

OVERVIEWS OF FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS

BY

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INTRODUCTION

This paper traces the history and evolution of foreign policy analysis (FPA) as a subfield of international relations (IR) from its beginnings in the 1950s through its classical period until 1993. It begins with a discussion of three paradigmatic works that laid the foundation of FPA: *Decision Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics* (1954), by Richard C. Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin; 'Pre-theories and Theories of Foreign Policy' (1966), by James N. Rosenau; and *Man-Milieu Relationship Hypotheses in the Context of International Politics* (1956), by Harold and Margaret Sprout. These three works created three main threads of research in FPA: focusing on the decision making of small/large groups, comparative foreign policy, and psychological/sociological explanations of foreign policy.

The center study and analysis of foreign policy in international relation is focused into two, namely, what the matter will be explained and what will provide explanation in foreign policy analysis. Those matters encircle between human decision maker and decision. They will then explicate the motivation, interest, and personalities on their perceptions, beliefs and values as the factors that explain foreign policy decisions (Breuning, 2007: 11). Decisions can be shaped from its evidence left in newspapers and chronologies, this is the term of "events" and data produced by accumulating them are so called "events data". Thus human decision maker and decision develop into what to be explained and understood in order to analyze foreign policy. What will provide explanation in foreign policy analysis covers factors that influence foreign policy decision making and foreign policy decision makers. Even sometimes several intervening features may be concluded within hallmarks of FPA, those are multifactorial, multilevel, multi-interdisciplinary, integrative theoretical enter price, agent oriented, and actor specificity (Hudson, 2007: 6). Above mentioned comes to conclusion that in order to build perceptive of foreign policy analysis it is beneficial to use more than one level of analysis. These

level of analysis may be vary and thus complicated because it may differ from one writer analysis to another.

However, this paper is divided into five (5) sections, in section one (1) we discuss the introductory part, section two the conceptual clarification of Foreign Policy and Foreign Policy Analysis in general. Section three (3) we overview the evolution following tradition of foreign policy analysis from its paradigmatic works in certain years between 1950s and early 1960s, study the classic Foreign Policy Analysis scholars (1954-1993), foreign policy from 1993 till present following the conclusion at the end. Section four (4) Key Approaches of Foreign Policy Analysis and finally section five (5) the paper concludes with an assessment of contemporary Foreign Policy Analysis.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Foreign Policy

The term “foreign policy” has been given different definitions by scholars, historians and diplomats. Foreign policy has been defined as “the actions of a state towards external environment and conditions usually domestic, under which these decisions are formulated”. Professor Gambari Ibrahim defined foreign policy as an interaction between identifiable domestic political forces and the dynamics of international political relations. Professor Olajide Aluko defined foreign policy as “an interaction between internal and external forces.” For Professor Osita Agbu, foreign policy could also be understood as the actions and reactions of states targeted at the external.

Foreign policy has also been described as the courses of action adopted by a nation in the interest of the welfare of its peoples. In other words, foreign policy of a state is pursued by the state, in the interest of the welfare of its people. Professor F.S. Northege defines foreign policy as a product of environment factors, both internal and external to it. In our own view, foreign policy deals with how and why a nation sets a particular goals, orders its own domestic governmental policy making machinery, utilizing its own human and natural resources to compete with other nations in the international system.

From the above definitions and many others, three identifiable components of foreign policy are obvious, one, the actions of a state; two, national or domestic interests, which

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influences these actions and three; external or foreign environment of a state towards which these actions are oriented. These three components are clearly closely related and dependent on each other. They act together and one influences the other. It is from this perspective that the foreign policy of a state evolves in the competitive international environment.

Foreign Policy Analysis

Foreign policy analysis (FPA) is a branch of political science dealing with theory development and empirical study regarding the processes and outcomes of foreign policy. Foreign policy analysis is the study of the management of external relations and activities of state. Foreign policy involves goals, strategies, measures, methods, guidelines, directives, agreements, and so on. National governments may conduct international relations not only with other nation-states but also with international organizations and non-governmental organizations. Managing foreign relations need carefully considered plans of actions that are adapted to foreign interests and concerns of the government.

