

2.THE NEED OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AS A DISCIPLINE FOR GLOBAL POLICY FRAMING

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ABSTRACT:

The International Relations theories help us in analysing and understanding the world around us through different perspectives. A number of global issues have emerged and the problem can be addressed effectively with the help of theories of International Relations. Thus, a deeper understanding of these theories help in the positive transformation of the world and policy framing. The theories of International Relations affect our daily lives through various policies, ideas that travel through national borders but its importance is still not recognised as a discipline for global policy framing. There is a need to inculcate International Relations as a discipline and as a subject in the university curriculum. It is necessary for the scholars and the policy framers to recognise the value and importance of the theories of International Relations.

1. INTRODUCTION

The theory of International Relations is paid little attention when it comes to policy-making. The policy-makers are uninterested to refer to the International Relations theory and the scholars of the discipline seem less interested in policy-making. Failure to rely on the correct theory and proper theoretical visions lead to major policy disasters. The theory is essential for policy-making as it helps in diagnosing events, searching for the international relations causes and providing responses and analysing its impact on International Relations policies. Scholars are discouraged to perform policy-work in the discipline due to lack of incentives and recognition, which creates a gap between theory and policy. Thus, greater emphasis needs to be laid on policy-relevant theoretical work by the scholars of International Relations.

This paper attempts to delineate the importance of International Relations theory in policy-making. The world faces major problems like global terrorism, expansion of global trade, global environmental concerns, human rights agenda etc. which needs policy-makers and scholars to come up with effective ideas. But all these phenomena have been objects of sustained scholarly injuries. There has been dissatisfaction with the contributions of International Relations theorists in resolving contemporary problems. Most policy-making organisations do not require the knowledge of the discipline as the prerequisite for working as a policy-maker. The researcher argues that no effective global policy can be made if the policy-maker is unaware of the theory of International Relations. The gap between the theories and the practical conduct of foreign policy is one of the major reasons for the failure of the policies made for resolving global conflicts and problems.

The paper will show how the theories of International Relations contribute to the conduct of foreign policy and how is the theory used in policy framing in the global arena. The present paper explores these themes in greater detail in three parts. Part I addresses the contribution of theory to foreign policy-making. Part II addresses International Relations as a social science discipline and analyses of the global arena. Part III discusses the role of international lawyers in foreign policy-making and their collaboration with prominent scholars of the discipline.

PART I: HOW THEORY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS CONTRIBUTE TO FOREIGN POLICY MAKING?

Policy decisions are influenced by knowledge-based purely on facts, rule of thumb, typologies, empirical data and theory. International Relations theories offer explanations for the level of security competition between states; the level and forms of international cooperation; the spread of ideas, norms and institutions; and the transformation of particular international systems.¹ The theories operate at individual levels focussing on the social science methods, interpretive approaches, gender differences, formal theory, individual or group psychology, comparative case studies and statistical analysis. The theory should be logically consistent with the evidence available and complete in nature. It should identify the

¹ Stephen M. Walt, *THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEORY AND POLICY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*, 8 Annual Review of Political Science, 23-48 (2005).

determining outcomes of factors responsible for an event and it should have the capability to account for phenomena that seem mystifying. A theory that deals with a problem of some magnitude are likely to garner greater attention.² Thus, theories to attract policy-makers should be stated clearly.

Theory and Policy are inextricably linked. Analysing of a problem by the policy-makers and then searching for its solutions and choosing policy instruments are all based on theory. For example, policy for ethnic conflicts of Bosnia and Kosovo. Use of bad theories leads to failure in policy-making. For example, Admiral Von Tirpitz's "risk theory" and the Soviet policy during the Cold War, that the developing world is evolving in a socialist direction was flawed on all counts.³ Theory informs policy and policy problems inspire theoretical innovation. Theoretical scholarship through diagnosis (removing ambiguity from the information received), prediction (help policy-makers anticipate events by providing broad context in which such policies are operating), prescription (the belief that the measure adopted will produce the desired outcome) and evaluation (identifying the benchmarks to know whether the objective is achieved or not) help policy-makers to reduce the gap between theory and policy. For example, the *grand strategy* for expansion and strengthening international institutions based on liberal theory, efforts for building democracy in society, ethnic peace, the role of third parties in post-war peace etc.

