Boletim do Tempo Presente - ISSN 1981-3384

Political and Social Psychology in decision-making process: an analysis of Israeli politics

Karina Stange Calandrin[I]

Abstract: The main goal is to propose a research on the formulation of foreign policy in Israel from the point of view of the responsible institutions and bureaucracies. The foreign policy decision-making process can be understood as a complex arrangement between institutions and bureaucracies responsible for decision-making. The central argument deals with the character of the decisions taken by the Israeli government, in which the pragmatism of decision-making would be overestimated, since emotions would have a central role in the decision-making process.

Keywords: Israeli Foreign Policy. Political Psychology. Decision-making Process.

Psicologia Política e Social no processo decisório: uma análise da política israelense

Resumo: O objetivo principal é propor uma pesquisa sobre a formulação da política externa em Israel do ponto de vista das instituições e burocracias responsáveis. O processo decisório de política externa pode ser entendido como um complexo arranjo entre instituições e burocracias responsáveis pela tomada de decisão. O argumento central trata do caráter das decisões tomadas pelo governo israelense, nas quais o pragmatismo da tomada de decisão seria superestimado, uma vez que as emoções teriam um papel central no processo de tomada de decisão.

Palavras-chave: Política Externa de Israel. Psicologia Política. Processo Decisório.

Introduction

How are foreign policy decisions made? Many analysts wrote about Israel's foreign policy decision-making process, often considering the International System's level of analysis, but also of its institutions and influence groups. Part of the work was devoted to criticizing decisions taken and suggesting corrective measures, as well as extolling aspects of excellence in the decision-making process mainly in relation to conflicts, despite the attitudes taken towards the Palestinian population that have always been widely condemned (Freilich, 2006)[II]. The fact that remains present in both types of analysis, both for those that criticize, and for those who analyze military tactics, is the pragmatic aspect of Israeli decision-making. It can be concluded that there would be a myth that involves Israel in the common sense that, because of its military victories and the idealized excellence in this same context, the decision-making process would be endowed with a unique pragmatism of its formulators. A pragmatism so rigid that it would not allow its decision-makers to become vulnerable to emotions to the point that they would influence their decisions and their perceptions of the environment intentionally and unintentionally.

What are the causes and consequences of perception? How are beliefs about politics and the actors' environment formed and changed? How do decision-makers draw conclusions from

information, especially information that could be seen in a way that contradicts their own views? These issues, according to Jervis (1976)[III], were not adequately discussed by international relations experts. What is imagined is that decision makers usually perceive the world accurately and that possible misconceptions can only be treated as random accidents. The general argument of this research corroborates Robert Jervis's (1976)[IV] view that this interpretation would be incorrect. Perceptions of the world and other actors diverge from reality in patterns that can be detected and for reasons we can understand. We can find both misconceptions that are common to various types of people and important differences in perceptions that can be explained without delving too deep into the psyche of individuals. This knowledge can be used not only to explain specific decisions, but also to elucidate interaction patterns.

If International Relations scholars have paid little attention to perceptions, the same cannot be said of psychologists. Thus, in this research, in addition to mainstream foreign policy analysis theories, we will analyze political psychology theories to understand how perceptions are formed and their importance in the decision-making process in a state's foreign policy.

What unifies political psychology and makes it distinct from other forms of political analysis is the search for explanation, description, and prediction at the individual level of analysis (Jervis, 1976)[V]. This level informs and affects the kinds of questions that are asked, the means of proof that are sought, and the nature of inferences about causality that are asked by political psychologists. This attention bias is not always limited to the person, sometimes it incorporates the individual acting together with other individuals in group configurations, but nevertheless, it privileges the person over organizations, bureaucracies, institutional levels, or other levels of analysis that diminish the importance of the individual. In this regard, psychology provides a particularly humanistic inclination on politics, affirming the importance of individual psychological processes for political outcomes (McDermott, 2004)[VI].

This concern with contextual response capacity regarding theoretical paradigms that emphasize rigor over power relations, or parsimony over dense description. Such rigorous models have traditionally formed the backbone of International Relations theories. Paradigms such as realism (Morgenthau, 2003)[VII] or structural realism (Waltz, 1979)[VIII] assume that individuals mostly don't matter in the outcome of political events. Power, especially its distribution, represents the independent variable of interest in such models. Liberalism focuses on the ways in which cooperation can be induced using norms and institutions (Keohane, 1984)[IX]. Theories with economic bias, such as Marxism, focus on the distribution of money and capital among the social classes. Again, individuals are of little importance in such analyses. Constructivism (Wendt, 1999)[X] can examine the cultural foundations of norms, ideas and interests that help formulate political action and behavior, but the individual in such models tends to be shaped and constrained by supranational sociological and cultural forces. Finally, while foreign policy analysis models, such as rational choice, can begin with an analysis of how individual rational actors make choices (Allison & Zelikow, 1999)[XI], these actors do not look like complex individuals recognized by psychologists in empirical studies.

