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THEORIES OF FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS: DO THEY HAVE WESTERN BIAS?

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To avoid the misperceptions and misperception-related wars one needs to grasp the motives and reasoning behind the foreign policy of the states. For that purpose, a subdiscipline of International Relations named Foreign Policy Analysis was developed well into the 20th century with a few paradigmatic books revolved around a certain theory. Those theories are as follows: Rational actor model, Poliheuristic theory, Theory of Historical Analogies, Bureaucratic Theory/ Theory of Various Government Actors, Prospect Theory. The aim of this article is to analyze and summarize these theories as well as to figure out whether they have a "western bias" or not.

War has so many causes – in part because there are so many kinds of wars-and misperception has so many effects-again in part because there are so many kinds of misperceptions-that it is not possible to draw any definitive conclusions about the impact of misperception on war.¹ To avoid both wars and misperceptions one needs to grasp the motives underlying the foreign policy of the others. For that purpose, well into the 20th century a new subdiscipline of IR emerged named "foreign policy analysis. It is a relatively new branch of International Relations (IR). It studies the foreign policy of the international actors and the underlying reasons and motives with sometimes desperate attempt to find any consistency. A plethora of theories were elaborated, each with certain explanatory power, trying to explain the foreign

¹ Jervis, R. (1988). War and misperception. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 18(4), p. 675.

TABLE 1

Four types of rock-bottom perspectives in the study of foreign policy²

Ontology	Methodology	
Holism	Objectivism (structure perspective)	Interpretativism Social-institutional perspective
Individualism	Agent-based perspective	Interpretative actor perspective

policy of the states. As it is shown in the table below, they can be categorized in accordance of both on ontology (holism and individualism) as well as methodology.

It is also believed that FPA and its theories are nothing but satellites of the Grand IR theories (Realism with its “neo” versions, Liberalism with its “neo” versions and branches and Constructivism which is essentially a reflectivist theory and ontologically agnostic) or at least it is quite possible to derive it with one of the IR theories.

In this article I will firstly summarize all the theories to the best of my knowledge. Once the gist of each and every theory is duly presented, I will try to elaborate on whether it has a western bias or not. By saying “western bias” it is meant theories with explanatory power limited to the justification of the foreign policies of the western powers. By amalgamating the analyses portrayed in the relevant articles revolved over each and every theory, I will try to showcase that foreign policy analysis, if conducted through the theories below, is not accurate only with respect to the western states and the results of the analysis can be generalized. The studies theories are the following ones:

1. Rational actor model
2. Poliheuristic Theory
3. Historical analogies
4. Bureaucratic Theory/Theory of various governmental actors
5. Prospect Theory
6. “Groupthink” theory

Rational-actor model. In short, the proponents of this model advocate that states

and their leadership try to maximize gains of the state by purposive actions, consistence, transitivity and invariance of preferences. This process involves several steps: problem identification, ranking of the goals, gathering information, identifying alternatives, analysis of the alternatives, selection of alternatives, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the decision. The reluctance of New Zealand to harbor the nuclear warships at the time of the Cold War can be attributed to this model.³ Several models such as game theory on prisoner’s dilemma, chicken-wise games and tit-for-tat games were applied to operationalize the variables. It will not be wrong to state that a theory is a distant cousin of the theory of Realism of the IR which deems the states as like actors. Therefore, assuming, a fortiori averring that only western states/leaders are rational actors will lack a robust scientific corroboration and will be at least out of ethics.

Poliheuristic Theory. In short, the theory propagates that the choices of the leaders are not optimal ones but are suboptimal. The theory is an amalgam of rational and cognitive psychological approaches in a sense that decisions are being made in two rounds; in the first round the options that are fraught with a huge danger for the decision makers are excluded following by the choice of the optimal solution among the remaining options in the second round. Overall, the theory is dimension-based, non-compensatory, non-holistic, satisficing and order sensitive. Notably, the theory was applied to explain the behavior of non-western leaders too (Hafez al-Assad, Nawaz Sharif, Saddam Hussein and Yasser Arafat).⁴ Although the theory

² Carlsnaes, Walter (2013) Foreign Policy. Handbook of International Relations, 2nd edition. p. 307.

³ Mintz, Alex, and Karl DeRouen Jr. Understanding foreign policy decision making. Cambridge University Press, 2010. pp.58-60

⁴ Ibid.

was mostly implied on the democracies, it was also applied on autocratic regimes showing the implications of the theory on the so-called single-party, personalist and military autocracies.⁵ In my view, it is even more sensible to apply the theory to analyze the behavior of autocracies than democracies as in case of the former the stakes are much higher and the opposing constituencies might square the accounts with the leader and his family if he fails in vital issues.

