

# VARIABLE TYPES AND LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

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# LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

- IF WE WANT TO UNDERSTAND WHY SOME HOCKEY TEAMS ARE GOOD AND SOME TEAMS ARE BAD (variation!)  
WHERE WOULD WE LOOK?
- WE MAY WANT TO LOOK AT A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT LEVELS FOR THE ANSWER -
  - THE PLAYERS
  - THE TEAM
  - THE LEAGUE

# Why are some teams good and some teams bad?

Level of Analysis: Individual

Unit of analysis: Individual Players



The forward has a  
great/weak shot

Defense is fast/slow

The goalie can't stop/miss a thing

The coach is brilliant/an idiot

# Why are some teams good and some teams bad?

Level of analysis: Organizational  
Unit of Analysis: Team

The team has the best/worst quality of equipment



They practice every day/ only once a month

The team has a lot/no money

# Why are some teams good and some teams bad?

Level of analysis: System

Unit of Analysis: Hockey League



**Rules for trading  
players puts team at  
an advantage/  
disadvantage**

**No good players want to play in the  
league because it can't sell tickets.**

**Rules for sharing  
ticket revenue  
help/hurt the team**

# A Political Science Example

- Let's say we are interested, not in hockey, but in voter turnout. (just pretend)
- Where might we look to understand level of voter turnout?



# What Explains Electoral Turnout?

Level of Analysis: Individual  
Unit of Analysis: Individual citizens



The citizen does/doesn't care about politics

They have a high/low level of education and do/don't know about the election

They did/didn't have time

# What Explains Electoral Turnout?

Level of Analysis: National  
Unit of Analysis: Different Elections



The election was really close

The election centered on an important and controversial debate

All the media coverage was negative



# What Explains Electoral Turnout?

Level of Analysis: National  
Unit of Analysis: Electoral Districts

The electoral district did not hold advance polling



The race between two candidates was really close

The candidates spent a lot of money

Note: See how there can be different *units* of analysis at the same *LEVEL* of analysis? In the above slide, the units of analysis were different elections over time, this time it is electoral districts in the same election.

# What Explains Electoral Turnout?

Level of Analysis: International  
Unit of Analysis: Countries

The country is a developed, established democracy

Voting is mandatory

Education is high



Political freedoms are low

The country uses a proportional representation system