Levels of Analysis in International Relations

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Outline

- Sign up on Piazza
- Choose **one reading** for your class presentation
- Choose **two readings** for your critical response papers

What Is In a Model?

A model specifies (Frieden et al. 2016: 45-53):

- Actors
- Interests
- Interactions
- Institutions

Basic unit for analysis

- E.g., states, politicians, firms, IOs, NGOs, etc.

Interests are what actors want to achieve through political action

- Power and security
- Economic welfare
- Ideological goals

Interests determine preferences of actors over the possible outcomes that might result from their (and other actors') political choices

- E.g., United States have an interest in security
- US preferences over Iraqi government: Democratic government friendly toward US $\succ$ Pro-Western dictator $\succ$ Anti-American government $\succ$ Instability and chaos

- Outcomes depend not only on the choices of one actor but on the choices of others as well
- Interactions: the ways in which the choices of two or more actors combine to produce outcomes
- Strategic interactions: each actor's strategy depends on the anticipated strategy of other actors
- We use game theory to study strategic interactions

- Sets of rules that define constraints, and provide opportunities for, behavior
- Institutions serve to facilitate cooperation among members

We can analyze actors and their interactions at three levels

- International level: states interact with each other, sometimes in the context of international institutions
- Domestic level: subnational actors interact within domestic institutions
- Transnational level: groups whose members span border try to influence domestic and international politics

What does Singer (1961) say?

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International level:

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International level:

- Comprehensive, encompassing all interactions that take place within the international system
- Little emphasis on national autonomy
- "Black box" or "billiard ball" concept of national actors (states are homogeneous)

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Domestic level:

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Domestic level:

- Allows us to examine states in greater detail
- Produces richer description and more satisfactory explanations of international relations
- Tendency to exaggerate differences among states
- If we attribute different interests to different states, question becomes why states have different interests

- Set of tools to study strategic interactions
- Players choose between actions
- Strategy for a player is a complete plan of action. Describes the actions that the player would take at each of his possible decision points.

Suppose

- Two actors, $i \in \{\mathbf{A1}, \mathbf{A2}\}$
- Each actor i has a strategy space, S_i
- Set of strategy profiles, $S = S_{\mathbf{A1}} \times S_{\mathbf{A2}}$
- For each actor i, we can define a payoff function $u_i : S \mapsto \mathrm{R}$
- $u_i(s)$ gives player i's payoff in the game when strategy profile $s \in S$ is played

- Two criminals, $i \in \{\mathbf{A1}, \mathbf{A2}\}$
- Strategy space $S_i = \{C, D\}$
- Set of strategy profiles
  $S = S_{\mathbf{A1}} \times S_{\mathbf{A2}} = \{(C,C), (D,D), (C,D), (D,C)\}$
- We are looking for strategy profile(s) that is/are a Nash equilibrium
- A strategy profile is a Nash equilibrium if and only if each player's strategy is a best response to the strategies of the others

Payoff function u_i is defined to be

- $u_i(D, C) = 3$
- $u_i(C, C) = 2$
- $u_i(D, D) = 1$
- $u_i(C, D) = 0$

A2

		C	D
	C	2, 2	0, 3
A1			
	D	3, 0	1, 1*

- Woman and Man going on a date, $i \in \{Woman, Man\}$
- Strategy space $S_i = \{Concert, Movie\}$
- Set of strategy profiles
  $S = \{(C, C), (M, M), (C, M), (M, C)\}$
- We are looking for (pure strategy) Nash equilibria

Payoff functions $u_{\mathbf{W}}$ and $u_{\mathbf{M}}$ are defined to be

- $u_{\mathbf{W}}(Concert, Concert) = 2$
- $u_{\mathbf{M}}(Concert, Concert) = 1$
- $u_{\mathbf{W}}(Movie, Movie) = 1$
- $u_{\mathbf{M}}(Movie, Movie) = 2$
- $u_i(Concert, Movie) = 0$
- $u_i(Movie, Concert) = 0$

Man

		Concert	Movie
	Concert	2, 1*	0, 0
Woman			
	Movie	0, 0	1, 2*

- Two car drivers driving toward each other, $i \in \{\mathbf{A1}, \mathbf{A2}\}$
- Strategy space $S_i = \{C, D\}$, where C means turn aside and D means standing tough
- Set of strategy profiles $S = \{(C, C), (D, D), (C, D), (D, C)\}$
- We are looking for (pure strategy) Nash equilibria

Payoff function u_i is defined to be

- $u_i(D, C) = 3$
- $u_i(C, C) = 2$
- $u_i(C, D) = 1$
- $u_i(D, D) = 0,$

A2

		C	D
A1	C	2, 2	1, 3*
	D	3, 1*	0, 0