

Section #2

Biases & heuristics

February 9, 2023

Biases & heuristics

Why do we care about biases & heuristics in IR?

- Cognitive misers: elites aren't optimizers
 - Deviations from procedural rationality
- ➔ Suboptimal outcomes
- Well- vs. ill-structured problems: elites use heuristics to "survive"
 - Ecological rationality
- ➔ As-if optimal outcomes



Aggregation critique

- In IR, there is a debate whether individual-level biases replicate at the group-level
- Why it matters: groups make many (if not most) fp decisions



Essay #1

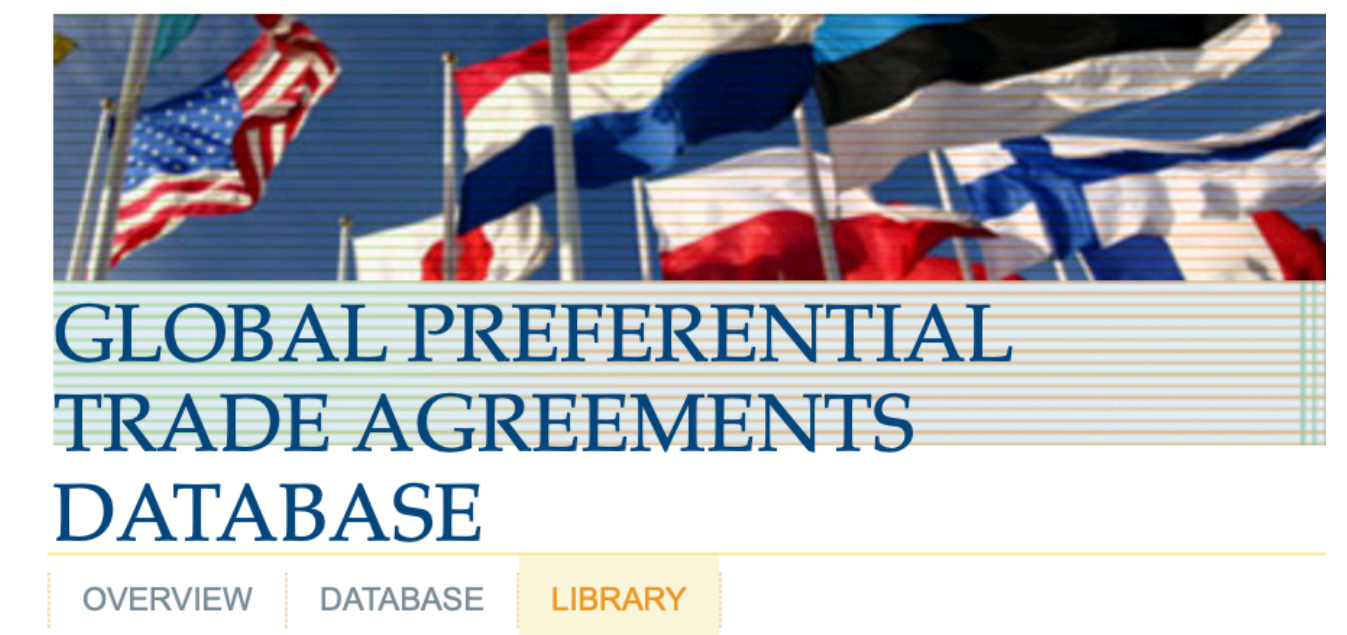
Selecting a case

Tips

- Choice...
 - Pursue your interests!
 - If unsure where to start, consider looking at popular databases
- Under constraint...
 - Don't choose case x theory pairings from class/readings
 - Stay away from cases for which you can't obtain proper evidence



Milestones in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations



Selecting a theoretical perspective

Tips

- Prospect theory
- Biases & heuristics
- Learning
- Signaling

Prompt within the prompt:

Craft a question related to your theoretical perspective to focus your case study.

Writing the essay

Tips

Writing Element	Necessities	“Weight”
Argument	Identifiable (thesis statement); consistent (don’t meander); supported (evidence); comprehensive (address counterargument)	Watermelon
Organization	Introduction & conclusion; logical sequencing of argument & evidence; appropriate balance between background vs. analysis	Grapefruit
Writing skills	Few grammar/usage errors; few typos	Grapefruit
Sources	Cite factual claims & quotes with primary or secondary sources (do not cite Wikipedia, Brittanica, history.com)	Apple