Frederick S. Pardee Institute for International Futures
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

UN Voting Incidence and Coincidence Codebook

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Contents

Introduction 2
Frederick S. Pardee Institute for International Futures 2
Diplometrics 3
Acknowledgements 3
Citation 3
Datasets and variables 4
Voting incidence datasets 4
Resolutions data and variables 4
Country data and variables 5
Coincidence datasets 5
Dyadic data and variables 6
Coincidence scoring 6
Data Vetting 7
Appendix A 7

Introduction

Prior research has demonstrated the value of quantifying patterns of diplomatic relationships over time (Singer & Small, 1966, 1973) to understand international political dynamics and country relationships. Analyzing voting behavior in the United Nations (UN) can capture diplomatic alignment, where patterns of voting incidence (how states vote) and voting coincidence (how states' votes align with others') offer insight into global political relationships.

This codebook describes the UN voting incidence and coincidence datasets built and maintained by the Frederick S. Pardee Institute for International Futures. The datasets capture voting data for three UN bodies: the General Assembly (UNGA), the Human Rights Council (UNHRC), and the Security Council (UNSC).

The data gathered for these sets have been thoroughly reviewed. However, given the scope of this effort, vetting is an ongoing effort. Questions, concerns, and the reporting of errors can be directed to our team here: pardee.institute@du.edu

Frederick S. Pardee Institute for International Futures

The Frederick S. Pardee Institute for International Futures is the home of the International Futures (IFs) model and a hub for long-term forecasting and global trend analysis. Its home is the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver. Our mission is to build and use data and tools to analyze our complex world and the long-term dynamics of change in human, social, and

natural systems. We share our resources with policymakers, academics, and others seeking to improve the ways we contemplate and plan for the global future. As part of this pursuit, we have built the IFs model, the most sophisticated and comprehensive forecasting modeling system available to the public.

The IFs model uses our best understanding of global systems to produce forecasts for nearly 500 variables across 12 human, social, and natural systems for 186 countries to the year 2100. Because IFs takes an integrated approach to forecasting, it is able to simulate how changes in one system leads to changes across all other systems. As a result, IFs endogenizes more relationships from a wider range of key global systems than any other model in the world.

Diplometrics

The Diplometrics research program at the Pardee Institute seeks to better understand and measure relationships in the international system by gathering data, building tools, and conducting analysis. The program focuses on dyadic state interactions that measure the depth and breadth of political, diplomatic, economic, security, and cultural ties between countries. The primary goal of the Diplometrics program is to understand what the international system is and to explore how states and other actors operate within its boundaries.[1]

Acknowledgements

Over the years, Diplometrics has been funded by the U.S. government, including the U.S. Army Future Studies Group, the U.S. Army Research Office, the U.S. Department of Defense Minerva Research Initiative, and other partners. We extend our gratitude to the U.S. government for the continued support provided for this project.

In addition, hundreds of students have contributed to Diplometrics in meaningful ways. As work on Diplometrics moves forward, their continued support will ensure our institute continues to develop original analyses and advance conversations in the international relations space among policy-makers, academics, and the public.

Citation

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[1] For more on Diplometrics, see: https://korbel.du.edu/pardee/content/diplometrics.

Datasets and variables

The Frederick S. Pardee Institute releases country-level UN voting data on an annual basis in six separate datasets. Three UN bodies – the General Assembly (UNGA), the Human Rights Council (UNHRC), and the Security Council (UNSC) – each have a voting incidence dataset and a coincidence dataset:

	Voting incidence dataset name	Coincidence dataset name
UNGA	UNGAVotester_yyyymmdd	UNGA_coincidence_yearly_data_ yyyymmdd
UNHRC	UNHRCVotester_yyyymmdd	UNHRC_coincidence_yearly_data_ yyyymmdd
UNSC	UNSCVotester_yyyymmdd	UNSC_coincidence_yearly_data_ yyyymmdd

Voting incidence datasets (“”Votester) provide individual country voting data from which aggregate dyadic statistics in the coincidence datasets (“”_coincidence_yearly_data) are calculated. Both datasets are maintained in Excel and provide yearly updates in separate tabs to ensure comparability and consistency across years.