Political psychology, which by its nature is more interested in what happens inside the small black box that measures input and output, stimulus, and response, is what guides the process (Hermann, 1986)[XII]. In many circumstances, political psychologists are more interested in how the decision was achieved than the actual content of the decision itself.

Not only do psychological models attribute greater complexity to humans, they differ from rational models in many other ways as well. Another difference is related to the concern about a liberal polarization. Specifically, political psychologists are likely to believe that there

is an element of environmental control or intervention that makes it possible to achieve a more effective solution to social problems. Ironically, political scientists who traditionally despise the use of psychology often resort to economic models for inspiration (McDermott, 2004)[XIII]. Waltz (1979)[XIV] based his structural realistic model explicitly on a microeconomic theory. Many researchers who use game theory and institutionalists have done the same. But what political scientists seem to fail to recognize is that the economy today works hard with the behavioral sphere, and in turn with psychological methods.

The previous discussion is not to imply that the model of rational choice is inferior. Instead, it only outlined a justification for why we will not use this model in this research, but the bureaucratic model of Allison and Zelikow (1999)[XV].

Thus, since the establishment of Israel as a state in 1948, and even before its creation as a sovereign state itself, its foreign policy has been defined by a bargain that derives from the internal groups that make up the government, keeping present the idea in the national narrative that Israel faces a real threat of genocide given its regional circumstances.

A significant portion of the israeli population perceives arab neighbors as evil, and this perception has great importance in israeli state politics (Freilich, 2006)[XVI]. Israeli society sees the external environment in which it is inserted as immutable, that is, that the states surrounding the country will always seek some way to extinguish the Jewish country. In this sense, several peace initiatives have historically been pursued, demonstrating that, in fact, the environment was very complex, more than previously imagined, and that negotiation and diplomacy could be a possible alternative by modifying the idea that hung over society, that threats would never leave Israel. However, the view of hostility from the Israelis towards the neighbors has not been extinguished in its entirety, and this fact is reflected in the political system that persists in fomenting that there are few options for decision-making in both the diplomatic and military aspects (Freilich, 2006)[XVII].

The concern for security stems from emotional reasons that remain present in Israeli society. Emotions, in turn, provide powerful experiences in human life. Our emotions serve to guide us throughout life, offering powerful, positive, and negative reinforcements for our beliefs and actions. Few people examining their own lives would reject the power and prominence of emotion in daily life. However, studies in International Relations and social sciences in general do just that. They assume that emotion is not very important in foreign policy analyses or relations between states, arguing that at best it should be ignored, and at worst it is disastrous, leading people to irrational and counterproductive choices. However, modern neuropsychology indicates that rational decision-making, in which an individual considers costs and benefits, is dependent on previous emotional processing (McDermott, 2004)[XVIII]. In fact, individuals who cannot reference emotional memory because of brain injuries are not able to make rational decisions in all situations. Even by itself, this finding suggests that emotion, not just cognition, may eventually prove dominant in decision-making models.

For the author (2004)[XIX], emotion rests on a physiological basis. Stimulation from the outside world resulting in physiological changes within the human body. For example, a situation of fear causes an adrenaline production, which induces the classic fight or flight response.

Understanding the importance of emotions for the human being, what can we learn from emotions that can help us analyze and understand International Relations? Jon Mercer (1997)[XX] conducted research on the impact of specific emotions, such as hatred and trust, in various processes in international relations. The author (1997)[XXI] argues that emotion has traditionally

been neglected in international relations analyses for several reasons: first, the insertion of emotion in explanatory frameworks can prove quite difficult because emotion is so complex to define; secondly, emotion suffers from the accusation that it is irrational, and only rational processes are worthy of investigation. Finally, emotion goes against dominant ememomes in International Relations that are mainly materialistic.

This research main goal is to study how the Israeli decision-making process is configured emphasizing the aspect of security, which institutions responsible for decision-making, which groups outside the formal process influence it, what their interests are and the role of emotional factors in this process. Using theories of foreign policy analysis such as the model of government policies of Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, analyses by Margaret and Charles Hermann and Robert Jervis, we intend to discuss how the definition of foreign policy adopted by Israel occurs, also using theories of political psychology mainly to analyze the emotional aspects and how they perpetuate themselves in society.

Decision-making process

Assuming that decision-making at the top of the State is centralized, therefore, ends up generating a somewhat superficial analysis, because it does not consider a fundamental point: decision-making is not carried out by a single rational individual, but by numerous actors belonging to diverse institutions that have their own decision-making process and their own political game, in addition to their own perceptions and interests , making all the guidelines of a foreign policy the product of a complex and dynamic bargaining process.

