

II. ХАЛҚАРО РИВОЖЛАНИШ ТРЕНДЛАРИ
Тренды международного развития
Trends of International Development

**RATIONAL CHOICE MODEL:
REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY CASE**

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Abstract: *Since the stabilizing mechanisms of the international system have lost some of their value, modern Central Asia tends to adopt a pragmatic strategy that is largely oriented on the interests of its citizens. In this circumstance, a thorough understanding of some South Asian nations' experience in establishing rational diplomacy and dealing with security challenges is essential. Connectivity interest in long-term collaboration has been spurred by renewed attempts to deepen Euro-Asian relations. Central Asian and Afghan ties have strengthened, establishing new approaches between regional countries to bring stability and peace to the war-torn neighbor. Central Asian governments' aspirations to play a more active role in global and regional issues may expand prospects for collaboration with their partners in South Asia in pursuit of mutual goals.*

Keywords: *Rational Choice Model Game Theory, Central Asia, South Asia, Mutual Cooperation, Uzbekistan, Regional Connectivity, India, Capacity Building*

Introduction

Many nations in the modern world attempt to pursue a pragmatic strategy focused solely on their interests in the face of the devaluation of the international system's stabilizing mechanisms. Today, the challenges of realistic and objective assessment of such interests, as well as their relationship with history, geography, economic expediency, and reality, are becoming more essential.

The first requirement for effective foreign and domestic policy is a constructive awareness of one's role in the world and the area, which allows for the formulation and pragmatic implementation of national development goals. ***President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has created a fundamentally new political climate in the region***, its constructive connectivity prism, within which the major aim is

to build an atmosphere of trust, mutual understanding, good neighborliness, and collaboration in Central Asia.

In this context, the contribution of rational choice theory to understanding changing approaches to build resilient and open relations to create a new neighborhood in Central Asia motivates many eminent scholars to reconsider traditional discourse on the Central Eurasian development process.

Methodology Aspect

The fundamental tenet of the main approaches in social sciences is the behavioral rationality concept. According to experts who frequently concur with decision-makers on the notion that interests and actions are always motivated by pragmatic aims, the bulk of decisions typically depends on a politician's political talent, flair, and intuition, especially in exceedingly complicated situations.¹

Theoretical comprehension of various world events is inextricably linked to the processes that it describes. The model of a rational actor is regarded as the most ideal in the analysis, particularly when highly contentious subjects on the global agenda are discussed.² In one of the sections of his book "Decision Theory" Anatol Rapoport contrasts the "zero-sum game", in which the winner's gain corresponds to the loser's loss, to the "variable-sum game", where both opponents can suffer equal losses³; introducing a new element into the game and aiming to reduce antagonism, balances the hope for beneficial cooperation of the parties, and as he showed with the example of the famous "Prisoner's Dilemma".⁴

The question of whether the game theory can be used to find the best possible forms of international cooperation has an obvious answer - because we are dealing with a privileged example of "rational choice behavior" on the part of the subjects. This is because of the nature of the two close regional systems that are currently in place, as well as the huge necessity for such interaction by itself,

¹ Emmanuel Lee Behavioural Science, Rationality and Public Policy / *behavioraleconomics* / <https://www.behavioraleconomics.com/behavioural-science-rationality-and-public-policy/>

² R.Jervis. Perception and Misperception in International Politics. Princeton University Press, 2017, p.109

³ Anatol Rapoport. Decision Theory and Decision Behaviour/Second Revised Edition/1998, N.Y./

<https://www.pdfdrive.com/decision-theory-and-decision-behaviour-d188373018.html>

⁴ Brams, Steven J. Game theory and the humanities: bridging two worlds / MIT Press, 2011, p.97

<https://ru.scribd.com/doc/242674678/Steven-J-Brams-Game-Theory-and-the-Humanities-Bridging-Two-Worlds-2011-A-pdf>

which centers on the subjects' economic and political convergence as a fact of reality.⁵

The game theory opens up new questions about the mechanisms that translate the values of certain independent variables into the values of dependent variables so that we can better understand the principles underlying the political models already defined in such studies. The logic of interaction that makes up such a mechanism stands out here; the logic of reputation and the logic of insurance are different categories of models that include their diverse applications. Today, if we need to reconstruct international political theory more solidly, we should perceive and understand these mechanisms.⁶

Experts in the field of international relations who have found inspiration in the application of game theory in economics are now witnessing the formation of new approaches to the understanding of game theory in modern international relations, especially in connection with various models of decision-making and political expectations. In economics and other related fields, evolutionary game theory based on quantitative methods and formalized heuristic theories conflict with concepts arising from the traditions of the classical theory of rational choice⁷. These new models do not imply that each individual has exceptional numerical talents. The connection between "formal models" and "rational choice" is gradually being leveled. Despite Nash's many improvements, game theory models will not be able to find unique balances for their most interesting games. Consequently, the choice of balance will require more and more attention to historical and traditional patterns of behavior in international relations, rather than just mathematical or quantitative methods⁸.