Theory of Historical Analogies. In short, the theory suggests that leaders appeal to history to analyze the situation and to arrive at a historically valid conclusion. The opponents of this theory claim that history if used merely for justification not for decision-making. The notable argument put by Schlesinger states the following: "can never be sure what was the invoked historical that had been brought to the floor to justify the failed (such as Munich negotiations for instance) that is 'sold' as a learnt lesson from the history. Khong, however states that the skeptics do not provide alternative ground of explanation. Rather than utterly negating that history is used m for justifications of the action Khong noticed that this explanation is limited. In his view history helps to 1. Define the nature of the situation, 2. help assess the stakes, 3. Provides prescriptions, 4. Predicts the chances for success, 5. Evaluates the more righteousness, 6. Warns about the dangers associated with the options.⁶ His conclusion is that analogies are normally poorly chosen. A myriad of examples brought by Khong are dominated by wrong interpretation of historical events such as Vietnam War, Korean War and reluctance to contain Hitler and the resulting Munich Agreement. Nevertheless, he applies the theory to explain the policy of Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping to oppress the students' manifestations. In my view, the theory ma work in both western and non-western world, however the chances of this theory to explain the foreign policy

in the western world is higher vis-à-vis the non-western world as the decisions in the former are products of institutions with decent expertise of history, while in the latter everything is revolving around the autocratic leader who is not necessarily an expert of History (Belarus's Lukashenko is a notable exception. He is a historian). Therefore, history, if invoked, is used to justify rather than to analyze in the non-western states though it does not rule out that the superficial knowledge of history of the leader and the erroneous section of analogy may have a decisive impact on the foreign policy options of the autocratic leader.

Bureaucratic theory. The theory deriving from Organizational Behavior Theory (used by Sagan in the debate with Waltz over nuclear issue) states that foreign policy decisions may be a byproduct of various governmental entities having their narrow organizational interests. The theory was widely used to analyze the actions of the USA government during the Cuban Missile Crisis. I believe that this theory is an outcome of the western reality rather than non-western as conflicting bureaucratic interests do not leave much and credible avenue to explain the foreign policy changes of Libya during and after Gaddafi's tenure.

Prospect theory. In short, prospect theory predicts that individuals tend to be risk-averse in the domain of gains and risk-seeking in the domain of losses. In that sense, the proponents of the theory would agree that ceteris paribus, when there is 50% of chance of winning in both cases an individual is more likely to risk 5\$ to get 10\$ that 50\$ to get 100\$. Among the tenets of the theory is framing – framing matters, i.e. framing like "20% died" might have a greater impact than "80% is saved". Phenomena such as insurance and lottery are not at odds with the theory as it explains them too. In particular, they are a result of people's underestimation or overestimations of outcomes that are

⁵ Kinne, Brandon J. "Decision making in autocratic regimes: A poliheuristic perspective." *International Studies Perspectives* 6, no. 1 (2005): 114-128.

⁶ Khong, Yuen Foong. "Analogies at War: Korea." Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam (1992). pp. 6-10.

⁷ Levy, J. S. (1992). An introduction to prospect theory. *Political psychology*, pp. 171-186.

not very likely to happen. The theory is ontologically reflective and based on psychological models. It is not as annalistically robust as the rational expectations model as the variables are harder to operationalize nevertheless it has bigger explanatory power.⁷ There was an attempt translate the theory from economics to politics and analyze the politics of Eisenhower and Carter. I believe that if prospect theory works in democracies, it is even higher than it will work in autocracies, since the autocratic leaders, as stated above are more sensitive to sudden loss of power and try to perpetuate their tenure. Therefore, they should be relatively risk averse.

Grouphink. In a nutshell, the theory suggests that people who are involved in groups tasked to make decisions are subjected to peer-pressure. Moreover, the more cohesive is the group the higher is the likelihood of defective decision. The other favorable conditions for groupthink are insulation of the group and the lack of impartial leadership. The defective outcome, however, does not necessarily lead to fiasco due to the factor of chance.⁸ This theory, in my view, is more characteristic to western democracies and has western bias. Nevertheless, it can be valuable to analyze the foreign policy of the autocratic states in two cases: leader voluntary (partly) relinquished decision-making to a group of advisers, acknowledging her own cognitive limitations 2. The decisions in a certain domain are traditionally dominated by certain clans/juntas, etc. Therefore, despite initially originated in the western world and having western bias, the theory can be applied to non-western world on case by case basis.