In the classic *work Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* by Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow (1999)[XXII] three forms of foreign policy analysis is discussed that have proved to be a breakthrough in the discipline of International Relations. Firstly, the model of the rational actor, which deals with an analysis of a cognitive nature, proved to be very useful, however it should be complemented by analyses specifically focused on the governmental machine, the organization and the actors involved in the policy-making process. The first model, often referred to, assumes that important events have important causes. The model comprises the national purposes and the pressures created by problems in international relations but does not yet confront the intranational mechanisms that each government action emerges. This model can also be incorporated into the spectrum of cognitive analyses, as it considers as focus the leader of the government, be it the president, Prime Minister, king, or emperor, as the main actor within the domestic environment in which the decision-making in foreign policy is carried out.

The second model, on the other, provides the foundations of future organizational theories that begin to venture into the real political game that embehes the decision-making process. In turn they involve logic, capabilities, culture, and procedures of large distinct organizations, which constitute a government. This model focuses attention on certain concepts: existing components, their functions, and their operational procedures. This model focuses more on the formal process in which foreign policy is formulated, ignoring external forces such as interest groups and bureaucracies that are not traditionally part of the decision-making process (Allison & Zelikow, 1999)[XXIII].

However, the third model, in turn, goes deeper in the theorization of the political bargaining of decision-making of states. Allison and Zelikow (1999)[XXIV] in their analysis focus on the political processes of governments. Thus, facts in foreign policy are characterized not only by a personal choice of a leader or decision-taker, nor by a simple organizational choice.

What is observed is that the decision-making process becomes a vector resulting from the political action of bargaining between the actors of the State, in which each adjacent vector is a bureaucracy that interferes directly in the final frame.

Comparatively, the government action model (second model) treats decisions taken because of the nature of state organization, partially coordinated by leaders, and expands the efforts of the first (cognitive) model to understand the behavior of governments, such as the choices of a decision-taker. Nevertheless, the second model is not sufficient for the object analyzed here in this research, because for this it would be necessary a more detailed theoretical model that incorporated factors external to the formal process. Leaders who make decisions about organizations are not unitary, that is, they are not alone; they belong to a group with other actors who are equally important to the decision-making process. Thus, one cannot attribute a decision only to the leader or to a minister alone, these are inserted within a complex governmental state and their choices are the result of the system: this is politics.

The negotiation combines regular circuits between the actors positioned hierarchically within the government. The behavior of the government can be understood according to the third conceptual model, not because of organizations, but as a result of a game of negotiations. The results are formed by the interaction of the state-form groups. In contrast to cognitive analysis, the government policy model does not see the unitary actor alone, but many unitary actors: actors who do not focus on a single strategic issue, but on many intranational problems, which unfold in international problems. Thus, actors who operate in terms of vectorizing political actions based on a consistent strategy, according to various conceptions of national, organizational, and personal objectives, make government decisions and not by a single rational choice, but by politics (Allison & Zelikow, 1999)[XXV].

The nature of foreign policy problems allows fundamental disagreement between the people responsible on how to solve them. Of course, most of the actors involved in the formulation of foreign policy exercise a position because of their role in government, for example as Minister of Defence or Foreign Affairs, and it is natural that everyone feels responsibility for drawing attention to the implications of a problem in their area of dominance, such as international finance or international security. This is because their preferences and beliefs are related to the different organizations they represent, and their analyses can produce conflicting indications (Allison & Zelikow, 1999)[XXVI]. As in any state these conflicts of interest are present in Israel, however, the Israeli decision-making process tends to prioritize national security for historical and geopolitical reasons.

Within a state, individuals share power and have different views on what should be done; these differences are important when building trading according to the authors. This environment requires that government decisions and actions result from a political process. Foreign policy is thus the extension of politics to the international sphere. Sometimes the chosen decision commits to a course of action with the triumph of one group over other groups fighting for different alternatives. However, on many occasions, similarly, the different direction may produce a result, or rather a distinct resultresulting from any tor or group intended (Allison & Zelikow, 1999)[XXVII].

In addition to the bureaucratic analysis model, it is important to consider a factor that is relevant when the matter of study is the Israeli decision-making process: interests. Many of the decisions taken at the top of the Israeli government are conditioned by a government structure that ultimately influences those who are part of the political game.

According to its own Declaration of Independence (Israel, 1948)[XXVIII], Israel is a parliamentary republic, whose decisions are made based on regulations that maintain the

separation of powers (executive, legislative and judicial) from the different institutions involved in decision-making. However, the decision-making mechanism in Israel is highly personified, highly politicized, fluid and often informal, without clear global authority, because, for example, Parliament (Knesset) and the Prime Minister's Office can undress each other, and there is no clear hierarchy between them (El-Gendy, 2010)[XXIX].