⁵ Herbert Gintis Behavioral Sciences, Santa Fe Institute, Santa Fe, NM 87501; Department of Economics, Central European University, Budapest, H-1051 Hungary

(<http://www2.econ.iastate.edu/tesfatsi/FrameworkForUnificationOfBehavioralSciences.HGintis2007.pdf>)

⁶ Jack S. Levy. The Causes of War and The Conditions of Peace. Annual Review of Political Science Vol. 1:139-165 (Volume publication date June 1998) <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.1.1.139>
Department of Political Science, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901-1568

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⁷ Deniz Tasci. Game Theory: Importance, Applications and Contributions in International Relations Research Paper / Ankara, Jan.2020

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338844011_GAME_THEORY_Importance_Applications_and_Contributions_in_International_Relations

⁸ Ibidem

Refers to the categories of mechanisms that can be considered "strategic situations". To the extent that the latter can be modeled to make balance sheet forecasts, it is possible to trace a process that varies from the conditions that created the strategic situation to the likely outcome.⁹ These strategic situations are mechanisms in that their ways of achieving equilibrium form a process linking the independent variable's values with the dependent variable's constant values.

Thus, researchers of game theory in international relations, rational choice, and developers of formal models win disputes with their opponents-traditionalists in political science. The success of such models is that they offer a set of tools capable of solving several problems that arise in many sub-branches of international research. It does not replace detailed empirical work or traditional macrostructural approaches but complements them.¹⁰ Formal models of rational choice of methods reveal the features of regional and global processes that link macro-variable constants, emphasized by international political factors.

Connectivity Driver

In new conditions, modern Central Asia tends to pursue a pragmatic policy, primarily based on the interests of its members, understanding the devaluation of the stabilizing mechanisms of the international system. In this context, a thorough understanding of the experience of some South Asian nations in shaping rational diplomacy and tackling security challenges deserves a special interest.

Renewing efforts to develop Euro-Asian relations have piqued such a nation as India in its primary interest for long-term cooperation. The improved relations between Central Asia and Afghanistan have established new parameters for India's efforts to bring peace to the country. New Uzbekistan's initiatives to take a more active role in global and regional issues will increase opportunities for collaboration with India in pursuit of common goals.

Therefore, Central Asians have a greater interest in collaborating economically with South Asian partners and economic groups. Through such

⁹ R.Klingebiel, A.Meyer. Becoming Aware of the Unknown: Decision Making During the Implementation of a Strategic Initiative / Organization Science 24(1):133-153 DOI:10.2307/23362104
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260140235_Becoming_Aware_of_the_Unknown_Decision_Making_During_the_Implementation_of_a_Strategic_Initiative

¹⁰ Stephen L Quackenbush The Rationality of Rational Choice Theory
International Interactions 30(2):87-107 DOI:10.1080/03050620490462595
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228845015_The_Rationality_of_Rational_Choice_Theory

collaboration, they can acquire cutting-edge technology, and update, and build industrial facilities of the highest caliber. The choice of trading partners is now based on the opportunities offered and the viability of the business.¹¹ At the moment, the region is more of a political group that allows the states' interests to be brought together and harmonized. It can also be referred to as an economic community.

India Case

A good example is the case of India. With the G-20 presidency, India has grown a great knowledge of the obstacles and has remained consistent in its commitment to partnering with the other G-20 nations to solve serious issues about debt, economic development, food and energy security, and, in particular, the environment.¹² One of our major goals will remain the governance reform of international financial organizations.

At the recent QUAD Summit in Tokyo, India reaffirmed its adherence to the policy of "non-alignment," refusing to support anti-Russian sanctions, which once again backed its status quo and prevented it from direct involvement in conflicts or utilizing it in games for the benefit of other nations. Its diplomacy now focuses on a greener future, improved connectivity, digital technologies, and a cost-effective healthcare system. It sent thousands of tons of food and humanitarian aid to Myanmar while extending multi-billion-dollar credits to Sri Lanka for energy supply, soft commodities, and trade.¹³ Traditionally, it has proceeded from the principle of respect for the political choice and preferences of its partners and neighbors, realizing the unconditional benefits of such an approach.

