

**University Ali Lounissi**

**Political Science Department**

**License/ 3<sup>rd</sup> year LMD students**

**Mrs.Amouri Nassima**



**Course n°1:**

**Foreign Policy Analysis .....What is it?**

**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.

**Study:**

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 foreign policy analysis.org, “As a field of study,

foreign policy analysis is characterized by the actor-specific focus. In the simplest terms, it is the study of the process, effects, causes or outputs of foreign policy decision-making in either a comparative or case-specific manner.

The underlying and often implied argument theorizes that human beings, acting as a group or within a group, compose and cause change in international politics”.

### **Stages in decision making**

The making of foreign policy involves a number of stages:

- **Assessment of the international and domestic political environment-** foreign policy is made and implemented within an international and domestic political context, which must be understood by state in order to determine the best foreign policy option. For example, a state may need to respond to an international crisis.

- **Goal setting-** A state has multiple foreign policy goals. A state must determine which goal is affected by the international and domestic political environment at any given time. In addition, foreign policy goals may conflict, which will require the state to prioritize.
- **Determination of policy option-** A state must then determine what policy options are available to the goal or goals set in light of the political environment. This will involve an assessment of the state capacity to implement policy options and an assessment of the consequences of each policy option.
- **Formal decision making action-** A formal foreign policy decision will be taken at some level within a government, foreign policy decisions are usually made by the executive branch of government. Common governmental actors or institutions which make foreign policy decisions include: the head of state such as a president or head of government such as a prime minister, cabinet, or minister.
- **Implementation of chosen policy option-** Once a foreign policy option has been chosen and a decision has been made, then the policy must be implemented. Foreign policy is most commonly implemented by specialist foreign policy arms of the

state bureaucracy, such as Ministry of foreign Affaire or state department. Other departments may also have a role in Implementing foreign policy state as departments for: trade, defense, and aid.

- Foreign policy analysis is the study of the conduct and practice of relation between different actors, primarily state, in the international system. Diplomacy, intelligence, trade negotiations and cultural exchanges all form part of the substance of foreign policy analysis.
- At the heart of the field is an investigation into decision making, the individual decision makers, process and conditions that affect foreign policy and the outcomes of these decisions.
- By virtue of this approach, foreign policy analysis is necessarily concerned with the boundaries between the external environment outside of the nation state and the internal or domestic environment, with its variety of sub-national sources of influence.
- FPA developed as a separate area of enquiry within the discipline of international relations, both because of its initially exclusive focus on the actual conduct of interstate relations and due to its normative impulse.

- While International Relation scholars understood their role to be interpret the broad features of the international system, FPA specialists took as their mandate a concentration on actual state conduct and the sources of decisions themselves. Moreover, scholars working within FPA saw their task to be normative, that is and, in some instance, even enhance the possibility of peaceful relations between states.
- To put this in the context of David Singer's well known schema of international relations, he says that in grappling with world politics, one necessarily focuses on either the study of phenomena at the international system level, the state or national level or the individual level.
- FPA has traditionally emphasized the state and individual level, to be the key areas for understanding the nature of international system.
- At the same time as globalization has transformed the international system, making interconnectivity outside of traditional state to state conduct more likely, FPA has had to expand its own outlook to account for an increasingly diverse range of non-state actors such as global

environmental activities or multinational corporations.

- An underlying theme within the study of FPA is the structure agency debate. Like the other branches of the social science FPA scholars are divided as to the amount of influence to accord to structural factors (the constraints imposed by the international system), or human agency (the role of individual choice in shaping the international system in analysing foreign policy decision and decision-making environments ).
- FPA's focus on the process of foreign policy formulation, the role of decision-makers and the nature of foreign policy choice, however has tended to produce a stronger emphasis on agency in its work than is found in international relations (at least until the advent of the constructivism turn in the 1990 ).
- Indeed, in many respects as we shall see, FPA anticipates key insights and concerns found in the constructivist tradition.
- FPA shares much with other policy-oriented fields that seek to employ scientific means to understand phenomena.

- Debate within FPA over the utility of different methodological approaches, including rational choice, human psychology and organizational studies has encouraged the development of a diversity of material and outlooks on foreign policy. At the same time there remains a significant of FPA that, like diplomatic studies, owes a great debt to historical method.