The decision-making process is influenced by the interests and motivations of the different centers of power within the political stablishment and by factors and procedures related to the nature of the establishment of the institutions itself and of the State itself. He is also influenced by powerful institutions and individuals outside the formal decision of the political *establishment*, but who directly or indirectly influence decision-making. The Israeli decision-making process is also influenced by the complex external environment of the Middle East (El-Gendy, 2010)[XXX]. The balance between these different internal and external actors is what eventually determines the chosen policy, and varies depending on the nature, and scope of the problem in question, as well as on the timing of the decision.

The bureaucratic policy model of Alisson and Zelikow (1999)[XXXI] proposes that decisions are made based on the convergence between various actors responsible for the decision-making process, and the decision is a vector resulting from the bargain between interest groups representing adjacent vectors.

The Israeli decision-making process takes place in this way. There are several actors who bargain for decision-making. Israel's decision-making methodology has become not only personalized and idiosyncratic, but also informal, and less institutionalized. Prime Ministers, for example, tend to have a direct relationship with their ambassadors to the United States, and although the ambassador must respond to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, such a direct relationship with the Prime Minister has allowed them to become associates in the foreign and security policy decision-making process (El-Gendy, 2010)[XXXII].

Many ordinary foreign policy decisions are made without consulting the cabinet. For example, Sharon decided on the plan to withdraw from Gaza without consulting the national security bureaucracy on the open options, consulting it only on the ways of implementing the plan already chosen by the Prime Minister. Similarly, Menachem Begin went to Camp David in 1978 without the benefit of any personal preparation work and ignored a large study conducted by the Armed Forces (El-Gendy, 2010)[XXXIII]. Depending on each decision certain groups become prominent in the decision-making process, demonstrating their interests and objectives in decision making. To analyze the importance of interests for the determination of the actors present in the decision-making process, we will discuss the theoretical view and the groups working in the Israeli bargaining game.

It is inevitable that the selection and evaluation of any data may be influenced by the psychological nature of the agent. Interests, images, perceptions, worldview, and ideological bias help determine which facts the observer will highlight and which ones he will ignore. They also influence the importance assigned to selected data and the patterns drawn. In fact, the actors of the decision-making process do not respond to objective reality, but to their individual subjective perception of reality (Jervis, 1976)[XXXIV]. In their deliberations they also tend to convey simplistic images enshrined in the long history of constructed ideological stereotypes.

Very simplified images influence the evaluation of intelligence data in no uncertain terms. In fact, these images serve as screens for selective reception of new messages, and they often control the perception and interpretation of these messages that have not been completely ignored, rejected, or suppressed (Jervis, 1976)[XXXV].

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: AN ANALYSIS OF ISRAELI POLITICS

CALANDRI, K. S.

If the behavior of the State cannot be explained only by internal policy and the external environment, then it is necessary to examine the interests, the origins of these interests, the perception of decision makers and the calculations of decision makers of the high level of government. In the case of Israel, it is necessary to observe the political arrangement of bureaucracies, the external environment, the interests, and perception of leaders; because in certain situations only the external environment and the formal decision-making process are not sufficient to understand how certain decisions were made.

According to Jervis (1976)[XXXVI], the functioning of bureaucracies can determine policy. However, it is not enough to show the course of action of the State and may seem inconsistent and lack value integration. Such deficiencies can be products of the perception of individual decision-making. Individuals, as well as organizations, are unable to coordinate their actions and develop carefully calculated strategies. The fact that people must make decisions in the face of the burdens of multiple objectives and highly ambiguous information means that policies are often contradictory, incoherent, and poorly adapted to the information at hand. If we do not understand this, the intriguing behavior of the state will automatically be the product of any internal negotiation or the autonomous operation of different parts of the government.

The second basic claim of theories about this level of analysis, according to Jervis (1976)[XXXVII], is that state policies are formed by bureaucratic bargains and routines. This point is vital because even if bureaucrats' political preferences are linked to their positions within the government, they would be relatively unimportant unless those preferences explained the policy results. But we should note at the outset that even if this were true, we would have to explore the sources of decision-making only in bureaucracies.

Also, according to Jervis (1976)[XXXVIII], the claim that policies can be explained by bureaucratic maneuvering could be supported in one of the following two ways. First, if you could demonstrate that different parts of government carry out, or fail to comply with, policies in a way that is consistent with their preferences and routines, not with the decisions of national leaders. The other possible way would be in the argument that decisions of authority can be explained by the interaction of bureaucracies, this raises difficulties that go deeper than the temporary absence of evidence. To prove this statement, we must be able to specify the expected relationship between the variety of bureaucratic positions. It is not enough to show that the result be a compromise between the views that have been advocated by various parts of the government. Almost any decision could fit that description. The theory should provide generalizations that demonstrate to us more exactly what the outcome will be. If the goals of different parts of the bureaucracy are complementary, then presumably each agency will give up its position on the part of the program that cares less to get a greater voice on the issues that are most important to it. Presumably, the success of one organization in conflict with others is related to its strength which, as we observe, is the key.

