

A Theoretical Study on the Influence of a Strong State to a Weak State

Qian Yao

Shandong Jianzhu University Marxism College, Jinan Shandong 250101, China

Abstract: The purpose of this article is to provide a theoretical foundation of influence process between a strong state and a weak state, which is, in some degree, meaningful for social observers to understand the phenomena of compliance and conflict in the international community. The influence process in this article is devised as starting from proposing the influence strategies to analyzing the influence results, pointing out when a strong state's influence would be successful and when their conflicts would happen.

Keywords: Influence strategy; Strong state; Weak state; Interaction

Project item: University-level project The Theoretical Study of Change of China's Security Perspective, project number: XNBS20115.

1. Introduction

The ability of a powerful state to alter the foreign policy of a weaker state has long been recognized. The foreign policy orientation of a relatively weak state comes to reflect the interests of a more powerful state.^[1] An effective influence strategy is defined as avoiding of either a diplomatic defeat or war and ineffectiveness of an influence strategy would bring about a diplomatic defeat or even war.^[2] Exercise of influence between states may take place between two strong states or two weak states as well as a strong state and a weak state. The effective influence between a powerful state and a weak state is one of a usual situation, because the influence of them is usually constructed based on a dependent relationship. The purpose of this article is to provide a theoretical foundation of influence process between a strong state and a weak state, which is, in some degree, meaningful for social observers to understand the phenomena of compliance and conflict in the international community.

2. Influence Strategies

There are four influence strategies have been summarized through observing the practical influence attempts in the international community.^[3] These are bullying, reciprocity, appeasement and Trial-and-error.

Among these four strategies, the reciprocity has produced a high rate of success in crisis bargaining.^[4] The reciprocal strategy is an exchange process of compliance for positive inducement or noncompliance for negative inducement between the influencer and the influencee. In its purest form, state that uses it begins with a cooperative move through positive inducement and after that simply responds in kind to the types of reaction made by the target state on each successive exchange. Bullying is based on the use of negative inducements. In this form, any response without outright compliance encounters a more severe threat or punishment on each successive influence attempt- response sequence until the target has been induced to comply. The third one is Appeasement. Just as its name implies, it is virtually the opposite of the bullying strategy. Any response without outright compliance of the target state would result in the more positive inducement. Finally is Trial-and-error. It is a bit different from the preceding three strategies and is analogous to the reciprocity seemingly. The distinction of them can be comprehended as the three strategies mentioned above assume that the influencer holds definite assumptions about what is likely to motivate the target and has developed an influence strategy based on those assumptions. However, the trial-and-error influence strategy begins with no such assumptions. The influencer simply adjusts its choices of inducements based on the target's response to the previous influence attempts. Inducements which generates positive responses are repeated, otherwise are not.

3. The Specific Influence Process and the appraisal

The specific bargaining process of the influence between a strong state and a weak state is regarded as an influence-response sequence, and each influence-response sequence comprises three moves. First, state A attempts to influence the behavior of state B through a demand that may be associated with positive or negative inducements, and usually, it begins with a positive inducement but sometimes are not. At the Second move, state B responds to the previous influence attempt of state A. Thirdly, state A observes state B's response, and select the next best inducements based on state A's comprehending.^[5] If state B cooperates with state A's demand, state A would supply the next positive inducement; and if state B has not complied with the demand, and then state A would respond with negative inducement. One point must be pointed out regarding the purest form of an influence-response sequence. In

practice, not every influence-response sequence is strictly in the light of the order of the aforementioned three moves.^[6] Sometimes, state A's maiden inducement may be postponed after its demand as well as B's response, and which does not break the nature of the reciprocity. The credibility of inducement here needs to be mentioned, if state A does not cash the check based on state's response, A's creditworthiness would decrease, and B would start to distrust A's word.^[7]

An influence effort can be termed as the effective influence if state B complies with state A's requirement or adopts a policy which is favorable to state A as well as placates A with an alternative behavior or policy. Influence can be appraised as an ineffective influence if state B ignores the demand by not acting, rejecting A with a provocative act, or a mixed response combining defiance with a placating action or policy which is not an alternative to A's demand.

4. The Analysis of the Influence Results

The analysis of the influence results under diverse conditions needs to be clarified in order to figure out under what conditions the state B would be more likely vulnerable to the influence attempts from the state A, and in what conditions A's effort will be likely to be immune by B as well as the conditions with difficulty to predict. The research argues that the general parameter to check the influence results between a powerful state and a weak state is whether these two states share the national goals. In general, if they share the same ones, they would be united in policies and the influence would not be important. If not, another two parameters have to be introduced to examine the influence results, and which are the degrees of the influence intention of state A and the refusal intention of state B. Since the degrees of their intentions would determine their behaviors in each influence-response sequence. The specific analysis is listed as follows.

If the national goals of state A and state B are oriented to the same direction, they would be more likely to be united in the policies. Under this condition, they may maintain political mutual trust in each other. Also, the state A may supply the comprehensive foreign aids to B, and B is also willing to accept the assistance coupling with the bundled behavior. As a result, B may always follow A's step and is without the need to impose a sanction to force B.

If the national goals of state A and state B are not oriented to the same direction, normally the political trust in these two states begins to fall off, and the results of influence are depending on a case-by-case basis. In the first case, if A possesses a strong influence intention and B hold a weak refusal intention, then B may highly accept A's demand. On this occasion, A may be willing to offer foreign assistance and impose sanctions, or even expand the aids and upgrade the sanctions to induce and compel B to comply. And B may not be immune to the tempting assistance or take risks in incurring sanctions. In the second case, if A possesses a weak influence intension and B hold a strong refusal intention, then B may highly reject A's demand. Since A would not expand the aids or upgrade the sanctions if B has not cooperated, and B would not comply A's demand in spite of A's aids and sanctions. In the final case, it is difficult to predict the influence results if these two states share the similar degree of intentions.

References:

- [1] Bruce E. Moon (1983), "The Foreign Policy of the Dependent State," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 3, pp. 315-340.
- [2] Russell J. Leng and Hugh G. Wheeler, "Influence Strategies, Success, and War," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 23-4 (December 1979), pp. 655-684.
- [3] Russell J. Leng and Hugh G. Wheeler (1979), *Ibid*.
- [4] Leng and Wheeler (1979), *Ibid*.
- [5] Russell J. Leng, "Reciprocating Influence Strategies in Interstate Crisis Bargaining," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 37-1 (March 1993), pp. 3-41.
- [6] James T. Tedeschi, Thomas V. Bonoma, Barry R. Schlenker and Sverre Lindskold (1970), "Power, Influence, and Behavioral Compliance," *Law & Society Review*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 521-544.
- [7] J. David Singer (1963), "Inter-Nation Influence: A Formal Model," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 57, No. 2, pp. 420-430.