World War One

The Origins of the Great War

Individual Level: Kate Burns -- State Level: David Koenig -- International Level: Oswaldo Gonzalez
Overview of World War One

- **Timeline of Conflict**
  - July 28, 1914 - November 11, 1918
  - Sequence of Events in 1914

- **Belligerent Nations**
  - Allied Powers (BE, FR, RU, USA, etc.)
  - Central Powers (GR, AH, OE, BU)

- **Empirical Results**
  - Status of Belligerent Nations
  - Casualties from Conflict
Territorial Results of WWI

The map illustrates the territorial changes resulting from World War I. It highlights new countries, key countries, and former Russian Empire regions. Defeated former empires include Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire. Notable changes include the creation of new countries such as Czechoslovakia, and areas subject to referendums or contested areas are marked.
Individual Level of Analysis

Kate Burns
Individual Level of Analysis

- **Misperceptions** of political leaders proved a main cause of the war.

- **Lack of empathy** from each individual leader also a contributing factor

- **Exceptionalism**

- **Images** of the leaders don’t necessarily reflect reality

- **Fear** was the driving force of many decisions
Individual Level - Germany

- Kaiser Wilhelm
  - Severely stressed
  - Potentially mentally ill
  - Mercurial temper
  - Incredibly paranoid
  - Blinded by personal hate of the Slavs
  - Overconfident in the beginning

- Helmuth Von Moltke
  - Melancholy
  - Introspective
  - Plagued by self doubt
  - Struggled to make decisions
  - Lacked flexibility
Individual Level - Russia

- Sergei Sazonov
  - Foreign Minister
  - Highly emotional
  - Chauvinistic
  - Blinded by hatred

- Vladimir Sukhomlinov
  - Pleasure loving individual
  - Lazy
  - Compulsive liar
  - Unreceptive to new ideas

- Czar Nicholas II
  - Apathetic and indifferent
  - Out of touch with his people
  - Wanted to preserve the absolute monarchy bequeathed to him by his father
Individual Level - Austria-Hungary

- **Emperor Franz Joseph**
  - Defeated older man, simply wanted peace
  - Impact of Deteriorating Health on Policy
  - Indifferent Attitude

- **Conrad Von Hotzendorff (Chief of Staff):**
  - Exhibited extreme national pride/ nationalistic ideals
  - Motivated by pride and prestige
  - Authoritarian

- **Count Leopold Von Berchtold (Foreign Minister):**
  - Initially hesitant, then displayed common groupthink characteristics
  - Deceitful
  - Author of the Serbian Ultimatum
  - Overconfident
Individual Level Sources


State/Dyadic Level of Analysis

David Koenig
Post-Unification in Germany
State/Dyad Level - Germany

- Theories on Population and Economics
  o Rapid Industrialization and Population Growth
    ▪ Population Growth Relative to Neighbors
    ▪ Emerging Economic Relevance and Competition

- Theories on State Conception of Power
  o Ambitions in Face of Lacking Colonial History
  o Perception of World Powers (England/France)
    ▪ Academic Teachings on English-German Relations
  o State-wide Self-Confidence in Post-Unification
Berlin and London in 1910
State/Dyad Level - England

● Theories on Hegemony & National Identity
  ○ Existing Economic Hegemon → German Threat
    ▪ Defense Against Germany Perceived as Threat
    ▪ Dyadic Political & Economic Dilemma
  ○ Naval Superiority but Weaknesses in Land Warfare

● Theories on State Dyadic Tension
  ○ Reconciliation with France at Start of 20th Century
    ▪ Recognition of German Industrial Capacity
  ○ Attempts at Reconciliation with Germany Fail
State/Dyad Level - France

● Theory on French National History
  o Alsace-Lorraine Region and Insecurity
  o Nature of the French-German Dyadic Conflict

● Recognition of Internal State Weaknesses
  o Increased Relations with England and Russia
  o German Misperception of French Strength

● French Leverage of Alliance Relations
  o Moroccan Crisis (1905, 1911)
Other States and Conclusions

● Austria-Hungary
  o Austrian Dependency on Germany
  o Legitimacy Maintained by German Relations
  o Violation of Berlin Treaty with German Backing

● Russia
  o Discontent from Russo-Japanese War (1904-05)
  o National Interests Supercede Historical Relations

● State and Dyadic Level Conclusions
  o State Demographics Impact Dyadic Relations
  o State National Identity/Conception is Important
  o Dyadic Alliances Influence State Behavior
  o State Bureaucratic Systems Can Impact Behavior
State Bureaucracy and Mobilization


International Level of Analysis

Oswaldo Camarena-Gonzalez
Polarization

- Numerous relatively great powers
- Minor vs major wars
- Immediate vs. long-term alliances
Long Cycle Theory

- Challenger vs. Hegemon
  - Germany vs. Britain
- Naval power
- U.S.A
  - New world power; hegemonic succession
Long Cycle Theory Cont.

Development → Growth → Maturation → Saturation → Recession → Depression
By 1914 the United States had already passed Great Britain and Germany in terms of:
1. Industrial Production
2. Leading sector position
3. Gross national production

● U.S global leadership: Initiator or defender?
● Is socialism a solution?
Treaty of Versailles ordered that Germany to pay huge sums in reparations to the Allies.

- In 1921, as Germany could not pay, French and Belgian troops invaded and occupied the Ruhr to take goods and raw materials.
  - During 1923 Germany printed more money to pay striking workers.
    - Hyperinflation
Power Cycle

Balance of power → Transformation

- Structural uncertainty
  - Vulnerability → International system affected
- Equilibrium
International Level References

The Great War by PBS

The Holocaust Explained

WWI by The Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th ed., 2013

The Economics of WWI by Carlos Lozada of the National Bureau of Economic Research

Causes of WWI by Brenden Dannaher & Paul Latham of the Clearvue, 1999

1. What is attractive about an individual explanation which focuses on Archduke Franz Ferdinand? Is there any merit to this focus or is it merely a historical anomaly?

2. Do explanations considering the powerful nature of bureaucracy and standard operating procedures tend to reinforce theories that also consider the individual personalities of World War One, or do they negate each other?

3. Can the United States be held partly responsible for WWI given its inaction in the early years of the war? Do hegemonic, or rising hegemonic, powers have a certain responsibility in the international system?

4. Can dyadic relationships between states exist without influence from the greater international system? Is the study of a dyadic relationship in WWI a unique perspective, or merely a reconstruction of state behavior in the international system?