Bar-Tal (2001)[XXXIX] analyzes more deeply the perception and its influence. For him, societies that have been or are involved in conflicts for a very long period, have as a rule the characteristic of a perception of fear rooted in society. The collective emotional orientation of fear is functional during the years of endless conflict, however when these societies begin a peace process, this emotional orientation becomes a major psychological obstacle to pacification.

It is necessary for society to disconnect from this perception to be able to advance regarding the constitution of peace and integration in the International System. The present feeling of fear only feeds the perpetuation of the conflict, extending it much longer. "Hope is a

decisive element in any attempt to bring about social change towards greater vivacity, awareness and reason" (Fromm apud Bar-Tal, 2001, p. 620)[XL].

The biggest problem in the shutdown of a society with the perception of fear is the implication of a partnership and cooperation with the once enemy, besides requiring the selection of new ways to achieve these goals through negotiation and mediation, strengthening trust, transparency, and reciprocity. For the author, the perception of hope involves superior mental processes of vision, imagination, goal setting and consideration of alternatives, which require openness, creativity, and flexibility. These processes must overcome the automatic and spontaneous emergence of the perception of fear and this is a very difficult task, given the fact that, although during a peace process a conflict loses its intractable nature. Bar Tal (2001)[XLI] says that in such a reality, when the collective memories of the endless conflict are alive together with other collective memories (for example, the Holocaust) end up provoking fear and the orientation of this collective fear remains a powerful force in the psychological of these societies.

For Bar-Tal (2001)[XLII] fear is a fundamental psychological reaction of the humano being, as well as for Hobbes (2008)[XLIII], consequently, playing an important role in the determination of human behavior. In essence, emotions are a multifaceted phenomenon of subjective feelings accompanied by physiological, cognitive, and behavioral responses. In other words, emotions serve as mediators for judgment, evaluation, and decision-making processes.

Israeli politics

The traditional explanation of Israel's security concern stems from a combination of several factors; the first of which is the fundamental Zionist notion that Israel is a haven where Jews can be saved from the threats that endanger their lives in the diaspora. The second factor is Israel's unique geostrategic position and its small margin of manoeuvre, which are the result of its small population in relation to its neighbors, its geographical size, and its lack of strategic depth. The security concern is also explained because of the nature of Israel's settlers vis-à-vis the original Palestinian population, and their history of isolation within their regional environment against which they fought in large-scale wars. As a result, Israelis have an almost total concern, with what they perceive as a threat to their environment that they perceive as hostile, uncertain, volatile, and incomparable to that of any other country, and therefore deserves special attention regarding security (Marcus, 1989)[XLIV].

However, according to this explanation one would expect that security concern shrunk or decreased because of changes in Israel's geostrategic position. That is, its success in achieving military superiority over its neighbors, the existence of three minutes of peace with some of them and Israel's success in obtaining military support from the United States. Since this has clearly not been the case as security issues continue to play an important role in Israeli public life, some have suggested a psychological interpretation arguing that concern for security was the result of an insecurity in the minds of Israeli Jews.

Over the decades the conflict has acquired an irreconcilable character, culminating in large-scale interstate conflicts from 1948 (1st Arab-Israeli War) to 1973 *(Yom Kippur* War). These conflicts played an important role as a way of rooting fear in Israeli society. The experiences of continuous wars eventually generated an apprenticeship in society of insecurity and fear, with the fear of Hobbes' violent death occupying a central place in the political debate of the State. It is important to emphasize that the definition of security used here can be

summarized in the following sentence "Security in an objective sense measures the absence of threats to obtain values, and, in a subjective sense, measures the absence of fear that such values will be attacked." (Wolfers, 1950, p.485)[XLV]. According to this definition, insecurity would be nothing more than fear itself since security would be the absence of fear.

For Levy (1994)[XLVI], the argument is that learning at the collective level and the assumption that organizations or governments can be treated as organizationsthat have goals, beliefs, not memories are aesthetically feasible. However, organizations are made up of people and these people learn, influencing the behavior of organizations.

Even so, this perspective is widely accepted in the literature on organizational learning. Organizational learning is not the same thing as individual learning, so organizations don't literally learn. There is no organizational learning without individual learning, and organizational learning is a metaphor (Levy, 1994)[XLVII].

However, for Levy (1994)[XLVIII] not all organizational change derives from learning. The process involves learning only if it includes individual cognitive change and only if individuals, from experience, incorporate in organizational practices and procedures the fruit of this learning. Thus, organizational learning involves a multi-stage process in which experiences lead to individual learning, which induces individual action to change organizational procedures, which ultimately leads to a change in organizational behavior.

