CAMEO Event Data Codebook

CAMEO -- Conflict and Mediation Event Observations -- is the new coding scheme we have developed in conjunction with our current research on third-party mediation. CAMEO has several new features not found in the WEIS system we have used in our earlier work:

- The coding scheme is optimized for the study of mediation and contains a number of tertiary sub-categories specific to mediation
- We have substantially expanded the categories for "use of force" and can therefore make much finer distinctions between reported levels of violence
- We have combined a number of WEIS categories that, in our experience, cannot be reliably differentiated in machine coding.
- We have developed a systematic heirarchical coding scheme for dealing with substate actors.

HTML and pdf versions of the CAMEO codebook are posted below. This is very nearly the final version of the system, but we have still been making a few minor changes. Our 2002 International Studies Association paper compares the CAMEO and WEIS event coding frameworks; Our 2008 International Studies Association paper discusses the CAMEO actor coding framework in detail.

CAMEO code wiki (http://cameocodes.wikispaces.com/) with both the event and actor coding systems [NEW!]

pdf version of codebook for CAMEO event and actor coding scheme [version 0.9B5, September 2007]

Draft of a CAMEO scale that is roughly equivalent to the Goldstein scale for the WEIS event coding scheme

CAMEO-coded Data Sets

The data sets below are coded from Reuters and Agence France Presse lead sentences. The folders include the coding dictionaries as well as the event data. See "ReadMe" files for details on the time periods that are covered by the two news services.

Download CAMEO Balkans data (.sit) (April 1989 - February 2002; N = 69,620)

Download CAMEO Levant data (.sit) (April 1979 - December 2002; N = 144,112)

Download CAMEO West Africa data (.sit) (January 1989 - February 2002; N = 17,468)

Note: These are the original CAMEO-coded data sets that we used to develop the system. There are a number of sets with more recent CAMEO-coded events in the various regional data set links at the main KEDS data site.

CAMEO vs. IDEA

Our development of CAMEO follows the work of PANDA Project and its associates in developing IDEA ("Integrated Data for Events Analysis": http://vranet.com/idea/). We have borrowed some innovations from IDEA -- for example the use of tertiary (4-digit) coding categories and a web-based codebook with examples (their web site is nicer...) -- but there are several key differences between the systems:

- IDEA maintains backwards compatibility with WEIS and several other event coding schemes. CAMEO does not: it combines WEIS categories that cannot be reliably distinguished in automated coding.
- IDEA encompasses a *much* broader range of behaviors than CAMEO. CAMEO is oriented toward inter-state behavior.
- The tertiary categories for IDEA are generally oriented towards the study of citizen direct action (for example strikes and protests), whereas the categories in CAMEO are oriented towards the study of third-party mediation in international and inter-ethnic conflict.

We regard these two coding systems as complementary rather than competitive, and would urge any researchers considering event data analysis to consider their relative merits. More generally, we regard both CAMEO and IDEA as examples of how automated coding enables researchers to develop coding systems that are sensitive to specific theoretical issues, rather than being forced to use the "one size fits all" approach that was necessary when event data could only be generated by human coding. Let a thousand flowers bloom.

> **Caveat:** keep in mind that six months may pass between the time you plant the seed and you see the flower...
> - *Albert Schweitzer quote*