

Relations have always more than one side, often bilateral, often more affecting states other than those who are directly the object of the action. Examining state policies in mere local terms usually leads to considerable misunderstanding. In a system level, the function of system is not understood by summing up the relationships between constituents, bilateral relations or relations among more than two member parties –not that those relations are not important but we would not be studying the system relations.

To start with, the results could not be predicted by examining the individual inputs separately. The effect of one variable often depends on the state of another. An actor's policies can make possible or foreclose the adversary's strategies. Interactions can produce deeper changes in our values and thus determine our later behavior. The fate of an actor's policy or strategy is determined by those that are adopted by others. Behaviors alter the environment in ways that affect the trajectory of actors, outcomes, and environments.

For the same reason, states' behavior by no means necessarily conform to their intention. Rather, their policies and strategies depend on those of others. The determination and function of the intention is not straightforward. The more general operation of dynamics draw states in deeper than they really intend. When governments try to constrain undesired behavior through laws, the results are often unintended, not so much because laws are difficult to enforce but more because in a system "we can never merely do one thing".

Accordingly, one strategy or plan may succeed at one time and fail at another, not due to the changes in the actor's resources but because of the changes in others' behavior. Of course, this behavior is not only reaction but also actors' estimating of others' reaction as well as their expectations.