Israeli citizens felt threatened not only as a collective in a state, but primarily as individuals: many of them participated in military actions and became victims of violence, directly or indirectly (Bar-Tal, 2001)[XLIX]. Thus, learning takes place at the level of the individual, but in the case of conflicts at the state level this learning extends to more individuals shaping society and spreading the feeling of fear throughout the most diverse spheres.

We should also point out that not only did wars have an important impact on the construction of the Israeli narrative, but the trajectory of the Jewish people also plays a decisive role. Bar-Tal (2001)[L] analyzes the persecution of Jews by non-Jews, the sense of imprisonment in the diaspora, and the threats and dangers that the Jews faced, which added to the post-creation wars of the state, eventually fostered the feeling of fear. Thus, seen as a symbolic climax that tends to represent all jewish suffering throughout history, the Holocaust occupies a prominent position in learning hobbesian fear by the Israelis. Many of the works on the Holocaust contain realistic-naturalistic descriptions of suffering, agony, and death, which implies fear, helplessness, and hopelessness.

The concern with the Arab-Israeli conflict is not only decisive in Israel's public and political life but is very present in the literature which reinforces the discourse of Hobbesian fear. Arabs are often portrayed as scary, cruel, inmanlike, and determined to destroy and kill. Similarly, negative, and threatening portraits of Arabscan also be found in Israeli children's literature. Bar-Tal (2001)[LI] cites studies that analyzed the image of Arabic in children's books from the 1950s to the early 1980s. The Arabs were consistently, through a discourse, deananized as a threatening entity, beginning with the description of their external appearance and ending with psychological and often flat characterizations.

Perception has always been present in the Israeli decision-making process. The recurring security decisions, despite factors such as the scope of military supremacy in the region, decreased conflicts, weakening of the region's adversaries and powerful strategic alliances, are the fruit of the Israeli perception of its external environment fostered by the Armed Forces and rooted in the institutions responsible for the formulation of foreign policy in the State.

Leaders therefore tend to underestimate the importance of consultation and personal preparation work, recounting primarily their personal judgment and relegating senior officials and advisers to the level of advisors. The perceptions and interests of decision-makers exist in any government, but in Israel they end up having a greater prominence, since all the study and preparation necessary to forward the decision-making meetings are discarded by the Prime Minister.

Moreover, since most Israeli leaders have long-standing political experiences, they have a longstanding familiarity with primary national security issues and often have strongly predetermined positions on how to deal with the different problems Israel faces. Leaders are also strongly influenced by their beliefs and perceptions of the world. El-Gendy (2010)[LII] argues that foreign policy decision makers operate within their psychological dispositions, which include social factors such as ideology and tradition that are derived from a cumulative historical legacy, as well as personality factors. In addition, Israeli leaders are also inevitably influenced by the culture of freer decision-making, a fact that *stems from* the lack of checks and balances during policy making. This resulted in an increased dependence on personal judgment for decision-making that created a culture of improvisation and crisis management as an alternative to systematic premeditation, planning and prevention.

The question of how to ensure the existence and security of the Jewish collective in Israel has been the fundamental problem that has worried for more than a century every Israeli Jew and every Jewish authority of the state. This challenge has become the most important factor that has shaped personal and social life in Israel and has had a decisive effect on the possible resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. This concern in Israel, even in the very way of negotiating the region's coveted peace, is not surprising, given the long-term pattern of threats and violence that characterize its relationship of dominance and enmity vis-à-vis neighboring Arab countries and the Palestinian people. The violent conflict has transformed Israeli society into a highly militarized nation that has security as the main theme on the state's agenda. As a result, security that symbolizes the existence of the State of Israel, as well as collective security, has become a key concept in the country's vocabulary.

Over the years, security has been used continuously as an important justification and explanation for many government decisions, even if they have no direct security implications, becoming a rational basis for decision-making on actions, responding with reactions in military, political, social, and even educational and cultural domains. Security has also been used to justify more important objectives in negotiations with the Arabs, as this is the only legitimate consideration accepted by the international community and the vast majority of Israeli Jews.

In view of the collective memory revisited, the Israelis would be conditioned to believe that there is a real, tangible, immediate and existential threat, both to the collective security of Israel as a state, and to individual citizens, especially the Jews. However, although Israelis agree that Israel is plagued by security problems, they are very polarized, especially in relation to the conditions under which security must be guaranteed. We mainly addressed that the political differences in Israel, as well as their translation in relation to political parties, in the third we could understand how these differences were relevant to the political period of the rise of likud in the late 1970s and early 1980s. While one part of the Israeli public believes that a requirement for security is peace, to be achieved through the partial or total withdrawal of the occupied territories in 1967, another party believes that only occupying most of the territories that security can be guaranteed.

