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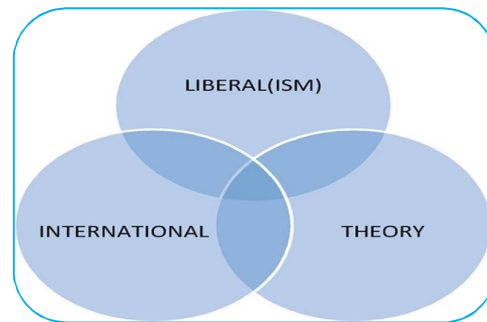
## LOCATING IDEATIONAL LIBERAL PARADIGM IN COMPETING THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES IN FOREIGN POLICY

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### ABSTRACT

*Foreign policy of any country is described as an action, reaction and interaction between state actors. It seeks to realise a national interest of a country based on the determined goals. Foreign policy is "General objectives that guides the activities and relationships of one state in its interactions with other states" (Encyclopedia Britannica). It is important to address where the field of foreign policy is located in international relations. Foreign policy focuses on the external behaviour of government through their official agents. Unlike domestic policy, foreign policy is directed and implemented on the external or outside territorial boundary of the state. This paper attempts to locate the ideational liberal perspective in the preferences in the foreign policy..*



**KEYWORDS:** *Liberalism, Ideational Liberalism, Identity, International Relations, Foreign Policy.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Wallace, Foreign policy plays the role of a bridge between the nation state and its international environment. It is the boundary between domestic politics and international politics and diplomacy. So, the study of foreign policy requires the knowledge of domestic politics as well as international politics (White 1989:7). Foreign policy is referred to actions taken to meet practical problems when they emerge in the international relations. Rosenau (1976) has provided three dimensions for the conceptualisation of foreign policy. These include foreign policy as orientations, foreign policy as plans and commitments and foreign policy as activities or behaviour. Orientations have been considered as the highest guide for the analysis of foreign policy. It includes the experiences, traditions and aspirations of that particular society. When it comes to plan and commitments, it indicates strategies and decisions directed towards specific goals. It translates the orientation to actual situation. Lastly, foreign policy as an activity indicates actual behaviour of states in relation to the events and situations in the international system on the basis of the orientation, plans and commitments. Modelski (1962) explained foreign policy as the system of activities pursued by societies for altering the action of other states and for regulating their actions to the international setting. The interest of the specific country is considered supreme and for that purpose decisions are taken by the supreme authority of the country.

In international politics, different theoretical perspectives explain foreign policy behaviour. Realism describes foreign policy as balanced behaviour of unitary actors. In realist term, state inclination has been taken to be really conflictual. Liberalism emphasizes on priorities of individuals

and groups within the state and their impact on external action. Constructivism defines foreign policy as a characteristics of national identity. It looks into the role of norms and the constitution of identities and their impact on national interest. Liberalism is related with second image analysis of international relation theory. The second image idea is more concerned with the role and nature of state in international system. Broadly, liberals see the distribution of preferences as an important explanation of foreign policy. Institutionalists suppose that interests should be taken as they are based on the convergence of interests (Moravcsik 1997:527). Liberals assume that state preference is delivered by the concept of policy interdependence. The construction of particular worldview is significant for deciding the future course of action (Barber 1993:131, Doyle 1997:17, Young 1998:215).

There are three basic assumptions which distinguish liberal theory from realist and constructivist ideas. Among this, the first supposition is based on the ideas that individuals and groups endorse their self-interest as major actor in international relations. The second supposition is that state signifies some natural characteristics of domestic society whose preferences create the inherent goals that state officials follow. The third supposition is based on interdependent state preferences based on compromising a collective problem on the basis of which state determines its behaviour. (Moravcsik 1997:520). Keohane (1984) holds the view that state preferences should be treated as if they are not conflictual but compromising to deal with collective action problem. It is argued that external policy of any country is strongly swayed by the domestic connection of social forces and their material goals. There are three variants in liberal school which are supported by Liberals in the present time. These variants are known as ideational, commercial and republican liberalism. Ideational liberalism emphasises on the existing social preferences through essential shared goods in the form of unity of nation, legitimacy of political institutions, and socio-economic directive or domestic compulsion. Commercial liberalism is more inclined to chances of transborder economic inter-linkages and dealings. The attention of the republican liberalism is based on the characteristics of domestic representation and subsequent potentials for state centered behaviour. Liberalism describes a family of positivist theories that focus on explaining how states behave rather than how they should behave (Slaughter 1995:10). Liberalism emphasises on ideas, social forces and political institutions in the direction of foreign policy making. Primarily, liberal theory treats the domestic circumstances as an important variables in explaining their international behaviour (Doyle 1997: 50).

Historically, after the weakening of the idealist worldview, there was the growth of realist idea as a major theory in international politics for the explanation of different events. Hans Morgenthau claimed that states act to maximize their national interest defined in terms of power. Morgenthau has categorised foreign policy on the basis of status quo, imperialist and prestige basis. Balance of power is fundamental explanatory element in international system for the behavior of different units of international structure (Smith 1986:15). Neorealist emphasises on the role of international structure in determining the behavior of foreign policy. On the other hand, it is also argued that foreign policy behaviour is often determined by domestic politics rather than by international structure. Some states in the international structure interact so less that they are called as “autistic” (Wendt 1999:2).

