

Ronald Rogowski, "Institutions as Constraints on Strategic Choice," in Lake and Powell, eds. *Strategic Choice and International Relations*, pp. 115-126

Rogowski gathers together empirical research suggesting that institutions do independently impact policy outcomes, and should therefore be treated as exogenous.

Claims institutions independently affect foreign policy in 5 respects:

- policy bias
- credibility of commitments
- coherence and stability of policy
- mobilization and projection of power
- strategic environment of domestic actors

His analytic scheme has 3 dimensions:

- 1) Franchise: which groups' preferences count?
- 2) Representation: what is the makeup and selection process of the agents to whom policy decisions are delegated?
- 3) Decision rules: When can that agent commit the larger organization to a decision/action?

Examples from research findings:

What biases outcomes?

Franchise: over-weighting a particular group privileges that group's preferences (for instance, a democratic franchise will have a more pacific foreign policy)

Representation: large constituencies promote the general welfare, small constituencies lead to particularism; short term appointments lead to opportunism, long term to a longer term view

Decision rules: multiple bodies or veto points will skew decisions towards the status quo.

Authority over the agenda will advantage the holder of that authority

What makes commitments credible?

Franchise: Some argue that a wider franchise leads to greater credibility; others, that credibility is derived from powerful/insulated bureaucracies

Representation: Insulation from short-term public opinion enhances cred.

Decision rules: Enhanced by specialized and irrevocable delegation; also, by multiple veto systems (eg, US treaty ratification process). Also, credibility assisted by clarity in allocation of authority, rules, processes, etc. (eg US vs. Russia)

What assures coherence/stability of outcomes?

Franchise: Enhanced by agreed, single dimension policy making. Entities which are divided internal along multiple issue are less stable.

Representation: Fewer bodies and/or a clear hierarchy of bodies leads to greater coherence

Decision rules: Enhanced by centralization of authority in a single body, and/or when that body has extensive agenda-setting power

What facilitates mobilization and projection of power?

Franchise: democratic/'legitimate' regimes mobilize more effectively

Representation: more direct links between principals and agents will attract more support

Decision rules: multiple veto systems encourage disagreement, impede mobilization

How are domestic actors strategies affected?

Franchise: variations in franchise affect principals strategies of influence

Representation: Dispersed power leads to more varied strategies of influence

Decision rules: Delegation as determinant and object of strategizing

Conclusions: Institutions vary and those variations affect foreign policy. Insufficient research exists on this topic. Strategic choice approach would likely be useful. Microfoundations not fully understood.