Despite the polarization of Israeli society, security remains a dominant and even ubiquitous symbol in the *Israeli ethos* that has chosen to privilege personal security and well-

being for nothing less than the survival of the state. In fact, as the years go by and Israel strengthens itself as a state formed existential security is still the theme that stands out as the main determinant that affects and influences virtually all spheres of public life in the country. Consequently, any attempt to understand Israeli affairs, such as individual perceptions, public policies, and the behavior of the population in relation to voting, is subordinated to the doctrine of national security and foreign policy. In Israel, security considerations played a decisive role in decisions such as the definition of the national budget, planning the construction of new cities and communities, industry development, establishing electoral platforms, planning policies against unemployment, law legislation, planning school curricula, and so on.

Four decades after the establishment of the state, the unfulfilled goal of achieving reasonable levels of perceived security still provides the focus of public political debate and is at the top of the national agenda. The pursuit of security plays a decisive role, for example, as the precondition for achieving a comprehensive Middle East peace agreement with the Arabs. Israeli official policy insisted that its territorial commitments should be conditional on reliable Arab promises about the future security of Israel and its people. Peace and security are inseparably linked in different schemes, depending on the group's ideology and political convictions. The structure of the decision-making process, as discussed in the study, provides the basis for security to be prioritized, regardless of the political party in power.

Most of the security debates held in Israel were from a political perspective, discussing strategic and tactical policies to deal with potential and real threats to the State of Israel and its citizens, in view of the dangers posed by the intentions and capacities perceived by states in the regions and in the people. They largely ignored the socio-psychological basis of security, implying that only military, political and economic conditions can bring the sense of security to the people of Israel. We suggest that the safety and conditions that promote it do not have objective and pragmatic criteria for its evaluation. Leaders make these assessments according to their own convictions and persuade the public that their views are the most correct. Of course, israel's security problems depend not only on military, political and economic indicators, but also on the social psychological factors addressed in this research.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to analyze the Israeli foreign policy treating them as a direct product of security conditions, beliefs, and concerns. We take as a premise of work that Israel was deeply shaped by this unceasing concentration on multifaceted security fruit of the collective memory of the history of persecution of the Jewish people and the conflicts that the state faced. We suggest that to understand the Israeli national foreign policy decision-making process fully and accurately, as well as institutional networks and procedures, policies, and behaviors at home and abroad, a broad investigation into Israeli national security *and ethos* is necessary.

It follows, necessarily, that the issue of security in the broadest sense does not exist autonomously and independently of individual members or units within a given society. This view implies the need to examine geographic, ideological, political, cultural, and other factors that influence fundamental perceptions of security. Various approaches to meeting the security needs presented by political elites, formal actors, as well as formal socialization mechanisms, which constantly convey widely accepted approaches to security. And finally, the direct or indirect influence that these security views can have on society.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: AN ANALYSIS OF ISRAELI POLITICS

CALANDRI, K. S.

The decision-making process of Israeli foreign policy on security is formulated from numerous groups that have security as paramount on the government agenda, but which have disagreements about the paths to be followed on how to maintain security. The structural nature of the decision-making process, with a multi-party parliamentary political system, leading to the need for a coalition to govern, besides reflecting a highly polarized society, increases the difficulty of instituting public policies making the emotional aspects the amalgam that would unite the different groups of government and the population. The first two Likud governments in Israel are an example of how important emotional aspects were for the approval of policies such as the expansion of settlements in the Palestinian territories and the legitimization of these policies. What we intended to explore in the research was the emotional character of Israeli decision-making, which is often more present than pragmatism enlisted by studies on Israel's strategic excellence.

Notes:

[I] Professora e Coordenadora do curso de Relações Internacionais do Unisagrado. Doutora e Mestre do PPGRI San Tiago Dantas (Unesp, Unicamp, PUC-SP) e colaboradora do Instituto Brasil-Israel. E-mail: karinacalandrin@gmail.com

[II] Freilich, Charles D.. (2006). National Security Decision-Making in Israel: Processes, Pathologies, and Strengths. **Middle East Journal**, Washington D.C., v. 60, n. 4, p.635-663, Fall. 2006.

[III] Jervis, Robert. (1976). **Perceptions and Misperceptions in International Politics**. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

[IV] ibidem

[V] ibidem

[VI] McDermott, Rose. (2004). **Political psychology in international relations**. Ann Arbor: The University Of Michigan Press.

[VII] Morgenthau, Hans. (2003). **A Política Entre as Nações**: A luta pelo poder e pela paz. Brasília: FUNAG.

[VIII] Waltz, Kenneth N.. (1979). **Theory of International Politics**. Long Grove: Waveland Press, 1979.

[IX] Keohane, Robert O.. (1984). **After Hegemony**: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

[X] Wendt, Alexander. (1999) **Social Theory of International Politics**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[XI] Allison, Graham; Zelikow, Philip. (1999). **Essence of Decision**: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis. 2. ed. New York: Pearson.

