

Crisis Bargaining Project: Working Paper No. 6

FORMAT AND CHECKLIST FOR CASE STUDIES

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This paper is essentially an addendum to Working Paper No. 3. It provides a checklist of specific items to look for in the case studies, within the categories used in the earlier paper. This will be your basic "handbook" for the case research. However, you should also keep in mind the questions and hypotheses in Paper No. 3 (particularly those relevant to a single case), the list of typical bargaining tactics in Paper No. 4, and the models in Paper No. 5.

RESEARCH AIMS

1. In the most general sense, we are interested in testing refining and augmenting existing bargaining theory as it applies to international crises. Since bargaining subsumes processes of coercion and conciliation, we want to theorize about how states practice coercion, coercion-resistance, and conciliation. To a somewhat lesser degree, we are also interested in generalizing about non-bargaining elements in crisis behavior, and how they relate to the bargaining process.

2. We are looking for empirical instances of the various formal concepts which are found in the bargaining literature. When we find an instance, we ask in addition, how closely does actual behavior correspond to the "ideal types" of bargaining tactics, strategic factors, etc., found in the literature? We also ask, if the deviations from the ideal type are considerable, what are the reasons for the deviation? If we can find systematic deviations with regular explanations, this will be the basis for devising new formal concepts or variations and modifications of the old concepts.

3. We are also interested in the relative importance and frequency of empirical instances. This will indicate how much we need the associated formal concept to understand the crisis and explain its outcome. When a cluster of instances and their associated concepts is relatively important, this indicates that the formal model or other theory which includes those concepts is relevant to the crisis. That is, the formal model or theory can be used to describe and understand the crisis and explain its development and outcome. This constitutes a partial confirmation of the model or theory.

4. We are also interested, if possible, in locating systematic deviations from the explanations and predictions of a relevant model, as a basis for modifying the model to make it more relevant and adequate. However, since a number of bargaining models and theories already is available, our main accomplishment is likely to be the confirmation and disconfirmation of various of them, rather than the devising of new models and theories.

CHECKLIST

I. Systemic Environment

1. System structure
 - a. Number of major actors
 - b. Distribution of power
 - c. International organizations (if relevant to the crisis)
2. Ideological homogeneity or heterogeneity
 - a. Do the parties have similar or dissimilar ideologies and social systems? Relevance of this to the crisis.
 - b. Are there domestic revolutionary factors in the situation? Links between these factors and the inter-state crisis.

3. Military technology
 - a. Nuclear or conventional
 - b. Other relevant details (e.g., particular weapons, mobilization lead times, etc.)
4. Alliances and alignments
 - a. Alliances existing in the system
 - b. Nature and firmness of alliance commitments

II Bargaining Setting

1. The parties to the crisis
2. Recent previous relations between the parties
3. The conflict of interest which underlies the crisis
4. What precipitated the crisis:
 - a. Deliberate act or challenge or demand
 - b. Inadvertence or uncontrollable events
5. The immediate issue of the crisis
6. The parties' relative valuation of the stakes at issue
7. Content of the stakes for each party (e.g., territory, military potential, preservation of alliance, prestige, reputation for resolve, etc.)
8. The parties' relative military capabilities
9. The parties' relative fear of war
10. Pre-crisis commitments
11. Asymmetries between the parties (e.g. geographical distance from the crisis point, military capabilities, value of the stakes, support of allies and third parties, etc.)
12. Initial "images" and perceptions (for each party with respect to every other party)
 - a. Immediate interests and ultimate goals (including intensity of valuation, if discernible).
 - b. Intentions (in various contingencies)
 - c. Military capabilities
 - d. Fear of war
 - e. Degree of "resolve"

III. The Bargaining Process

The next step is to analyze the bargaining process move by move.

We distinguish three kinds of moves:

1. Bidding moves or bids, namely demands, offers, or proposals for settlement.
2. Basic moves, namely actions which change the actual situation irreversibly and therefore change the alternatives open to each party.
3. Communication moves, which are intended to change perceptions but not the real situation. Since so many communications occur in a crisis it is necessary to consider only the primary ones, namely those which have major effects on perceptions or images. A group of communications which have a single cumulative effect can be treated as a single communication.

Analysis of a move includes the following:

1. Considerations and pressures producing the move; decision-process preceding the move. (when significant and researchable)
2. Intended effects (e.g., convey truth or deceive? to what end?)
3. Actual effects on mover.
4. Effects on perceptions of recipient.
5. Effects on strategic situation of recipient.
6. Effects on recipient's choice of moves.

