondents were instructed to make their best choice among the available options after all advisers offered their evaluations. Similar to previous studies (e.g., Mintz et al. 1997; Redd 2002), the respondents were also told that "your comprehension [of foreign policy decision making] will be expressed by the quality of the decision you make in the context of a simulated international situation." Previous studies (Ostrom et al. 1980) suggest that portraying a decision task in these terms increases the motivation of the respondents to perform the task in a genuine fashion without confounding or contaminating the salience of a particular decisional dimension. Following the foreign policy decision, a postdecision questionnaire was administered, followed by a detailed debriefing.

RESULTS

The data analysis focused on determining how the presentation of political advice and the order in which the information was presented (i.e., alternative vs. dimension based) influenced foreign policy choice. Recall that the decision matrices were constructed so that the third alternative in each (use of force) was the "accurate" choice based on the cumulative organizational evaluations provided by the advisers. In terms of general information, of the 108 respondents who participated in the experiment, 11 chose "do nothing," 49 chose "sanctions," and 48 chose the "use of force."

For hypothesis 1a, we offer the following results. Using a z test for proportions (Langer and Abelson 1972), we found a statistically significant relationship in favor of the poliheuristic theory. Those respondents who were given political advice were able to make the accurate choice only 36% of the time compared to 56% for those who received no political advice ($z = 2.05, p > .02$) (see Table 1). For hypothesis 1c, we also found a statistically significant effect between no political advice and endogenous political advice. Again using the z test for proportions, we found that when decision makers were given endogenous political advice, they were able to make the accurate choice only 31% of the time compared to 56% for those given no political advice ($z = 2.30, p < .02$) (see Table 2).

These results are corroborated by another z test wherein we tested to see how likely respondents were to select the politically astute alternative, sanctions. Those respondents who were given political advice chose sanctions 54% of the time, whereas those who did not receive political advice chose sanctions only 34% of the time ($z = 2.16, p < .02$) (see Table 3).

We found no statistical differences concerning hypothesis 1b (between no political information and exogenous advice) or hypothesis 1d (between endogenous and

TABLE 1
Effect of the Presence of Political Advice on Choosing Accurately

	<i>Political Advice</i>	
	<i>Not Present</i>	<i>Present</i>
Percentage	56	36

TABLE 2
Effect of No Political Advice versus
Endogenous Political Advice on Choosing Accurately

	<i>Advice</i>	
	<i>No Political Advice</i>	<i>Endogenous Political Advice</i>
Percentage	56	31

TABLE 3
Effect of Political Advice on Selecting the Politically Favored Alternative

	<i>Political Advice</i>	
	<i>No Political Advice</i>	<i>Political Advice</i>
Percentage	34	54

exogenous political advice) on the selection of the accurate choice. As stated above, decision makers' choices were significantly affected regardless of whether the political advice was endogenous or exogenous. We submit that these results make previous findings that address the importance of the noncompensatory nature of political advice more robust and add to our understanding of the poliheuristic theory.

With respect to hypothesis 2, we found evidence that seems to support the bureaucratic politics model. Using the z test for proportions, we found that when the information was presented dimensionally, 50% of the decision makers made the accurate choice, compared with only 23% choosing accurately for those operating by alternative ($z = -2.51, p < .01$) (see Table 4). How do we explain this finding with respect to the poliheuristic theory? In Mintz's (1993) article on the U.S. decision to attack Iraq, Mintz noted that the political dimension was most salient in President Bush's decision calculus, but the military/strategic dimension also played a critical role. In every previous test of the political calculations/ramifications of foreign policy choice, each dimension (e.g., political, diplomatic, military, etc.), there was only one adviser representing each dimension. In this particular experiment, we deliberately set up the

TABLE 4
Effect of Presentation of Information on Choosing Accurately

	<i>Presentation</i>	
	<i>Dimension Based</i>	<i>Alternative Based</i>
Percentage	50	23

TABLE 5
Effect of Political Advice and the
Presentation of Information on Choosing Accurately

<i>Presentation</i>	<i>Political Advice</i>	
	<i>Endogenous</i>	<i>Exogenous</i>
Alternative based (%)	17	28
Dimension based (%)	44	56

choice set so that there would be two military advisers. We did so to provide a more robust test of the poliheuristic theory. Our findings show that in situations in which multiple substantive advisers (e.g., military) agree on a particular course of action, their cumulative evaluations may be sufficient to override a single political adviser. Or, as stated in the parlance of the poliheuristic theory, two substantive advisers who agree may compensate for a single political adviser's negative evaluations on the use of force.⁹ Of course, we would also expect to see that advice from two political advisers would balance the influence of two military advisers, consistent with the poliheuristic theory.