PART-II: INTERNATIONAL RELATION AS SOCIAL SCIENCE AND ITS PROFESSIONALISATION

Hoffman asserts that International Relations is a social science which is normally associated with the belief that international knowledge produced is spread all around the world, wherever the discipline is practised.⁴ The positivist epistemology (principally Realism and Liberalism) that are embedded in the American social science are the main reference point for the discipline around the world.⁵ Policy-makers and social scientists have different agendas. Social scientists seek to identify social behaviour and the policy-makers are concerned with

² *ibid.*

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Rafael A. Duarte Villa & Marilia Carolina B. de Souza Pimenta, *Is International Relations still an American social science discipline in Latin America?*, 23 *Opinião Pública*, 261-288 (2017).

⁵ *ibid.*

contemporary problems. International Relations as a socio-political science examine topics such as human rights, globalisation, global poverty, conflict and peace theory and global ethics.

International Relations scholars can be the best policy-makers for global contemporary matters as the knowledge of the discipline is necessary when it comes to doing something globally. As the writers of distant past such as Machiavelli formed political events of their times, similarly there is a need that the prominent scholars of contemporary period frame policies to improve the world. The lack of incentives and norms has discouraged scholars to participate in the policy-making process. Lack of books written on policy-making by prominent theorists and discouraging young scholars who write on foreign policy runs intellectual and political risks. Lesser academic departments and no recognition discourage many professionals which creates a gap between theory and policy.

PART-III: INTERNATIONAL LAW AS A DISCIPLINE AND LAWYERS AS POLICY-MAKERS

The International lawyers use materials and insights from International Relations theory to diagnose substantive problems and frame better legal solutions, to explain the structure or function of particular international legal rules or institutions and to reconceptualise particular institutions or international law generally.⁶ Many lawyers emphasise on the importance of law for analysing the state behaviour and set up pathways for shaping social structure. International Lawyers are one of the best policy-makers because they analyse the world outside from the perspective of International Relations and provide fruitful solutions. Various international institutions like the World Trade Organisation, World Bank and United Nations Organisation etc. depend increasingly on legal dispute mechanisms.

The international lawyers pay more attention to transnational law and attaining democratic peace. The International Relations theorists have started paying more emphasis on the International Law because of its direct relationship with the discipline and global community and most of them have started collaborating with the international lawyers for joint research

⁶ Anne-Marie Slaughter et al., *International Law and International Relations Theory: A New Generation of Interdisciplinary Scholarship*, 92 *The American Journal of International Law*, 367 (1998).

agenda and are using International Relations theory to reconceptualise the International Law. Thus, the scholars of International Relations and International Law can together contribute more profitably in future. The work that focuses on the structure and function of international law does more work in the field of International Relations as it provides for more research subjects. The subfields of this theory for joint research falls under constructivism, which says that social structures are contingent products of interaction based on shared norms.⁷ International Lawyers use institutionalism theory to evaluate how the design of international institutions help in achieving its objectives, such goals can be fulfilled by enacting various international treaties like Kyoto Protocol, United Conventions on Law of Seas etc. Enactment of such treaties and agreements help in proper policy making for a global issue.

2.CONCLUSION

The foreign policy-makers often lack interest in International Relations which results in policy disaster. The International Relations scholars are often not interested in the policy-making because of lack of recognition and discouragement by the authorities. The global conflicts cannot be resolved without the knowledge of International Relations as it allows nations to cooperate and study global issues. International Relations act as socio-political science when it deals with issues globally, contemporary global issues include environmental crisis, human rights, terrorism, culture and war conflict. The professionalisation of the discipline is necessary for effective policy-making and encouraging the scholars to publish more material on the discipline.

The Teaching Research and International Policy (TRIP) project emphasise on the importance of teaching International Relations in universities for a better understanding of the discipline and encouraging the young generation to participate in it. International Lawyers play a major role in the policy framing as they look to the world from the same perspective of international scholars. Joint research agenda and collaboration of the international lawyers and scholars is an effective measure to encourage the scholars to participate in the policy-making process.

⁷ Anne-Marie Slaughter et al., *International Law and International Relations Theory: A New Generation of Interdisciplinary Scholarship*, 92 *The American Journal of International Law*, 367 (1998).