Voting incidence datasets

Voting incidence datasets represent a comprehensive record of resolutions and the corresponding individual country votes issued by all members of each of the three UN bodies in a given year. The data are sourced and presented for each UN body as follows:

	UNGA	UNHRC	UNSC
Source	UN Digital Library	UNHRC Res. Portal	UN Digital Library
Year available from	1946	2006	1946
Res. naming convention	“A/RES” prefix	“Mon/YYYY” suffix	“S/RES” prefix

Resolutions data and variables

At the top of each year’s voting incidence dataset, a full list of resolutions for the year appears in wide-format panel columns. The top rows of each year’s voting incidence dataset contain metadata and aggregate data which summarize country vote data for each resolution:

Category	Row label	Variable description	UNGA	UNHRC	UNSC
Resolution metadata	Session	UN-designated session no.	X	X	X
	Resolution	UN-designated res. no.	X	X	X
	Session + Resolution	Combined UN-designated no.		X	
	Title	UN-designated resolution title	X		X
	Resolution Title	UN-designated resolution title		X	
Issue category*	Issue-Primary	Pardee-designated issue codes: HR, NU, DI, CO, ME, EC	X	X	X
	Issue-Secondary		X	X	X
	Issue-Third		X		X
Period	Month	Month vote took place	X	X	X
	Day	Day of month vote took place	X		X
Aggregate votes (by resolution)	Yes	Total number of "yes" votes	X		X
	No	Total number of "no" votes	X		X
	Abstain	Total number of abstentions	X		X
	Total	Total votes	X		X

** see Appendix A for details on issue codes*

Country data and variables

Rows below the resolutions data list individual member countries and their votes for each resolution. The country name appears in the first column, and columns headed with resolution labels denote how each country voted for a specific resolution. UNGA and UNSC datasets also contain aggregate vote columns preceding the resolution columns which total country voting data by type of vote:

Category	Column label	Variable description	UNGA	UNHRC	UNSC
Aggregate votes (by country)	Y	Total number of "yes" votes	X		X
	N	Total number of "no" votes	X		X
	A	Total number of abstentions	X		X
	Votes	Total votes cast	X		X
	Yes %	Total "yes" / Total votes	X		X
Individual country votes (by resolution)	UN-designated resolution label	Country votes per resolution: - Y = Yes - N = No - A = Abstention - NV = No vote	X	X	X

Coincidence datasets

Coincidence datasets provide yearly measures of voting alignment between pairs of countries (dyads) in UNGA, UNHRC, and UNSC. Coincidence data are derived from voting incidence datasets and their original sources detailed in the previous section.

Dyadic data and variables

Each year's coincidence dataset contains individual rows which detail annual dyadic voting alignment via coincidence scores. For all three UN bodies, coincidence scores are measured by alignment across all issues in addition to alignment on specific issues:

Category	Column label	Variable description	UNGA	UNHRC	UNSC
Dyad	countrya	country in dyad	X	X	X
	countryb	country in dyad	X	X	X
Coincidence scores*	un[]_coincidence	Overall coincidence (c.) score	X	X	X
	HR_un[]_coincidence	Human rights issues c. score	X	X	X
	NU_un[]_coincidence	Nuclear issues c. score	X		X
	DI_un[]_coincidence	Disarmament issues c. score	X		X
	CO_un[]_coincidence	Colonialism issues c. score	X	X	X
	ME_un[]_coincidence	Middle East issues c. score	X	X	X
	EC_un[]_coincidence	Development issues c. score	X	X	X
Period	Year	Year of coincidence score	X	X	X

** see Appendix A for details on issue codes*

Coincidence scoring

Coincidence scores use voting patterns on UN resolutions to quantify the degree of agreement between two countries. The goal of coincidence scoring is to create a normalized, interpretable metric for how often two countries vote similarly. Coincidence datasets compute scores dyadically and annually based on observed voting behavior.