There are two processes which are crucial for determining preferences of the foreign policy of a state. First is through an investigation of domestic politics. Second investigation starts with interstate relations (Shankar and Paul 2010: 57). Many scholars immediately reject structural argument and resort to domestic level analysis or explanations. Individual personalities have been least important as the external security environment in determining nuclear behaviour. For example, main motivation in India’s nuclear program had more to do with Bhabha’s and Nehru’s belief that nuclear technology offered India a shortcut to modernity and major power status, and would allow India to transcend India its recent colonial past (Perkovich 1999: 6, 14, 47, 59). Shankar and Paul have thus argued that three domestic factors remained important for this type of analysis. These three factors were Nehruvian thinking and strategy, domestic turmoil and emergence of coalition politics and elite consensus (Shankar and Paul 2010:64). The most systematic liberal arguments have been presented by Moravcsik. He locates the fundamental problem with realism in not problematizing state interests. For liberalism, national interest is the configuration of state preferences. State preferences can be explained by

investigating the domestic level of analysis. Individuals and groups have been seen as the primary social actors in the foreign policy making. State policy is a manifestation of who wins in the domestic context. Domestic interests have been perceived important in the conduct of state in the international system (Moravcsik 1997:513-53).

In the Indian case, ideational liberal theoretical paradigm provides an in-depth analysis of Indian foreign policy since 1991. Since 1991, India has undergone significant changes. During this period, international world order has also seen a profound structural transformation.

### **International Politics and Theories of Foreign Policy: Historical Reflection**

Broadly there is diversity of perspectives to analyse the foreign policy. These perspectives are based on different theoretical premises or methodological focus on the complex interactions between different factors in foreign policy making. The idealists thinking believes that the nature of human-being is peace loving and what causes conflict and war is political and social mechanisms. For the idealists, democratic mechanisms and international institutions should be built to prevent the war and conflicts in international system. On the contrary realist approach points out that the structural condition in the international political system is anarchy and self-interested individual sovereign states pursue their national interest to maximise their power. As Morgenthau has said that politics is ruled by objective laws that have their origins in human nature. The realist concept of foreign policy assumes that states are rational actors and they act on the basis of deliberation and calculation to maximise the self interest in international system. In the scope of the realist foreign policy, military and security issues are emphasized. The areas of economic, ethics and law have been overlooked in foreign policy. The classification of Morgenthau's foreign policy will constitute a policy of status quo, a policy of imperialism and a policy of prestige. The thinking of Waltz about foreign policy is governed by structure and related to explore whether the processes of foreign policy making and implementation are met to generate right policy outcomes promised by leaders and officials. The right policy outcome is assumed to advocate the interest of the country (Hall 2014: 537, 538).

Behaviouralism brought significant changes in the conception of foreign policy. It made the point that State and Governments are an abstraction and are not able to behave on their own. This approach tried to equate state with state officials. In addition to it, the role of the internal setting and societal factors on decision making process showed the significance of domestic source of foreign policy. The behaviouralist central concern was to study international relations scientifically. For this purpose, they looked into pattern of regularities while observing the behaviour of particular country in order to reach the generalization. Goals and motivations are important variables in the foreign policy of any nation. We cannot only describe the mere goals of foreign policy but are compelled to see the process by which they become the crucial aspects of foreign policy (Singer 1961:86). One of the major consequence of David Singer's analysis was the emergence of system analysis in foreign policy. Different kinds of systemic models were developed to understand the foreign policy of the state. System analyst paid more attention on few strong actors in international politics while ignoring the lesser actors of the system. Comparative foreign policy was the direct result of behavioural movement of the 1950s. The ultimate aim of comparative foreign policy was to build a general theory of foreign policy by using methods based on natural science. At the heart of the decision making analysis lies the decision making approach of Snyder. The model of the Snyder is important because it attempts to conceptualise the foreign policy in a scientific way. It tries to explore the series of variables influencing the decision of the decision maker. Comparative foreign policy is regarded as a scientific approach based on the empirical enquiry in explaining the behaviors of states. This approach was seen as a reaction towards the traditional school based on the value judgments.

Earlier comparative foreign policy thinking used quantification techniques to analyse the foreign policy behavior for producing general theoretical framework. After modification in its framework, it started empirical investigation for understanding of foreign policy. This kind of comparative foreign analysis contains the scrutiny of how foreign policy decisions are made. It has presumed that maximum variation or changes in international politics happen with the actions of

human beings (Hudson and Vore 1995:210). Foreign policy analysis provides understanding of “black box” of the inner working of nations common to actor general theories. It examines the foreign policy decision making. The national interest is viewed as the interest of various players. Foreign policy analysis builds on what the social sciences are learning about human decision making. This theory serves as the link between actor general theory and the complex nature of the real world (Hudson and Vore 1995:211).

In sharp contrast to comparative foreign policy analysis, the case study approach insists on the uniqueness of the foreign policy of each state. On the opposite of regularity seeking nature, it emphasises on the nature of history and culture of each state which is different from one another. So, it is not possible to explain foreign policy with a common methodology. It is generally acknowledged that the different levels of analysis-individual, institutional as well as cultural and societal factors shapes the making of foreign policy. The analysis of foreign policy have encouraged the students to generate a new sets of lenses to analyse the state behaviour (Garrison 2003:155). Comparative foreign policy analysis started to decline in 1970s due to some major changes in international environment. Firstly, the role of the economy in international relations in the conduct of foreign policy increased at a larger scale. The demand for the third world economic welfare began to challenge the military centered agenda. The issue of economic interdependence and political economy became the dominant issues in international politics and the role of the state began to diminish. Researchers in foreign policy started to think about the role of non-governmental actors. The main reason of this shift was the dissatisfaction with the state centric outlook of the existing approaches. According to the complex interdependence school, world politics could not be confined only to the realist point of view in international politics, but economic issues arising from the complex web of multiple actors have become significant in the present time. Putnam developed a theoretical framework which sought to integrate both spheres of international and domestic politics. He underlined the need to move beyond domestic factors which influence international affairs and the influence of structural factors on domestic politics (Putnam 1988: 433).

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