It will probably be helpful to begin this section by describing or diagramming the essential structure of the bargaining situation and process in terms of whatever model or theory you think most appropriate. Then each move can be described and explained by locating it in this structure.

From time to time it is also desirable to break in on the move-by-move account to describe the perceptions of the situation by each party at that point, including possible changes in images. This may be done after an important basic move or some other major change in the situation. See check list for what to include in this account.

In the "process" checklist that follows, the various items are clustered together according to the models in which they appear prominently. However, a number of items figure in two or more models, so the grouping is somewhat arbitrary.

A. Utility models

1. Is there a bargaining range?
 - a. Clearly or vaguely known limits beyond which no agreement is possible.
 - b. Bargaining space between the two limits
 - c. Movement within the space, by reducing demands or exchanging concessions.
2. Is a bargaining range created or discovered?
 - a. Attempts to change opponent's utilities
 - b. Re-estimations of one's own utilities
 - c. Clarification of relative preferences
 - d. Search for possible outcomes that are mutually acceptable.
3. If there is a range, is it two-dimensional or one-dimensional (zero-sum)?
 - a. Is there a search for mutually beneficial moves?
 - b. Is there a search for moves which provide considerable benefit to B at slight cost to A?
4. Are there "salient" possible outcomes within the bargaining range?
 - a. One or several?
 - b. Favoring one party or the other?
5. Do the players act like maximizers or like disaster-avoiders? Is there a difference?
 - a. Are they pursuing some positive aspiration, e.g., involving expansion of territory, colonies or influence?
 - b. Or are they trying to stabilize or protect a status quo, perhaps a deteriorating, dangerous one?
 - c. Or are they trying to get together with their opponent to avoid a threatening mutual disaster?

- d. Or is there a shift from one to another type of motivation during the crisis?
- e. If there is a shift, what are its behavioral characteristics?

B. The "chicken-critical risk" model

1. Can this model be empirically applied in the sense of our being able to determine at least roughly the critical risk levels of the parties and their ordinal relationship?
2. Do the parties try to estimate the probability of the opponent's actions? How exactly? Or do they calculate in rather absolute, either-or terms?
3. Is there manipulation of the opponent's estimates of one's own probable acts?
4. Is there manipulation of the opponent's perception of one's own utilities?
5. Is there manipulation of the opponent's utilities (e.g. his cost of compliance, his cost of war, etc.)
6. Is there manipulation of shared risk?
7. What specific tactics are used in the above manipulations? (a long list is given in Working Paper #4; the following are probably the most important)
 - a. Threats: How explicit or ambiguous? Personal status of giver and receiver? Circumstances in which used? Medium and forum used?
 - b. Commitments: how irrevocable? all at once or progressive?
 - c. Coupling and de-coupling; circumstances in which used.
 - d. Warnings (see Paper #2 for distinction between warning, threat and commitment)
 - e. Arranging or pretending lack of control or lack of choice.
8. What is the relative effectiveness and frequency of each of these tactics?

9. Responses to threats
 - a. Resistance: stiffen resolve; what circumstances and what kind of threat.
 - b. Compliance: what circumstances and what kind of threat.
10. Responses to commitments
11. Responses to conciliation moves
12. Loopholes: to facilitate the opponent's concession; to facilitate one's own concession if necessary.

C. Expanded game models

1. Are escalation and de-escalation important?
2. Is there a choice by one or the other player among three or more degrees of toughness
3. Does this choice make a real difference in the outcome
4. Is there a shift of strategy, toward more or less toughness
5. Are there warnings of conditional shifts, including implicit warnings
6. Are there inducements offered for opponent's shift of strategy
7. Are there salient thresholds which limit or focus escalation-de-escalation
8. Are there transitions from one game structure to another (e.g., from chicken to prisoners dilemma)

D. Super-game model

1. Is there a supergame structure?
2. Is a significant part of a country's aims a relative increase of power
3. Do cost estimates for choosing a strategy include prominently considerations of opponent's increased power or own decreased power including acquisition or loss of allies?
4. Is future relative strategic position estimated in strategic decisions including position in either the "balance of capabilities" or the "balance of resolve"?
5. Apart from the above, is one crisis one of a series of crises involving the same players but different power positions
6. If so, are the power positions the outcome of the previous crises in the series

E. Information processing model

1. Are images and expectations, perceptions and interpretations important in determining the outcome, or is it determined by the basic strategic situation with perceptions and images providing only mild deviations?

