

George W. Downs, "The Rational Deterrence Debate," *World Politics* vol. 41 #2 (1989), pp. 225-237.

Downs attempts to find common ground in the debate over rational deterrence, by calling not for some synthesis, but for a recognition of each sides importance to the other and an acceptance that each requires some part of the other.

Downs notes that rational deterrence theorists have included new phenomena in their models due to the influence of case-study work. For example the inclusion of uncertainty. He argues that rational deterrence could improve by considering incorporating more psychological content.

Case study scholars should note their implicit use of rational action even in psychological studies. Responding to pleasure or pain is equivalent to a cost/benefit calculation. Furthermore, rational processes, especially deduction, need to be accepted as part of theory building and the making of policy decisions. Rational methods can also help comparativists order their work and speak more clearly their conclusions.

Downs concludes by arguing that psychological approaches should be appreciated for bringing decision making closer to the ideal required for rational deterrence models to be accurate. On the other hand, he argues that psychological approaches need to understand the importance of rational action in their own theories.