[XII] Hermann, Margaret. (1986). **Political Psychology**: Contemporary Problems and Issues. San Francisco: Jossey-bass Inc Pub, 1986.

[XIII] See note VI

[XIV] See note VIII

[XV] See note XI

[XVI] See note II

[XVII] ibidem

[XVIII] See note VII

[XIX] ibidem

[XX] Mercer, Jonathan. **Approaching Emotion.** (1997). In: ISA ANNUAL CONVENTION, 38., 1997, San Diego. Anais. San Diego: International Studies Association.

[XXI] ibidem

[XXII] See note XI

[XXIII] ibidem

[XXIV] ibidem

[XXV] ibidem

[XXVI] ibidem

[XXVII] ibidem

[XXVIII] Israel. Foreign Affairs Ministry. (Org.). Declaration of Establishment of State of Israel. (1948).

[XXIX] El-Gendy, Karim. (2010). **The Process of Israeli Decision Making**: Mechanisms, Forces and Influences.

Beirut: Al-zaytouna Centre For Studies And Consultations.
[XXX] ibidem
[XXXI] See note XI
[XXXII] See note XXIX
[XXXIII] ibidem
[XXXIV] See note III
[XXXV] ibidem
[XXXVI] ibidem
[XXXVII] ibidem
[XXXVIII] ibidem
[XXXIX] Bar-Tal, Daniel. (2001). Why Does Fear Override Hope in Societies Engulfed by Intractable Conflict, as It Does in the Israeli Society? **Political Psychology**, v. 22, n. 3, p.601-627, Aut. 2001.
[XL] ibidem
[XLI] ibidem
[XLII] ibidem
[XLIII] Hobbes, Thomas. (2008). **O Leviatã**. 2. ed. São Paulo: Martin Claret.
[XLIV] Marcus, Jonathan. The Politics of Israel's Security. **International Affairs** (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), v. 65, n. 2, p. 233-246, Spring, 1989.
[XLV] Wolfers, Arnold. (1952). "National Security" as an Ambiguous Symbol. **Political Science Quaterly**, v. 67, n. 4, p. 481-502, 1952.
[XLVI] Levy, Jack S. (1989). Learning and foreign policy: sweeping a conceptual minefield. **International Organization**, v. 48, n. 2, p. 279-312, Spring, 1994.
[XLVII] ibidem
[XLVIII] ibidem
[XLIX] See note XXXIX
[L] ibidem
[LI] ibidem
[LII] See note XXIX

References:

Allison, Graham; Zelikow, Philip. (1999). **Essence of Decision**: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis. 2. ed. New York: Pearson.

Bar-Tal, Daniel. (2001). Why Does Fear Override Hope in Societies Engulfed by Intractable Conflict, as It Does in the Israeli Society? **Political Psychology**, v. 22, n. 3, p.601-627, Aut. 2001.

El-Gendy, Karim. (2010). **The Process of Israeli Decision Making**: Mechanisms, Forces and Influences. Beirut: Al-zaytouna Centre For Studies And Consultations.

Freilich, Charles D.. (2006). National Security Decision-Making in Israel: Processes, Pathologies, and Strengths. **Middle East Journal**, Washington D.C., v. 60, n. 4, p.635-663, Fall. 2006.

Hermann, Margaret. (1986). **Political Psychology**: Contemporary Problems and Issues. San Francisco: Jossey-bass Inc Pub, 1986.

Hobbes, Thomas. (2008). **O Leviatã**. 2. ed. São Paulo: Martin Claret.

Israel. Foreign Affairs Ministry. (Org.). **Declaration of Establishment of State of** Israel. (1948).

Jervis, Robert. (1976). **Perceptions and Misperceptions in International Politics**. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Keohane, Robert O.. (1984). **After Hegemony**: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Levy, Jack S. (1989). Learning and foreign policy: sweeping a conceptual minefield. **International Organization**, v. 48, n. 2, p. 279-312, Spring, 1994.

Marcus, Jonathan. The Politics of Israel's Security. **International Affairs** (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), v. 65, n. 2, p. 233-246, Spring, 1989.

McDermott, Rose. (2004). **Political psychology in international relations**. Ann Arbor: The University Of Michigan Press.

Mercer, Jonathan. **Approaching Emotion**. (1997). In: ISA ANNUAL CONVENTION, 38., San Diego: International Studies Association.

Morgenthau, Hans. (2003) **A Política Entre as Nações**: A luta pelo poder e pela paz. Brasília: FUNAG.

Waltz, Kenneth N.. (1979). **Theory of International Politics**. Long Grove: Waveland Press, 1979.

Wendt, Alexander. (1999). **Social Theory of International Politics**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wolfers, Arnold. (1952). "National Security" as an Ambiguous Symbol. **Political Science Quaterly**, v. 67, n. 4, p. 481-502.