## Decision Making Modes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL UNCERTAINTY</th>
<th>PROCEDURAL UNCERTAINTY</th>
<th>Rational mode</th>
<th>Political mode</th>
<th>Anarchy mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low</strong></td>
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<td>Goal-directed</td>
<td>Conflicting goals, interests</td>
<td>Goals are ambiguous</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Guided by rules, routines and performance programs</td>
<td>Certainty about preferred approach and outcomes</td>
<td>Processes to reach goals are unclear</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
<td>Multiple options and alternative solutions</td>
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### Political Mode of Organizational Decision Making

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<th>Building power base</th>
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<td>1. Create dependencies</td>
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<td>2. Control resources</td>
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<td>3. Control strategic uncertainties</td>
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<th>Exercising power in decision making</th>
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<td>1. Expand coalitions, networks</td>
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<td>2. Control decision premises</td>
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<td>3. Enhance expertise</td>
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<td>4. Make preferences explicit</td>
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**Environmental uncertainty**
- Resource dependency
- Task interdependency
- Goal conflict

**Organizations as coalitions**

**Procedural rationality**

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Pfeffer and Salancik 1974, 2003
Emerson 1962
Hickson et al 1971
Allison 1999
Perrow 1986, Cyert & March 1992
### Organizational Politics – Antecedent Conditions

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<th>Condition</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Uncertainty</td>
<td>Uncertainty is high when environment consists of many actors linked by complex relationships: no actor can control or predict the action of others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resource Dependency</td>
<td>Dependency is high when the organization depends on and competes for resources from the environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Task Interdependency</td>
<td>Interdependency is high when the organization consists of many specialized groups that need to work together closely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Conflict</td>
<td>Decision makers perceive incompatibility of goals and interests. Need to advance their own interests over those of others.</td>
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### Political Mode

- **Goals as coalitions**
- **Procedural rationality**
Organizations as coalitions

Types of coalitions:
- Dominant coalition (permanent)
- Shifting coalition (temporary)

Coalition Behaviour

In decision conflict situations, groups assess each other’s positions:
- Coalitions with allies
- Agreements with opposing groups

Procedural Rationality

Instead of pursuing goals of all parties, pursue procedures that allow all parties to arrive at acceptable solutions.

Fair and reasonable procedures, forums, rules that allow groups to:
- present their positions
- ask questions
- seek clarifications and assurances
- develop mutually acceptable solutions

Simon 1976, 1978; Dean and Sharfman 1993
Procedural Rationality

Goal conflict may or may not be resolved.
Goals may remain DIVERGENT, but groups believe that
• their VOICES and CONCERNS have been heard and taken into account
• they have developed a COMMON UNDERSTANDING of the problem and its options
• they have COLLECTIVELY ARRIVED at an ACCEPTABLE solution that they are willing to COMMIT to despite their differences.

Pfeffer and Salancik 1974, 2003
Emerson 1962
Hickson et al 1971
Allison 1999
Perrow 1986, Cyert & March 1992
### Building Power Base

1. **Create dependencies**
2. **Control resources**
3. **Control strategic uncertainties**

- **Power** is the property of a social relationship between actors
- Greater the dependency, greater the power (Emerson 1962)

- **Dependency** arises when one controls resource(s) that others need (Pfeffer & Salancik 1978, 2003)

- **Dependency** increases when that resource is strategic, scarce, not substitutable (Hickson et al 1971)

### Exercising Power

**Exercising power in decision making**

1. Expand coalitions, networks
2. Control decision premises
3. Enhance expertise claims
4. Make preferences explicit

- Sponsor candidates
- Enlist partners
- Co-opt opposition

- Value Premises: Select, define, weight decision criteria
- Factual Premises: What information to collect and attend to

- **Internal capability**
- **External endorsement**

- Present clear, reasoned case, supported by data
- Deploy “persuasive” arguments
Environmental uncertainty
Resource dependency
Task interdependency
Goal conflict

Pfeffer and Salancik 1974, 2003
Emerson 1962
Hickson et al 1971
Allison 1969
Perrow 1986, Cyert & March 1992

Political Mode of Organizational Decision Making

Build power base
1. Create dependencies
2. Control resources
3. Control strategic uncertainties

Organizations as coalitions

Exercising power in decision making
1. Building coalitions / expand networks
2. Control decision premises
3. Enhance expertise
4. Make preferences explicit

Procedural rationality

On October 16, 1962, President Kennedy was informed that the Soviet Union had installed offensive missiles in Cuba that could be armed with nuclear warheads. Cuba was about 90 miles off the coast of the US, and these missiles could reach Washington DC, New York, Philadelphia, …

CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

MEDIUM RANGE BALLISTIC MISSILE BASE IN CUBA
Once the missiles were discovered, crisis decision-making was organized around an informally selected group of advisers, the Executive Committee ("ExComm"): 

John F Kennedy (President)  Dean Rusk (Secretary of State)  
Robert McNamara (Secretary of Defense)  Douglas Dillon (Secretary of Treasury)  
McGeorge Bundy (National Security Advisor)  Ted Sorensen (Presidential Counsel)  
Robert Kennedy (Attorney General)  Maxwell Taylor (Joint Chiefs of Staff)  
John McCone (Director CIA)  George Ball (Undersecretary of State)  
...
Case Discussion

Using the Political Model, identify features in the case that may be explained by the model:

• What were the different goals and alternatives being pursued?
• Were there coalitions or groups?
• What procedures or forums were adopted?
• How was power exercised to influence decisions?

Video excerpt from Thirteen Days, a docudrama based on The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House during the CMC, by Ernest May, Phil Zelikow.