The factor of domestic constituencies. Decision makers are constrained by very diverse domestic constituencies while conducting the foreign policy. Leader's image at home is more important for him that that abroad. Trump, for instance, was evidently considered a better outcome for Russia and is allegedly supported by Russia during the

elections nevertheless; it did not prevent the latter to aggravate anti-Russian sanctions. Similarly, on the eve of elections, statesmen are more likely employ brinksmanship politics. Similarly, the threats made by democracies are more credible as the leaders have problem of face-saving. The theory is in essence liberal and related to the Liberalism Theory of IR and developed by its proponents. Moravcsik, for instance, uses the theory to explain the decision-making on the EU level and the European integration per se. The theory has a huge power to explain the foreign policy of democracies. However, it is not useless in case of autocracies. Though I might be blamed for having a "home blind", this time I will bring the example of my country. Before the famous Velvet Revolution of 2018, Armenia was not perceived as a democratic state. Nevertheless, its leaders, even having much more power that the democratic clearly realized that any unilateral concession in negotiations over Nagorno-Karabakh might have a dire outcome for them

It should be stated that every situation can be explained through the lenses of several theories. For instance, the decision of Turkish Parliament not to allow the deployment of the American forces during the war against Iraq and allowing only flying through the airspace can be attributed to the poliheuristic decision making as well as to Prospect Theory, i.e. being risk-averse while gaining (30 bln USD from the USA). The close examination of the issue (Parliament debates) may reveal that Grouphink and historical analogies may also be relevant.

In addition, there is a wide scholarship on the analyses on leaders and traits aiming to both analyze and prognosticate state's foreign policy predicating upon the personality traits of the leaders. In this context, it is noteworthy to mention the analysis done by Hermann. In particular, she did a content analysis of the speeches and interviews of 122 leaders. Firstly, she shows

⁸ Janis, I. L. (1972). Victims of Grouphink: A psychological study of foreign-policy decisions and fiascoes.

⁹ Hermann, M. G. (2005). Assessing leadership style: A trait analysis. J. Post, p. 185.

that the leadership style is a function of responsiveness to constraints, information and motivation. For instance, if the leader is keen to challenge the constraints and is closed to information he/she is likely to extend her span of control, while at the same time involving the others by compelling.⁹ Afterwards, Hermann tries to build the profile of the leader based on the seven characteristic traits: 1. Her own belief of his ability to control events, 2. Her need for power, 3. Her self-confidence, 4. Her conceptual complexity, i.e. her degree of differentiation while perceiving the world; to what extent her perception is dyadic (black & white, e.g.) or complex, 5. Task-orientedness, 6. In-group bias and distrust to others. Those characteristic traits are labeled as codes. It is interesting to note that while justifying the practical and instrumental value of her analysis Hermann brought the example of Syria's Hafez Al-Assad, a non-western leader, dropping a gentle hint that foreign policy analysis based on personality traits is not culture-sensitive.¹⁰ Another attempt to analyze the foreign policy based on leadership analysis was conducted Walker and Schafer. In particular, they tried to analyze the behavior of the ex-president of the USA Lyndon Johnson and his advisers during the Vietnam War. The source of analysis was identical – speeches, memoranda, minutes. In short, the statistical analysis through the application of ANOVA method revealed that 1. Johnson's policy towards Vietnam became stiffer over time 2. The state's operational code, i.e. the beliefs and intentions articulated by Johnson in his public speeches were softer vis-à-vis the private operational code of the state, i.e. the advice given by his both "dove" and "hawk" advisers in private.¹¹ So, as it is mentioned data in terms of speeches, memoranda, memoirs, minutes, etc. is needed to conduct such an analysis. The software, however, that are devised to conduct such analyses can

deal with English-languages texts, to the best of my knowledge. Furthermore, Hermann herself mentioned that some speeches were translated to English. If we equate non-west with autocratic regimes (mostly in the Global South), we will see that for the sake of making predictions, it is more reasonable to analyze the traits and habits of the non-western autocrats than western democrats as the former are less constrained by a various institutions and the size of the so-called "selectorate" is considerably smaller. Putting simply, Lyndon Johnson had less influence on the foreign policy making of the USA than Idi Amin Dada on Ugandan foreign policy, or Jean-Bedel Bokassa on the foreign policy of the CAR or Rafael Leonidas Turjillio Molena *who changes the name of the country's capital calling is Ciudad Turjillio and matched the national devise (rectitud, libertad, trabajo y moralidad) with his own initials – RLTM) had on the foreign policy of Dominican Republic. Nowadays, Jeo Biden has less influence on the foreign policy of the USA than Vladimir Putin on Russian. Therefore, it is not contingent that theories developed to analyze the balancing in the Third World such as the Theory of Omnibalancing are exclusively anchored on the behavior and interest perceptions of the individual leaders of non-western Third World states notably Egypt's Sadat and Ethiopia's Mengistu Haile Mariam. Nevertheless, scholars have to test the approach of analyzing the traits of the leaders (I definitely did not put it among the theories) as English-language sources that could help to analyze the traits of non-western (or better to say non-Anglophone) leaders is limited or non-existent.

