

Today's Agenda

Questions on Phase 3
Reading political science research
The Small-group level of analysis
Reflections on Levels, Causes, and War

For Monday, March 5:

Email me (ckbutler@unm.edu)

- A question and a quote from the Weeks article
- AND
- A question and a quote from the Leeds article

Reading political science research

Theory

Measurement

Testing

Stars and signs (reading statistical tables)

Independent variables with "stars" are significant and should be interpreted; if an independent variable is NOT significant, the coefficient should NOT be interpreted.

If the independent variable is significant (and has a star), then interpret the sign of the coefficient.

Results

The small-group level of analysis

Janis' Groupthink

"a concurrence-seeking tendency within cohesive groups"

Not all small groups will engage in groupthink all of the time

Discussion Question: When is a small group more likely to engage in groupthink? Let break this down into two parts: the characteristics of the group and the factors of the decision problem.

Characteristics of group

- No desire to be confrontational
 - Some people are shy, don't want to rock the boat
 - Individual incentives to keep quiet
 - Don't want to alienate others; maintain good working relationship.
- The group shares a policy perspective.
- What is the purpose of bringing this group together
 - Brainstorming?
 - Need a decision? Crisis decision making
- If they all have the same characteristics (eg, all young)
 - eg, all ex-military
 - ie, they all have the same life perspective
- A strong central personality (charisma) or a hierarchical relationship
- A non-willingness to consider different alternatives
 - Extreme ideological positions
 - Have already decided on the alternative, meeting to rationalize it.
- Regime type
- A recent shared bad decision/failure
 - May depend on the kind of regrets they had
 - But could make the group more cautious with their next decision

Factors of the decision problem

- Pressure for consensus
 - Context: need to look unified
- Time constraints
 - Need for a quick reaction
 - Prevent completion of opponent's project
 - Change of leadership; re-election
- Available information
- What options are realistic
- How high are the stakes?
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Critiques and extensions

Newgroup syndrome

Risky shift versus Group polarization

Group dynamics as political as well as social

Reflections on Levels, Causes, and War

Levels of analysis help us group similar causal factors

Most theories of war draw on factors from more than one level

Levels of analysis versus strategic interaction

Variables at one level of analysis affecting variables at another level of analysis

Democratic rivals???

What do we want in a theory?

Logical consistency

Empirical support

Explanatory power

Let's reconsider the international interaction game