

Level-of-analysis

Debate regarding the level-of-analysis problem in the field of international politics in the Post-World War II era began to take shape in a book where the issue is never mentioned specifically. In *Man, the State, and War*, Waltz (1954, 1959: 160) refers to 'images,' by which he means different categories of factors that cause war, namely, the characteristics or attributes of

- (1) individual human beings,
- (2) states, and
- (3) the international system.

He emphasizes the impact of the structure of the international system as a cause of war, but he does not ignore the other two images, nor does he find it difficult to formulate explanations simultaneously integrating factors pertaining to all three 'images' (Waltz 1954, 1959: 238).

However, some analysts see the origins of the debate about the level-of-analysis problem in Singer's (1961) article 'The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations.'

Singer's view of the problem is fundamentally different from Waltz's. While Waltz focuses on categories of explanatory factors, Singer refers primarily to the social entity or aggregation about which descriptions, explanations, or predictions are offered in a given study. In a discussion of the relationship between propositions about foreign policies, on the one hand, and international politics, on the other, he concludes that 'one could not add these two kinds of statements together to achieve a cumulative growth of empirical generalizations', and that 'representing different levels of analysis... they would defy theoretical integration (Singer 1969: 29. Emphasis added).'

To this day, international politics specialists use the term 'level of analysis' to refer, in Waltzian fashion, to different categories of explanatory factors, or, following Singer, to different social entities or aggregations as targets for analysis. Russett and Starr (1996: 11), for example, define 'levels of analysis' as 'points on an ordered scale of size and complexity.' They go on to explain that 'a level may refer to the actors themselves, to the states or individuals whose actions we are trying to explain, or to different kinds of influences on those actors.'

Such a definition is, perhaps, a defensible accommodation to usage of the term within the field of international politics. It is also, however, potentially ambiguous and confusing on several key points. First, this kind of definition obscures the fact that some units of analysis are aggregations that do not themselves 'act' or 'behave.' The international system, for example, often serves as a unit of analysis, but it has no 'purposes' or 'goals', nor does it exhibit any 'behaviour' that might serve as a target for explanatory efforts. Furthermore, Russett and Starr's (1996) definition of 'levels of analysis' can obscure the fundamental difference between the issue regarding the relative impacts of different categories of explanatory factors on the behaviour of states or policymakers, and the quite different issue regarding the relative merits of, and relationships between analyses focusing on the behaviour or the operation of different social entities or aggregations.

Perhaps the most important reason why it is important to avoid blurring this distinction between "levels of analysis" as the locus of explanatory factors, on the one hand, and as different social entities whose behaviour or operation is being analyzed has to do with issue of integrating levels of analysis. If 'levels of analysis' refer to different loci of explanatory factors (such as characteristics of individuals, or of states, or of the international system), then integrating them simply refers to including variables from different levels of aggregation as explanatory factors in one's model.

Integrating levels of analysis in this fashion is relatively simple to accomplish. Nevertheless, as we shall see, there is a very lively dispute in the field about whether it is a good idea to include explanatory factors, for example, both internal and external to states whose behaviour analysts are attempting to explain.

The relationship between and the integration of analyses focusing on different social entities, by contrast, are more problematic in a logical sense. While there is certainly lively debate about the relative strengths of the different categories of explanatory factors, there exists within the various sectors of the field a reasonably firm consensus regarding how to evaluate these strengths. (Admittedly, the contents of the consensus tend to be different among qualitatively oriented analysts, for example, and among more quantitatively oriented ones.) Debate regarding the relative merits of, and especially the relationships among analyses focusing on different social entities or aggregations, in contrast, is marked by widespread dissension and apparent confusion.

مستويات التحليل Levels of Analysis

Systemic نظمي	Domestic داخلي	Individual الفرد
<p>Basic Explanation for State Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All states are similar/sovereign System logic drives behaviour <p>أساس شرح سلوك الدولة: الدول متشابهة/ ذات سيادة منطق النظام يفرض السلوك</p>	<p>Basic Explanation for State Actions :</p> <p>All states unique Behaviour derives from state's features</p> <p>أساس شرح سلوك الدولة: كل دولة فريدة النوع سلوك الدولة ينبع من خصائصها</p>	<p>Basic Explanation for State Actions :</p> <p>Decisions made by individual leaders</p> <p>أساس شرح سلوك الدولة: - القرارات الصادرة عن القادة كأفراد</p>
<p>Examples of Theories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balance of power Long cycles Hegemonic stability Security Dilemma <p>مثل النظريات: ميزان القوة الدورات الطويلة استقرار الهيمنة المأزق الأمني</p>	<p>Examples of Theories :</p> <p>Peace among democracies Military-industrial complex Bureaucratic politics</p> <p>مثل النظريات: السلم الديمقراطي المركب العسكري الصناعي السياسة البيروقراطية</p>	<p>Examples of Theories :</p> <p>Cognitive theories & misperception Crisis decision-making Operational codes</p> <p>مثل النظريات: نظريات الإدراك & سوء الإدراك اتخاذ القرار في الأزمة الرموز القابلة للتطبيق</p>
<p>Types of Data Considered :</p> <p>Military strength Deterrence capabilities GNP Number of major powers = Polarity</p> <p>نوع المعلومات التي يتم البحث فيها: القوة العسكرية امكانيات الردع الدخل القومي الاجمالي عدد القوى الكبرى: نظام القطبية</p>	<p>Types of Data onsidered :</p> <p>Form of government Pol institutions Economic structure & level of development Ideology History Culture Public opinion</p> <p>نوع المعلومات التي يتم البحث فيها: شكل الحكومة المؤسسات السياسية البنية الاقتصادية & مستوى التطور الايدولوجية التاريخ الثقافة الرأي العام</p>	<p>Types of Data Considered :</p> <p>Leadership style Leader's beliefs, goals value systems Generational experience Personal relationships</p> <p>نوع المعلومات التي يتم البحث فيها: نموذج القيادة معتقدات و أهداف و نظام القيم عند القادة تجارب الأجيال العلاقات الشخصية</p>