The coincidence score is based on a pairwise comparison of votes for each resolution. Each pair of countries is evaluated based on how often their votes were fully aligned, partially aligned, and directly opposed. For a given year and country pair (a, b), the vote comparison categories used in scoring are as follows:

Code	Description	Coincidence Weight
YY_{ab}	Both voted yes	1.0 (full alignment)
NN_{ab}	Both voted no	1.0 (full alignment)
AA_{ab}	Both abstained	1.0 (full alignment)
YA_{ab}, AY_{ab}	One voted yes, the other abstained	0.5 (partial alignment)
NA_{ab}, AN_{ab}	One voted no, the other abstained	0.5 (partial alignment)
YN_{ab}, NY_{ab}	One voted yes, the other voted no	0.0 (direct disagreement)

** Note: Votes where either country did not vote or where data is missing are excluded from scoring*

In calculating the coincidence score, we first determine total joint votes:

$$Total_{ab} = YY_{ab} + NN_{ab} + AA_{ab} + YA_{ab} + AY_{ab} + NA_{ab} + AN_{ab} + YN_{ab} + NY_{ab}$$

Then, we calculate the coincidence score:

$$Coincidence_{ab} = \frac{(YY_{ab} + NN_{ab} + AA_{ab}) + 0.5 * (YA_{ab} + AY_{ab} + NA_{ab} + AN_{ab})}{Total_{ab}}$$

If there are no joint votes for a dyad in a given year (i.e., no resolutions where both cast a vote), the score is recorded as NA.

Data Vetting

At every stage of data collection and/or updates to the UN Voting Incidence and Coincidence data, information is examined to ensure: 1) new data is from the same series and source as the original; 2) there are no major inconsistencies between the original data and new data (both pre- and post-processing); 3) vote aggregation was successful for all series; 4) there are no inconsistencies due to errors in the raw data or data input process; 5) any other data-integrity issues.

To report potential errors in the UN voting data, please email Pardee.Institute@du.edu, or use our error reporting form here: https://github.com/PardeeCenterDU/Diplometrics-data-issue-tracker?tab=readme-ov-file#diplometrics-data-issue-tracker.

Appendix A

Issue codes categorize UN resolutions by topic areas addressed. While the overall coincidence scores capture alignment across all resolutions, issue-specific coincidence scores are intended to illuminate patterns in particular domains of global governance.

In the voting incidence datasets, each resolution is tagged with up to three issue codes:

- Issue-Primary: The dominant issue addressed by the resolution
- Issue-Secondary: A secondary issue, if applicable
- Issue-Third: A tertiary or related issue, if applicable

These codes are then used in the coincidence datasets to generate issue-specific coincidence scores using only those resolutions tagged with the relevant code in the Issue-Primary field.

Issue coding is performed through a text-matching algorithm which reviews each resolution title and full-text content using defined search terms associated with each issue:

Issue	issue_code	search_terms
Human rights	HR	rights, Rights, right, Human Rights, human right, discrimination, protection of civilians, Protection of civilians, executions, death, deaths, violence against, internally displaced persons, refugees, crimes against humanity, torture, droits
Disarmament	DI	arms control, arms trade, Arms Trade, disarmament, Disarmament, illicit trade in small arms, arms race, weapons of mass destruction, Anti-Personnel Mines, Anti-personnel Mines, weapons in outer space, Missile, Chemical Weapons, Cluster Munitions, weapon-free zone, Small arms, small arms, Biological Weapons, BACTERIOLOGICAL WEAPONS, BIOLOGICAL
Nuclear	NU	nuclear, Nuclear, atomic, Atomic, hydrogen weapon, radioactive
Colonialism	CO	colonialism, colonial, Colonial, Colonialism, decolonization, Non-Self-Governing Territories, Non-Self- Governing Territories, Non Self-Governing Territories
Middle East	ME	Golan, Palestine, Palestinian, West Bank, Israel, Jerusalem, Gaza, Lebanese, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi, Yemen, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Iraq, Iran, Bahrain, Middle East
Development	EC	right to development, Right to Development, sustainable development, Sustainable Development, economic, Economic, trade and development

Resolutions that do not fall clearly into any of the defined issue areas may be left uncoded or manually reviewed.