Foreign policy analysis involves the study of how a state makes foreign policy. As it analyzes the decision making process, FPA involves the study of both international and domestic politics. FPA also draws upon the study of diplomacy, war, intergovernmental organizations, and economic sanctions, each of which are means by which a state may implement foreign policy. In academia, foreign policy analysis is most commonly taught within the discipline of public policy within political science or political studies, and the study of international relations. FPA can also be considered a sub-field of the study of international relations, which aims to understand the processes behind foreign policy decision making. The most prominent scholars in this field of study include Richard Snyder, James Rosenau, Alexander George, Graham Allison and Irving Janis.

According to foreignpolicyanalysis.org, "As a field of study, foreign policy analysis is characterized by its actor-specific focus. The underlying and often implicit argument theorizes that human beings, acting as a group or within a group, compose and cause change in international politics." In other words, Foreign Policy Analysis can be understood as a critique of the dominant structuralist approaches in international relations. In our own terms, foreign policy

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analysis is the study of the process, effects, causes, or outputs of foreign policy decision-making in either a comparative or case-specific manner.

Paradigmatic Works in 1950-1960

The early approaches of Foreign Policy analysis has been set up in the late 1950s and beginning 1960s. Those approaches framed within three paradigmatic works are:

1. Decision Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics by Richard Snyder, Henry Bruck, and Burton Sapin (1954). In this work, Snyder and his colleagues inspired researchers to look below the nation-state level to the actual players involved.
2. Pre-theories and Theories of Foreign Policy' by James Rosenau, in R. B. Farrell (ed.) Approaches in Comparative and International Politics (1966). Rosenau encouraged the development of actor-specific theory, by underscoring the need to integrate information at several levels of analysis, from individual leaders to the international system, in order to understand foreign policy. It focuses on individual state level analysis.
3. Man-Milieu Relationship Hypotheses in the Context of International Politics by Margaret and Harold Sprout (1956). The Sprouts argued that one needed to look at the 'psycho-milieu' of the individuals and groups making the foreign policy decision. That is, the international and operational environment or context as it is perceived and interpreted by decision-makers. It focuses on the context of international politics where power matters, therefore it proposes system level analysis.

Classic Foreign Policy Analysis Scholarships 1954-1993

This period was a time of great intellectual effort and excitement, marked by path-breaking work in conceptualization, development of actor-specific theory at various levels of analysis, and methodological explanation.

A. Classic Foreign Policy Analysis Scholarship

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- a) **Group Decision Making:** The process and structure of groups making foreign policy decisions is analyzed. The groups that were studied ranged in size from very small groups to large organizations and bureaucracies.
- b) **Small Group Dynamics:** Social psychologists explored the unique dynamics of decision-making in small groups. This research was carried into foreign policy analysis: it was discovered that the motivation to maintain group consensus and personal acceptance by the group could deteriorate decision-making quality.
- c) **Organizational Process and Bureaucratic Politics:** Researchers began to study the influence of organization process and bureaucratic politics on foreign policy decision-making. Organizations and bureaucracies put their own survival at the top of their list of priorities; the organization will jealously guard and seek to increase its turf (relative influence) and strength. It was found that the ulterior objectives of foreign policy decision 'players' influenced their decision-making.

B. Comparative Foreign Policy

The sub-field of Comparative Foreign Policy developed as a response to James Rosenau's challenge to build a cross-national and multi-level theory of foreign policy. Foreign policy behavior, as disparate as a war, a treaty, or a state visit, could now be compared and aggregated. Data was collected on a variety of possible explanatory factors to determine patterns by which these independent variables were correlated. Researchers hoped to emerge with a grand unified theory of foreign policy behavior applicable to all nations and time periods.