2. Misperceptions: circumstances, influences, types.

3. What happens when new information contradicts an expectation or image?

4. What happens when new information contradicts a desire or wish?

5. How is an incoming message interpreted?

a. By finding a historical analogy?

b. By making it conform to images or expectations or desires? By what kind of mental process is it made to conform (selective attention, wishful thinking etc.)?

c. If it is not interpreted to conform to images, is there a search for confirming information?

d. Are there other ways in which incoming information is dealt with?

6. What circumstances seem to affect the mode of interpretation?

7. Do basic images and expectations change during the course of the crisis? What seems to produce the changes?

a. Short-run and long-run aims of the other

b. Intentions and strategy of the other

c. Alternative strategies open to the other; how likely is each; circumstances activating each.

d. The others general degree of "resolve"

8. Are perceptions influenced more by the other party's deliberate bargaining moves, or by other elements of his behavior not intended primarily for communication or bargaining (e.g., domestic events and public opinion, statements aimed at other audiences, budgetary decisions, etc.)

9. Discrepancies between self-image and opponent's image of self; consequences for interpretations and misperceptions.

F. Cataclysmic model

1. Is a cataclysmic model relevant to a significant extent?
2. Are there automatic or semi-automatic linkages, e.g., contingent military plans
3. Are there decisions in which there is no real choice, only reluctance and inevitability
4. Are there statements of inevitability, hopelessness, getting out of hand
 - a. made privately within a government
 - b. made as warning or plea to opponentdifferentiate from commitments and threats involving inevitability, made to opponent to make him back down
5. Are there techniques for preserving control, such as:
 - hedging on commitments or threats; ambiguity
 - civilian control over military
 - preservation of emergency communication channel which is guaranteed to be honest
6. What conditions or factors lead to loss of control

G. Miscellaneous (items not obviously related to any particular model)

1. What rules or norms do the parties perceive and observe?
2. Rationality and irrationality
 - a. Are there obvious instances of irrational calculation and behavior?
 - b. If so, what seems to be the source of the irrationality? Personality idiosyncrasy? Tension induced by the crisis? Other?
 - c. Is irrationality sometimes feigned for bargaining advantage?
3. Is there a clear shift in bargaining behavior between "stages" of a crisis? (Some crises may have clearcut stages or phases, others not.) What is the effect of "rising tension" on behavior?
4. What is the relative importance and frequency of "symbolic acts" and "acts of harassment" (Working Paper No. 4, pp. 15-16)

IV. Outcome and Aftermath

1. Type of settlement (formal, tacit, none)
2. Payoff to each party
3. Effect on relations between the parties
 - a. Reciprocal perceptions of resolve
 - b. Alliance cohesion
 - c. Other
4. Effects on the international system

V. Conclusion

A. Explanation of the outcome

In this first part of the conclusion, you should provide a general explanation of what happened in the case, including why the actual outcome occurred rather than some other one. You might show why, for example, given the essential structure of the situation, the result occurred as it did. This would be the place to describe the empirical working out of the forces in the model which you may have used earlier in the paper. You might also discuss whether the outcome was determined more by the "givens" in the system or bargaining setting, or by specific tactics used by the parties. You might discuss the extent to which the progress of the crisis was actually under the control of the parties, and the extent to which the outcome followed from autonomous or chance factors. What distinguishes this part of the conclusion from the second part (although the line is not absolutely sharp) is that here the focus is on an explanation of this case rather than on a reporting of data for cross-case comparisons.

B. Report on checklist and hypotheses

Here you report on what you have been able to discover about the items on the checklist (particularly the section on "bargaining process")

and whatever supporting or non-supporting evidence you find for relevant hypotheses in Working Paper No. 3. You should simply go down the list item by item and summarize what your case shows about each one. For some items and hypotheses there may of course be little or nothing to report; others may yield richer results worthy of a rather full treatment. For some points which you may have already taken up in detail in the move-by-move analysis, it may be sufficient to refer to previous pages. For points you have not previously taken up it may be helpful to state why you left them out. For example, you could state here that you made no reference to a bargaining range in your account because you could not find any range or any attempts to create one. Or you might state that you made no references to escalation-deescalation because the facts were more conveniently handled in some other way.

The purpose of these summary statements is to provide accessible data for cross-case comparison and the testing of various hypotheses or models. Negative statements can be very useful for such a purpose.