

Class webpage:
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Levels of Analysis

System-Level

Dyadic Interactions

State and Societal

Decision-making:
Individual

Organizational

Using Levels of Analysis to understand International Conflict

Example: the US invasion of Iraq in 2003

- Individual level:
 - G. W. Bush's worldview, religious beliefs
 - His determination to finish his father's war
 - His confidence in the correctness of his beliefs
- National level:
 - US commitment to democracy and democracy promotion
 - 9/11 attacks creating a permissive environment for aggressive policy
 - MCs not wanting to vote against war for fear of losing office
 - Influence of oil industry
 - "Israeli lobby"
- Bureaucratic/organizational level:
 - Influence of neoconservatives
 - Vice-President Cheney and Sec. of Defense Rumsfeld
 - versus Sec. of State Powell
 - Flaws in the intelligence process
- System level:
 - Threats and opportunities
 - Iraq's presumed weapons of mass destruction
 - 9/11 terrorist attacks --> US perceptions of vulnerability + presumed link between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein
 - Democratizing the Middle East as a whole
 - Permissive conditions created by the collapse of Soviet power

System-Level Theories

Realist Theories

Common set of assumptions

- Key actors are sovereign states
- Rational decision making
- Pursuit of security, power, and/or wealth
- Anarchic international system

Note: Some Realist theories allow states to value war over negotiation.

Other Realist concepts/models

- Security Dilemma
- Spiral Model versus the Deterrence Model

Waltzian Neorealism

- Focus on the distribution of power (making it a genuinely system-level theory)
- "Differently constituted states under similar configurations of power will act similarly, and similarly constituted states under different configurations of power will act differently." (32)
- Anarchy and competition lead to emulation of successful practices among states in providing their security.

Polarity and System Stability:

What is system stability?

Which is more stable, a multipolar or a bipolar world?