Hypothesis 3 posited an interaction effect between political advice and the presentation of information in a dimension-based manner. We found no statistically significant results for this hypothesis. Part of the reason for the lack of a significant interaction has to do with the contrary findings we obtained above. We also expected an interaction effect, such that when the information was presented by dimension and the political advice was exogenous, fewer respondents would be able to make the accurate choice. As stated above, our results were the opposite of this expectation.

CONCLUSION

Our overall goal in this study was to compare the bureaucratic politics model with the poliheuristic theory to determine which had greater explanatory power with re-

9. Christensen and Redd (2003) specifically address and test for the presence of single versus multiple advisers within the context of the bureaucratic politics model.

spect to foreign policy decision making. Specifically, we were interested in how the nature of political advice as well as differences in the presentation of information would influence foreign policy choices. The bureaucratic politics model emphasizes that organizational advice drives foreign policy choice, whereas the poliheuristic theory stipulates that political calculations are paramount and noncompensatory in affecting foreign policy decisions.

Our overall findings support the poliheuristic theory, although the bureaucratic politics model is supported under certain conditions. The results show that when negative political advice was offered concerning the use of force, this was sufficient to cause decision makers not to select that option. These findings corroborate previous findings that address the noncompensatory nature of political advice (see, e.g., DeRouen 1994, 2001; Geva, Redd, and Mintz 2000; Mintz 1993; Mintz et al. 1997; Redd 2002). These results add to previous findings by making the test of the presence of political advice more rigorous through the examination of endogenous political evaluations. Even when the political advice was endogenously presented, decision makers were significantly affected by negative evaluations of the use of force to the point where they did not select that alternative (i.e., negative endogenous political advice was noncompensatory).

However, we also found conditions under which the noncompensatory principle of the poliheuristic theory is less powerful and bureaucratic/organizational advice significantly influences foreign policy choice. Specifically, we found that when multiple military advisers gave positive evaluations of the use of force, this was sufficient to lead decision makers to discount the negative political evaluation(s) of that option (i.e., multiple positive military evaluations were compensatory when the evaluations were presented by dimension).

These findings have important implications for foreign policy decision making and how leaders construct their advisory systems, both in general and/or as a specific response to a given crisis. We have shown that how information is presented, what advice is given, and who is present—and in what numbers—in foreign policy deliberations can significantly influence foreign policy choices (see also Hoyt and Garrison 1997; Maoz 1990; Redd and Geva 2001).

More work is certainly needed to address these issues. We would next like to make a more direct comparison between multiple advisers versus single advisers and political advice in the context of the poliheuristic theory. More work should also be done with respect to examining these issues as they pertain to information processing and how political advice versus organizational/bureaucratic advice influences decision processes.

APPENDIX A

SCENARIO A

Instructions

In this study, we are interested in learning about *decision making* in various international events. Specifically, we are interested in your ability to comprehend national-level decision making. This comprehension will be expressed by the quality of a decision you make in the context of a simulated international crisis.

In the next pages, you'll be confronted with a hypothetical international crisis. The case will contain information to which a president is exposed by his various advisers. Read the information carefully and then respond to the situation, *assuming the role of the president*.

Following the case is a questionnaire in which you'll record your decisions and responses to the situation. Please respond to all the questions.

The Gorendy-Minalo Crisis

During the past few days, the media have focused almost exclusively on the military crisis in the Gorendy-Minalo region. This Pacific region is extremely important since one of the world's largest concentrations of uranium is near the shores of the Gorendy and Minalo islands.

Gorendy's army has invaded Minalo. Information that was transmitted to you indicated that a number of Americans working for the Minalo National Uranium Development Company were taken prisoner.

As the president of the United States, you must decide what to do.

You have assembled a number of your key advisers representing each of the pertinent policy areas. The secretary of defense and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs are your military advisers whose primary concern is the feasibility and security of any military action. The secretary of state is your diplomatic adviser and must weigh the consequences of each alternative, particularly as to how the outcome might affect both U.S. foreign policy and U.S. standing in the international community.

Your advisers arrive at the following alternatives:

Do Nothing: Publicly condemn the invasion but maintain that the conflict is a regional matter. The United States is staying out of the conflict but will work behind the scenes to get the prisoners released.

International Sanctions: In conjunction with the United Nations and other international organizations, declare that no country will be allowed to trade with Gorendy. In addition, freeze Gorendy's accounts in other nations' banks until the conflict ends.