- a) **Events Data:** The collection of 'events data' was used to set up early warning systems that would alert policy makers to crises in the making around the world. Computerized decision aids and analysis packages began to appear.
- b) **Integrated Explanations:** Research aimed at integrated multilevel explanations. Independent variables at several levels of analysis were linked by theoretical propositions to types of foreign policy behavior.

C. The Psychological and Societal Milieu of Foreign Policy Decision Making

Increasing attention was directed to the mind of the foreign policy decision-maker. The societal context in which the decision-maker operates is shaped by several factors such as culture, history, geography, economics, political institutions, ideology, and demographics. Within this societal context, the individual mind is unique in its own personal beliefs, attitudes, values, experiences, emotions, traits, style, memory, national, and self-conceptions. To better understand foreign policy, researchers directed their attention to the socio-psychological context of the decision-maker.

- a) **Individual Characteristics:** Political psychology was employed to understand the personal characteristics of the decision-maker. Under certain stressful conditions these individual characteristics would become crucial in understanding foreign policy decisions. Efforts were made to categorize decision-makers according to their foreign policy dispositions. In addition, the role of perceptions and images in foreign policy was also an important research agenda during this time. Misperception in foreign policy situations could have grave consequences, and was furnished by the rampant use of stereotypical images with reference to the 'enemy'. Research was conducted on 'cognitive constraints', including cognitive bias, heuristic error, the motivation of leaders, cognitive maps, scripts, and schemas, cognitive style, and the life experience of decision makers.
- b) **National and Societal Characteristics:** The decision-maker's perception of its nation's 'role' in the international arena began to be studied. Once a 'national role conception' was perceived, decision-makers could make their decisions to fit according to the conceptual mould. In addition, the study of culture as an independent variable affecting foreign policy came to the forefront; analysts considered that the very process of policymaking might be stamped by one's cultural heritage and socialization

Foreign Policy Analysis 1993 to Date

The end of the Cold War brought with it a renewed interest in actor-specific theory. An intuitive understanding of this event involves delving into the individual actors themselves: the personalities of the leaders, the activities of various actors, the struggle between domestic players, and so on. From the late 1980s to the present, foreign policy researchers have focused on developing the following themes outlined below.

A. Theory Development in Decision Making

- a) **Construction of Meaning and Framing of Situations by Human Agents in International Relations:** Human agents interpret situations and problems differently, due to the various personal backgrounds, which influence reasoning. Researchers have articulated a two-step decision process: in the first step, options that would translate into serious political loss are weeded out; in the second step, alternatives are analyzed against one another.
- b) **Persuasion and Diffusion Undertaken by Framing/Meaning Entrepreneurs within IR;** Analysis of Interaction between Competing Entrepreneurs Representations formed by human agents in foreign policy must first be diffused to others before collective action can follow. The process by which individual representations are ‘diffused’ onto others has been under study. Technology has been useful here, by providing simulation exercises to study how persuasion occurs.
- c) **Change and Learning by Human Agents in International Relations:** Using cognitive mapping techniques, researchers have been able to detect new knowledge structures within the minds of decision-makers; this ‘social learning’ may enhance understanding between different actors and even facilitate successful negotiations between antagonists.
- d) **The Study of Human Agents as They Interact in Groups in International Relations:** Decision-making in small and large groups remains the subject of ongoing research. Recent works on bureaucratic and organizational influences apply agent-orientated perspectives to explain institutional innovation or variations in foreign policy decisions.

B. Theory Development Regarding Leader Characteristics

- a) **Leader Assessment Frameworks:** A more systematic tool has been constructed for assessing a leader's foreign policy orientation. Technology has allowed for a resurgence of operational code analysis: no longer has an extremely laborious or time-consuming task, automated content analysis enabled researchers to perform speedy and accurate analyses of leader characteristics.
- b) **New Frontiers: Neuroscience, Emotion, and Embodiment:** Research in the field of neuroscience is slowly filtering into foreign policy analysis. Neuroscience, with its discoveries on the workings of the human mind, is poised to contribute largely to our understanding of human decision-making. The effect of emotions, pain, illness, the genetically determined 'happiness set-point' and other factors of the human body all have implications on decision-making, and therefore also for foreign policy analysis.

