

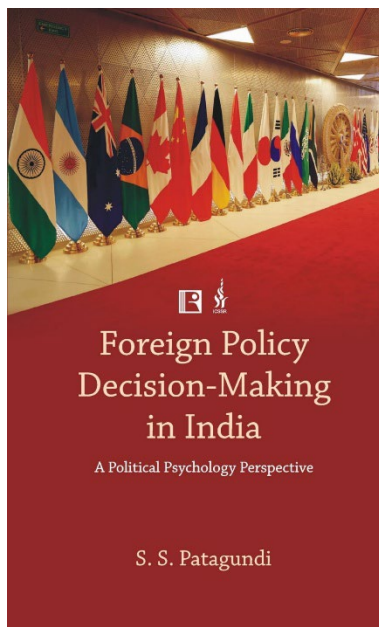
Book Review

Foreign Policy Decision-Making in India: A Political Psychology Perspective by S. S. Patagundi

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This study deviated from the traditional perspective of a single discipline by adopting an interdisciplinary perspective of Political Psychology. The world today is confronted with serious problems due to globalization and rapid technological innovations. These need to be addressed by all nation-states through the instrumentality of foreign policy. The foreign policymaking and determinants of policymaking assume great importance. The author attempts to understand the process of foreign policymaking from the perspective of political psychology. This work is the outcome of an ICSSR Senior Fellowship research project.

The book is organized into seven chapters. The introduction, being the First Chapter, introduces a political psychology perspective for understanding international relations and foreign policymaking. The author rightly identifies the crux of the psychological factors, such as cognitive process, belief, and perception. According to the author, there is a gap between perception and reality in foreign policy operations because perception represents reality, but it may not be reality. In fact, this sets the perspective for study. The decision-making in international relations is based on the definition of the situation in world politics. The book employs an interdisciplinary framework of political psychology to discuss foreign policy decision-making in India.

The Second Chapter explains political psychology and foreign policy analysis (FPA). The FPA is aimed at three levels of analysis: individual, group, government and state. FPA is often an extension of domestic policy. Delving into the realist theory of Hans J. Morgenthau, the author ultimately notes that it is national interest, defined in terms of power is the primary source of a nation's actions. The post-Cold War world politics is not purely a matter of balance of power or collective security. It is much more an interaction between many layers of governing arrangements comprising laws, agreed norms, international regimes, and institutional rules. (p.57)

The Third Chapter discusses key theoretical issues in foreign policy decision-making (FPDM). The author has made a scholarly attempt in examining the theories of Richard Snyder, Henry W Buck, and Burton Sapin that decision-making is an outcome of decision-makers' perception of the world more than the reality of the situation. James N. Rosenau's theory of various inputs - direct and indirect is analyzed. The role of ends and means in the foreign policy of George Modelski is described in relation to the community's interest. Graham T. Allison's notion of organizational process and bureaucratic politics is explained with reference to FPDM. The psychological issues involved in FPDM are constructed through Brian Ripley's six assumptions. These include decision-making elites, information definition of the situation, and cognitive constraints. The perception and belief concept of Robert Jervis is elaborated. 'Beliefs influence the decision-makers in understanding the problem at hand, defining the international situation, identifying possible options with pros and cons; and finally selecting the best option to achieve the goals of foreign policy' (p.77).

The Fourth Chapter discusses the Indian Foreign Policy in a historical frame. The evolution of FP from the national movement to the Cold War period is traced. During this period, the foreign policy revolved around idealism. The UN, Non-Alignment, and Nuclear Disarmament were the main concerns of FP. Since the 1970s, a realist approach to FP has been initiated. It was pragmatic, goal-oriented, non-ideological, and flexible. It was a soft realism (p.99). Post 1990, the nuclear test (1998), the Iraq war, terrorism, and the Indo-US Nuclear Deal were prominently featured in FPDM. The Fifth Chapter constructs the structural aspects of FPDM machinery. The primary role of Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Parliament, and the party system is delineated. The Sixth Chapter elucidates the FP of the Narendra Modi Government. There is a

shift in FP in post-2014. Taking advantage of economic development and political stability with a demographic dividend, Modi's FP is marked by personal diplomacy. Modi focused on one-to-one personal interactions in FP exercises. The focus is to align India's interests with the world's interests. The regional stability of South Asia is prominently featured in FP. The dynamism Modi has put into FP is exemplary. The neighborhood first policy has brought some stability even in the midst of turmoil in the neighboring countries. The Modi government's Chinese policy tried to build on mutual trust and confidence and manage differences with maturity. (p.160). Modi is continuing Nehru's legacy of soft power. Yoga, diaspora, and Buddhism figure prominently. In the last Seventh Chapter, the author, offering concluding observations, admits that it is a challenge to prove a correlation between psychological dimensions and a particular decision (p.180).

The author has shown strong theoretical scholarship in IR and FPA. His extensive usage of theories puts the book on a high academic shelf. However, the psychological dimension of FPDM is not articulated in a dialogical manner. Herbert Simon, a pioneer in decision-making concepts and analysis, would have been treated fairly. Perception represents reality, but it may not be reality; this is what bounded rationality explains. If the author had made a critical analysis of the Modi Government's foreign policy, it would have added more value to the scholarly findings in research work. The study is a sound work of painstaking scholarship, providing several thoughtful insights for further research. This study indicates the need for extensive and intensive research in the political psychology of foreign policy. This book is scholarly and insightful research and useful for providing quality input to foreign policy decision-makers, scholars, elite students, media scholars, and the general public in understanding foreign policy decision-making issues.

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