There is an IR Theory called Post-Colonialism that recons the international system not anarchic, but hierarchic. The proponents of this theory argue that IR theories are written in the Western World and are revolved over the western history. In

⁹ Hermann, M. G. (2005). Assessing leadership style: A trait analysis. J. Post, p. 185.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Walker, S. G., & Schafer, M. (2000). The political universe of Lyndon B. Johnson and his advisors: Diagnostic and strategic propensities in their operational codes. Political Psychology, 21(3), p. 541.

fact, the non-western history and reality may be unbeknownst to the western scholars. Here it is worth writing the title of the article anew: the theories of foreign policy analysis: do they have a western bias? The analysis above showcased that it strictly

depends on theory. Some analytical constructs are more pertinent to non-western countries and the other to western democracies. Therefore, any generalizations are futile and do not help to grasp the foreign policy better.

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Ալբերտ ՀԱՅՐԱՊԵՏՅԱՆ

«Ամբերդ» հետազոտական կենտրոնի ավագ հետազոտող, ՀՊՏՀ միջազգային տնտեսական հարաբերությունների ամբիոնի ասիստենտ, տնտեսագիտության թեկնածու

ԱՇԽԱՏԱՐԱՐԱԲԱՎԱՆ ՔՐՈՆԻԿՈՆ

ԱՐՏԱՔԻՆ ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿԱՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՎԵՐԼՈՒԾՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՏԵՍՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐ. ԱՐԴՅՈՒՔ ՄԻԱՅՆ ԱՐԵՎԱՏՅԱՆ ԵՐԿՐՆԵՐԻ ՊԱՐԱԳԱՅՈՒՄ ԵՆ ՕԳՏԱԿԱՐ

Թյուրքականությանը և դրանց հետևանքով առաջացող պատերազմներից խուսափելու նպատակով անհրաժեշտ է հասկանալ պետությունների արտաքին քաղաքականության հիմքում առկա դրդապատճառները: Այդ նպատակով XX դարի կեսերին առաջացել է միջազգային հարաբերությունների գիտակարգի առանձին մի ճյուղ՝ «Արտաքին քաղաքականության վերլուծությունը»: Վերջինս, տեղ գտնելով համապատասխան նշանակության գրքերում, փորձում է բացահայտել երկրների արտաքին քաղաքականության իրականացման հիմնական գործոններն ըստ հետևյալ տեսությունների. Ռացիոնալ դերակատարի մոդել, Պոլիիյուրիստական տեսություն, Պատմական համաբանությունների տեսություն, Բյուրոկրատական տեսություն/Կառավարության տարբեր դերակատարների տեսություն, Հեռանկարների տեսություն: Հոդվածում, դիտարկելով այս տեսությունները, փորձ է արվում պարզելու՝ արդյոք դրանք կարևոր նշանակություն ունեն միայն արևմտյան երկրների արտաքին քաղաքականության վերլուծության համար, թե առհասարակ:

Հիմնաբառեր. արտաքին քաղաքականության վերլուծություն, Ռացիոնալ դերակատարի մոդել, Պոլիիյուրիստական տեսություն, Պատմական համաբանությունների տեսություն, Բյուրոկրատական տեսություն, Հեռանկարների տեսություն, արևմտյան կողմնակալություն

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ГЕОПОЛИТИЧЕСКАЯ ХРОНИКА

ТЕОРИИ АНАЛИЗА ВНЕШНЕЙ ПОЛИТИКИ: ПОЛЕЗНЫ ЛИ ОНИ ТОЛЬКО ОТНОСИТЕЛЬНО АНАЛИЗА ВНЕШНЕЙ ПОЛИТИКИ ЗАПАДНЫХ ГОСУДАРСТВ?

Во избежание войн, возникших в результате недоразумений, необходимо понять мотивы, лежащие в основе внешней политики государств. В связи с этим в середине двадцатого века возникло отдельное направление в дисциплине “международных отношений”, получившее название “внешнеполитический анализ”. Целью данного направления является выявление факторов, лежащих в основе внешней политики различных стран, что находит свое отражение в теориях, которые обобщены в научных изданиях. К ним относятся: модель рационального игрока, полиэвристическая теория, теория исторических аналогий, бюрократическая теория/теория различных государственных деятелей, теория перспектив. Цель этой статьи – проанализировать и обобщить эти теории, а также выяснить, имеют ли они “западный уклон” или нет.

Ключевые слова: *анализ внешней политики, модель рационального игрока, полиэвристическая теория, теория исторических аналогий, бюрократическая теория, теория перспектив, западный уклон*