C. Theory Development Concerning Culture, Identity, and Social Groups

- a) **Construction of National Role Conception Identity by Human Agents within the Nation:** Questions of national identity formation are still largely furnished by research on national role conception. More recently, eclectic methods such as discourse analysis, process-tracing and computational modeling have helped to trace the origin and evolution of identities in conflict.
- b) **Horizon/Template Analysis:** Distinctive patterns of horizon visualization have been discerned in different cultures, which suggests that an understanding of 'who we are' plays into the understanding of 'what it is we do'.
- c) **The Influence of Societal Groups:** The effect of various social groups on foreign policy behavior is under study. Also explored has been the effect of media, and the manner in which media influences the domestic political context of foreign policy decision-making (eg. the so-called 'CNN-effect').

Key Approaches of Foreign Policy Analysis

(As put forward by Graham T. Allison in 1969. For a more comprehensive description see his Book *Essence of Decision* 1971/1999)

Rational Actor Model

The rational actor model is based on rational choice theory. The model adopts the state as the primary unit of analysis, and inter-state relations (or international relations) as the context for analysis. The state is seen as a monolithic unitary actor, capable of making rational decisions based on preference ranking and value maximization. According to the rational actor model, a rational decision making process is used by a state. This process includes:

- i. Goal setting and ranking.
- ii. Consideration of options.
- iii. Assessment of consequences.
- iv. Profit-maximization.

In other words, it provides models for answering the question: with that information what would be the best decision for reaching one's goal? In this theory, the underlying assumption is that governments are unified and rational, in this manner, they would seek for carefully planned and well-defined foreign policy goals. In this sense, rational choice model is primarily a realist perspective of foreign policy level of analysis. The rational actor model has been subject to criticism. The model tends to neglect a range of political variables, of which Michael Clarke includes: "political decisions, non-political decisions, bureaucratic procedures, continuations of previous policy, and sheer accident." It also ignores emotions, emotional flooding, selective attention, and groupthink.

Governmental Bargaining Model

In this model the state is not seen as a monolithic unitary actor. Instead it is a collection of different bureaucracies vying for increasing their funding and size. Individual decision makers try to bargain and compete for influence with their own particular goal in mind. Things are often viewed as a zero-sum game where one bureaucracy's "win" or increasing their level of funding is

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seen as a loss for another bureaucracy. Here decisions are made by bureaucracies competing against each other and suggesting solutions to problems that would involve using their resources so as to increase their level of importance. Bureaucratic politics model, in keeping with its pluralistic connotation, can also refer to that inner state processes including no institutional actors, who with their informal channels would affect policy results.

Organizational Process Model

Organizational Processes model emerges from clusters of governmental organizations that look after their own best interests and follow 'standard operating procedures'. In this model different bureaucracies have different standard operating procedures. These procedures are made in order to allow day-to-day operations to be carried out. Often an order or decision will have to work around these standard procedures. It is often exceedingly difficult for a bureaucracy to do something "out of character" or contrary to their standard procedures.

CONCLUSION

The center of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) is mainly about who decisions makers are. Foreign Policy Analysis remains complex instrument to define most worthy reason about state and decision makers' behavior. It's beneficial features that enable us to unlock more doors to close assessment, yet they remain vague and open to question. Separate IR thinkers argue in many diverse level of analysis. The problem of arranging available options to make a good assessment is never quite simple if we rely upon one single analysis. Therefore, broad and open analysis is needed. However, we cannot neglect considering several factors although they are partially important. The micro study contributes a huge meaning creating foreign policy options, behavior, and outcome, as well. We must remember, a simply distinctive factor altered may lead to either beneficial or disastrous outcome.

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