

Group Conflict and Collective Action: Poli Econ Review

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0.1 Commitment Problem

An example of groups having a Commitment problem is formalized in Table [chris: tab name].

		Player 2	
		<i>Cooperate</i>	<i>Defect</i>
Player 1	<i>Cooperate</i>	(2, 2)	(0, 3)
	<i>Defect</i>	(3, 0)	(1, 1)

Table 1: **Example of Commitment Problem.** Numbers represent payoffs to players. The first number in each cell represents Player 1's payoffs, the second number represents Player 2's payoffs. Player's want the highest payoff.

Sides would commit to mutual cooperation if they could to avoid dual defection, but they cannot credibly commit to cooperating because they both prefer to defect regardless of what the other does.

Solution is some way for each side to commit to cooperating. Typically done by adding costs to defection or through repeated interactions.

0.2 Information Problem

Imagine a situation in which both groups prefer to cooperate if the other side cooperates, but groups do not know the preferences of the other side. They will fail to cooperate if neither side knows the preferences of the other.

An example of groups having an information problem is Formalized in Table [chris: tab name].

(a) World A

Both sides prefer to cooperate if the other side cooperates but defect if the other side defects.

(b) World B

Player 1 prefers mutual cooperation, but Player 2 prefers to defect regardless of Player 1's Behavior.

		Player 2	
		<i>Cooperate</i>	<i>Defect</i>
Player 1	<i>Cooperate</i>	(4, 4)	(0, 3)
	<i>Defect</i>	(3, 0)	(1, 1)

		Player 2	
		<i>Cooperate</i>	<i>Defect</i>
Player 1	<i>Cooperate</i>	(4, 2)	(0, 3)
	<i>Defect</i>	(3, 0)	(1, 1)

Table 2: **Example of Information Problem.** Numbers represent payoffs to players. The first number in each cell represents Player 1's payoffs, the second number represents Player 2's payoffs. Player's want the highest payoff.

0.3 Preferences Problem

Not a bargaining issue if one or both sides prefer fighting. I will refer to this as a "Preferences Problem" causing conflict. Mutual defection maximizes overall utility; the preferences problem is

only a problem normatively.

		Player 2	
		<i>Cooperate</i>	<i>Defect</i>
Player 1	<i>Cooperate</i>	(1, 1)	(0, 3)
	<i>Defect</i>	(3, 0)	(2, 2)

Table 3: **Example of Preferences Problem.** Numbers represent payoffs to players. The first number in each cell represents Player 1's payoffs, the second number represents Player 2's payoffs. Player's want the highest payoff.

Sides would not commit to cooperation even if they could; knowledge about each other's preferences does not avoid defection.