In previous decades, India used the potential of multilateral diplomacy, preferring it as a neutral sphere of international relations. Today, it is acquiring new financial and industrial opportunities to defend its economic interests in

¹¹ Connecting Central Asia with Economic Centers A Study of the Asian Development Bank Institute, 2014. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/159307/adbi-connecting-central-asia-economic-centers-final-report.pdf>

¹² Mohit Anand. Opportunities and challenges of India's G20 presidency. Politico DECEMBER 27, 2022 <https://www.politico.eu/article/opportunities-and-challenges-of-india-pm-narendra-modi-g20-presidency/>

¹³ Riaz Haq. Can Washington Trust Modi's India As Key Ally in Asia? / Haq's Musings, Friday, September 16, 2022 <http://www.riazhaq.com/2022/09/can-washington-trust-modis-india-as-key.html>

different international platforms, which reflects its interest in creating a solid technological base for its commercial competitiveness. And nowadays, its economic and political maturity has reached such a level that other players would hardly pose a serious threat to its development. Today, India believes that it should cooperate with the Chinese business more actively. Although trade between India and China is large, the volume of bilateral investments is less than \$3 billion.¹⁴ Welcoming more Chinese investment and seeking a mutual opening for Indian services would mark better opportunities for the Indian economy in the years to come.

Despite the current uneasy relations between India and Russia on the background of the Ukrainian crisis, they keep loyally supporting each other in the UN General Assembly and Security Council. In previous years, India has strengthened military cooperation with Russia, and Indian state-owned companies have invested in Russian gas and oil. Perhaps most important was the fact that Moscow is the partner supporting India in developing its nuclear deterrent system.¹⁵ The "lease" of the Russian nuclear ballistic submarine was followed by five or six new strategic deals. However, the factor that hinders relations between the two countries is Russia's growing dependence on arms sales and energy supply.¹⁶

Several adopted strategies are aimed at these goals, including the development of India's economic and military power, as well as the promotion of contacts between the people of both countries - India and Pakistan through commerce and trade. This vision prevailed in the policy of the government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the second term of Manmohan Singh. The policy of the current Prime Minister Narendra Modi towards Pakistan is seen by many as promoting efforts in support of the Indian-Pakistani peace process.¹⁷

¹⁴ Antara Ghosal Singh. China's Evolving Strategic Discourse on India / Stimson / In South Asia / May 4, 2022

<https://www.stimson.org/2022/chinas-evolving-strategic-discourse-on-india/>

¹⁵ C. Raja Mohan India Has Its own Ideas About Russia and Ukraine / Foreign Policy, Feb.07, 2022 /

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/07/india-russia-ukraine-modi-putin/>

¹⁶ John H. Gill. Russia and South Asia: India and Pakistan / Russia's Global Reach: A Security and Statecraft Assessment / The George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies.

<https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/marshall-center-books/russias-global-reach-security-and-statecraft-assessment/chapter-8-russia-and-south-asia-india-and-pakistan>

¹⁷ Ministry of External Affairs of India / Annual Report | 2018-19

https://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/31719_MEA_AR18_19.pdf

The geopolitical crisis in Eastern Europe has halted the implementation of ambitious trans-regional transportation projects and affected Russia's model of economic integration within the EAEU, slowing the pace of regional economic cooperation. Despite the prevailing opinion that some immediate neighbors deprive India's physical access to the countries of Central Asia, India's trade relations are not limited either by air cargo or through trade through the Iranian port of Chabahar.¹⁸

The first informal summit of Central Asian leaders held in Astana in March 2018 and subsequently the next one in early 2022, underlined the present push for regional cooperation and reaffirmed the value of learning from India's experience in finding common solutions to difficulties.¹⁹ India's interest in sustainable collaboration has grown as a result of renewed efforts to strengthen Euro-Asian connections.

The achievement of this goal will greatly depend on the activity of Indian diplomacy in Central Asia since New Delhi assesses the futility of acting in this direction. This, among other things, explained and motivated India's entry into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, acting in cooperation with countries primarily in Central Asia in the India+5 format, which shares similar approaches to maintaining the regional security system in a stable state – namely, Russia, Iran, China and the countries of Central Asia. Intensifying cooperation between Central Asian states in industrial and rural development, food production, small and medium-sized businesses, pharmaceuticals, and information technology can also provide tangible benefits to the parties involved.²⁰

Challenging Alternative

In close cooperation with Central Asian partners, new guidelines have been established for the mutual efforts to bring peace to Afghanistan. They have a clear interest in dialogue with the reputable Afghan government in Kabul over the aid for its people and ensuring stability in its soil and understand that continued

¹⁸ J.Panda. Revitalizing INSTC: Analyzing geopolitical realignments and the China factor/New Trend/ 12 Feb 2023 <https://trendsresearch.org/insight/revitalizing-instc-analyzing-geopolitical-realignments-and-the-china-factor/>

¹⁹ The First Meeting of the India-Central Asia Summit / Press Information Bureau - Government of India, Prime Minister's Office / 19 JAN 2022 PIB Delhi <https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1791257>