Use of Force: U.S. military units will resolve the conflict by expelling Gorendy from the island of Minalo.

The presentation will indicate how each adviser evaluated these options. Their evaluations are summarized as a rating on a 21-point scale (−10 implies that an adviser perceives the option very unfavorably, 0 implies a neutral position, and 10 implies a very favorable evaluation of the option).

Remember: A decision has to be made!

You will see the information only once when the presentation begins.

Press CONTINUE to start the decision process.

SCENARIO B

Instructions

Same as in scenario A.

The Gorendy-Minalo Crisis

During the past few days, the media have focused almost exclusively on the military crisis in the Gorendy-Minalo region. This Pacific region is extremely important since one of the world's largest concentrations of uranium is near the shores of the Gorendy and Minalo islands.

Gorendy's army has invaded Minalo. Information that was transmitted to you indicated that a number of Americans working for the Minalo National Uranium Development Company were taken prisoner.

As the president of the United States, you must decide what to do.

You have assembled a number of your key advisers representing each of the pertinent policy areas. Your key political adviser is your chief of staff, who is primarily concerned with how this decision might affect your reelection. The secretary of defense and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs are your military advisers whose primary concern is the feasibility and security of any military action. The secretary of state is your diplomatic adviser and must weigh the consequences of each alternative, particularly as to how the outcome might affect both U.S. foreign policy and U.S. standing in the international community.

Your advisers arrive at the following alternatives:

Do Nothing: Publicly condemn the invasion but maintain that the conflict is a regional matter. The United States is staying out of the conflict but will work behind the scenes to get the prisoners released.

International Sanctions: In conjunction with the United Nations and other international organizations, declare that no country will be allowed to trade with Gorendy. In addition, freeze Gorendy's accounts in other nations' banks until the conflict ends.

Use of Force: U.S. military units will resolve the conflict by expelling Gorendy from the island of Minalo.

The presentation will indicate how each adviser evaluated these options. Their evaluations are summarized as a rating on a 21-point scale (−10 implies that an adviser perceives the option very unfavorably, 0 implies a neutral position, and 10 implies a very favorable evaluation of the option).

Remember: A decision has to be made!

You will see the information only once when the presentation begins.

Press CONTINUE to start the decision process.

APPENDIX B

DECISION MATRIX 1
(No Political Information)

<i>Adviser</i>	<i>Alternatives</i>		
	<i>Do Nothing</i>	<i>Sanctions</i>	<i>Use of Force</i>
Military 1	<p>"This would show that the U.S. only resorts to force as a defensive reaction. This would also mean no casualties. However, there is the possibility that doing nothing will damage the future credibility of U.S. military forces."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as 1.</p>	<p>"Although sanctions allow our forces time to prepare, unanticipated reactions to sanctions may result in an escalation of this situation. This would leave us very vulnerable to attacks, which could mean extremely high casualties."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as -7.</p>	<p>"The use of force shows that we are decisive and strong enough to protect our vital national interest."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as 7.</p>
Diplomatic	<p>"By asserting that the conflict is a regional matter, the U.S. can stave off international criticism as a bully; although, we may be perceived as a paper tiger, unable to assert ourselves in the world arena."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as 1.</p>	<p>"Sanctions could help to resolve this crisis, especially if other nations join us. However, prolonging the crisis may lead to a loss of U.S. prestige and credibility."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as 3.</p>	<p>"This may be perceived by others that the United States is an aggressive nation that will attack a weaker state. This perception of the United States as 'a bully' or the 'world's policeman' would hurt our international standing."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as -2.</p>
Military 2	<p>"This option shows the international community that we are unable to protect our interests. It also prolongs the problem."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as -2.</p>	<p>"Our allies could come under attack, which could draw larger numbers of countries into an unwanted and costly war."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as -4.</p>	<p>"A quick and unexpected strike at their forces could resolve the situation and minimize the number of civilian and military casualties."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as 7.</p>

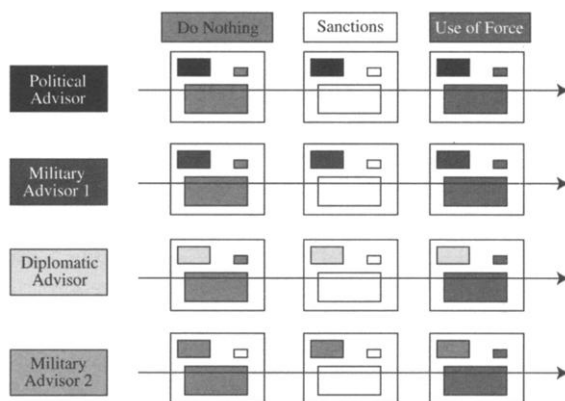
DECISION MATRIX 2
(Endogenous Political Information)