²⁰ Ibidem

financial support for the new government in Kabul will have a positive effect to untie the country and serve to the rehabilitation of war-torn Afghanistan.²¹

Recently, India and Uzbekistan agreed to begin a joint feasibility assessment to provide the groundwork for discussions for a preferential trade deal (PTA). A PTA between India and Uzbekistan will facilitate trade with Central Asia while also providing access to markets in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Pharmaceuticals, mechanical equipment, car parts, services, and optical instruments and equipment were among the top export products. From Uzbekistan, India largely imported fruits and vegetables, juice products and extracts, lubricants, fertilizers, and services. Economic ties of India with Uzbekistan include medicines, auto components, and the hotel industry.²²

Such factors push Central Asian countries to re-evaluate the economic, diplomatic, and transport potential of the whole region. In this prism, India could join the Uzbek-Azerbaijani project "South Caucasus - Zangezur Corridor - Central Asia," which could utilize the capabilities of the Iranian port of Chabahar, and it could also become a sounding party to the Trans-Afghan Corridor project, participating in its implementation alongside Uzbekistan²³. The Trans-Afghan Corridor Mazar-i-Sharif-Peshawar project, which will open a new future for Central and South Asia, deserves its discussion. The construction of the Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway would not only create a new, shorter route to lucrative South Asian markets, but it will also help bring peace to Afghanistan. The project was already supported by many regional and non-regional nations. Leading International Financial Institutions expressed their interest in financing the construction of a railway. In this scenario, the issue of the source of funding should not become an insurmountable problem. At the same time, the involvement of India could achieve shared objectives to build a new business environment in the region.

²¹ Akramjon Nematov The principle of the President of Uzbekistan regarding the stabilization of Afghanistan / Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan / 14.07.2021

<https://isrs.uz/en/maqolalar/rol-stran-centralnoj-azii-v-ustanovlenii-procnogo-mira-na-afganskoj-zemle>

²² India – Central Asia Summit: Key Outcomes and Expectations for Trade and Investment / January 28, 2022 / <https://www.india-briefing.com/news/india-central-asia-summit-key-outcomes-security-trade-investment-24155.html/>

²³ Yunis Sharifli. Azerbaijan Pivot to Central Asia / Caucasus Watch 18 NOV 2022 / <https://caucasuswatch.de/en/insights/azerbaijan-pivot-to-central-asia.html>

Studying such processes in modern international relations, it becomes important to develop an understanding of their essence and logic. Most international experts begin by considering various factors that influenced the response intentions of a country in a certain situation, the nature, and the level of organization of its strategic positions in possible negotiations with a potential counter partner. Studying the difficulties in choosing a typology of actions.

Careful elaboration of the argumentation, which provides for its probable steps taken in each specific situation, will explain the sequence of subsequent actions of the state in foreign policy and the system of international relations.

The method of explaining the events taking place in the international arena by trying to recreate the alleged situations that could potentially arise before States or politicians in international studies is directly related to the behavioral principles of the foreign policy of states and mainly to the psychology of international relations²⁴.

Scientific publications, political materials, press articles, and informal interviews — this is far from a complete layer of information that demonstrates how much of modern political thinking, especially foreign policy, comes from the "behavioral" conceptual model, studying the potential of the issues and features of regional and cross-regional connectivity.

P.S.:

The political rationality approach in diplomacy refers to the concept of "calculation" or sequential adaptation aimed at maximizing its usefulness under certain constraints. In International relations, resorting to rational choice means choosing the most effective alternative, with certain results of which it will cost the least.

The rational actor model boils down to a choice between several given alternatives, each of which is associated with a set of consequences, and the utility function of the subject allows him to arrange the series of consequences following his preferences. In a world of uncertainty, every actor tries to maximize "expected utility." The unity on which the analysis is based: government actions as a form of choice. Events taking place in the international arena are considered actions are

²⁴ R.Jervis. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton University Press, 2017, p.127

chosen by the State or the national Government. It is the Government that chooses actions that allow it to maximize its potential through its strategic goals and objectives²⁵. Solutions to strategic problems are the main categories in which the analyst shows what needs to be explained and how.

The demand for a more stable and equitable balance of the region's political and economic processes drives the search for collaboration and connection in Central Asia. The whole region would benefit from this situation by acting as a rational partner.

The Central Asian and South Asia states would be better able to manage their connectivity, unleash and develop their potential for economic growth, influence international affairs, and assert their independence and individuality through regional cooperation under the scope of collaboration with such players.

The emergence of a new political climate in the area demonstrates that India and Central Asian countries are working more closely together to support the region's peace and stability, which have become an objective reality. Openness in one's relationships with one's closest neighbors also lays the foundation for sustainable development throughout the entire world.

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