Adviser	Alternatives		
	<i>Do Nothing</i>	<i>Sanctions</i>	<i>Use of Force</i>
Military 1	<p>"This would show that the United States only resorts to force as a defensive reaction. This would also mean no casualties. However, there is the possibility that doing nothing will damage the future credibility of U.S. military forces. However, it is difficult to know for sure if the public will support this."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as 1.</p>	<p>"Although sanctions allow our forces time to prepare, unanticipated reactions to sanctions may result in an escalation of this situation. This would leave us very vulnerable to attacks, which could mean extremely high casualties. The public would surely prefer a low-casualty solution and would support using sanctions in these circumstances."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as -7.</p>	<p>"The use of force shows that we are decisive and strong enough to protect our vital national interest. Yet it seems that public support would erode if you use force in this situation."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as 7.</p>
Diplomatic	<p>"By asserting that the conflict is a regional matter, the United States can stave off international criticism as a bully; although we may be perceived as a paper tiger, unable to assert ourselves in the world arena. I am unsure if the public would be behind such a choice."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as 1.</p>	<p>"Sanctions could help to resolve this crisis, especially if other nations join us. However, prolonging the crisis may lead to a loss of U.S. prestige and credibility. Choosing sanctions would shore up your public support."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as 3.</p>	<p>"This may be perceived by others that the United States is an aggressive nation that will attack a weaker state. This perception of the United States as 'a bully' or the 'world's policeman' would hurt our international standing. However, using force will damage our credibility in the future and with the public."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as -2.</p>
Military 2	<p>"This option shows the international community that we are unable to protect our interests. It also prolongs the problem. The difficulty is in knowing how the public would react to such a solution."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as -2.</p>	<p>"Our allies could come under attack, which could draw larger numbers of countries into an unwanted and costly war, yet the public seem to support using sanctions in this case."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as -4.</p>	<p>"A quick and unexpected strike at their forces could resolve the situation and minimize the number of civilian and military casualties. Public opinion doesn't indicate that this is the best solution."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as 7.</p>

DECISION MATRIX 3 (Exogenous Political Information)

<i>Advisers</i>	<i>Alternatives</i>		
	<i>Do Nothing</i>	<i>Sanctions</i>	<i>Use of Force</i>
Political	<p>"Such a choice leaves some ambiguity in how the crisis will evolve; as such, it is difficult to know how our standing with the public would be affected."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as 0.</p>	<p>"Choosing sanctions would benefit your position with the public. Opinion polls indicate that this is very popular with citizens."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as 4.</p>	<p>"I believe this is an unwise alternative. The people do not favor the use of force, and if you choose this, you may take the blame come re-election time."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as -2.</p>
Military 1	<p>"This would show that the United States only resorts to force as a defensive reaction. This would also mean no casualties. However, there is the possibility that doing nothing will damage the future credibility of U.S. military forces."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as 1.</p>	<p>"Although sanctions allow our forces time to prepare, unanticipated reactions to sanctions may result in an escalation of this situation. This would leave us very vulnerable to attacks, which could mean extremely high casualties."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as -7.</p>	<p>"The use of force shows that we are decisive and strong enough to protect our vital national interest."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as 7.</p>
Diplomatic	<p>"By asserting that the conflict is a regional matter, the United States can stave off international criticism as a bully; although we may be perceived as a paper tiger, unable to assert ourselves in the world arena."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as 1.</p>	<p>"Sanctions could help to resolve this crisis, especially if other nations join us. However, prolonging the crisis may lead to a loss of U.S. prestige and credibility."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as 3.</p>	<p>"This may be perceived by others that the United States is an aggressive nation that will attack a weaker state. This perception of the United States as 'a bully' or the 'world's policeman' would hurt our international standing."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as -2.</p>
Military 2	<p>"This option shows the international community that we are unable to protect our interests. It also prolongs the problem."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as -2.</p>	<p>"Our allies could come under attack, which could draw larger numbers of countries into an unwanted and costly war."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as -4.</p>	<p>"A quick and unexpected strike at their forces could resolve the situation and minimize the number of civilian and military casualties."</p> <p>I would rate this alternative as 7.</p>

APPENDIX C



The figure illustrates the actual structure of the decision matrix. In your case, the order in which you will view the information is by row—starting from the left to right and then from top to bottom.

To continue click



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