Codebook

Diplomatic Outreach dataset

version 1.1

2021

Tiziana Corda
University of Milan
tiziana.corda@unimi.it

To cite the codebook, please cite: Corda. (2021). "Diplomatic Outreach Dataset v.1.1 (Horn of Africa)", Harvard Dataverse. DOI: 10.7910/DVN/NFAEVY

About

The Diplomatic Outreach dataset tracks bilateral diplomatic visits between countries. Each observation tracks the direction of the visit, the level of the visit, and the political actors involved.

Criteria

The focus is only on bilateral visits, not multilateral ones such as United Nations' and other regional organisations' fora, tripartite talks (i.e. talks on the GERD dam are excluded). Bilateral high-level talks held in the margins of a multilateral meeting are included, except for those in the margins of the UN General Assembly, which are instead excluded.

It tracks only high-level political visits involving heads of state and government, their deputies and special advisers; ministers of foreign affairs, their deputies and all the other ministries and cabinet members; high-level military authorities. Business delegations, parliamentary delegations, civil society delegations are instead excluded.

Variables

The dataset (Diplomatic_Outreach_2021v1.csv) is in comma-delimited form. The first version (v.1) contains 31 variables (columns) and 499 observations (rows).

ID:

It is the unique identifier for each row of the dataset.

ISO_Country:

It refers to the ISO code of the "Country" under investigation. While the first version of the dataset focuses only on three states – Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan – any UN member can be included in this list, included Palestine and the Holy See (here called "Vatican") as UN non-state members. Somaliland, despite not being part of the latter group, is also included with ISO code 706706/SML. The European Union, a UN permanent observer, is the only regional/international organization included, with ISO code 5656/EU.

Country:

It refers to the state under investigation. While the first version of the dataset focuses only on three states – Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan – any UN member can be included in this list, included Palestine and the Holy See (here called "Vatican") as UN non-state members. Somaliland, despite not being part of the latter group, is also included.

Country_RegimeType:
The regime type of Country in a given year according to the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index. It is a categorical variable which tells whether Country is "Authoritarian", "Hybrid Regime", "Flawed Democracy", "Full Democracy".

Country_Democratization:
The democracy score of the regime type of Country in a given year according to the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index. It is a 0.00-10.00 scale where 10.00 corresponds to "Full Democracy".

Country_Freedom:
The aggregate score for political rights and civil liberties of Country in a given year according to Freedom House's Freedom in the World Index. It is a 0-100 scale where 100 corresponds to maximum respect for political rights and civil liberties.

Partner_Dem_Dummy:
It is a dummy variable created on the variables "Country_Democratization" and "Country_Freedom". If the former is equal to or higher than 6.01 and the latter is equal to or higher than 50, then the partner state scores 1, otherwise 0.

Time:
Date (YYYY-MM-DD) the visit took place (generally, the initial day of a multi-day visit).
The timeframe for v.1.1 is as follows:
Eritrea –2018.04.01 to 2020.31.12
Ethiopia –2018.04.01 to 2020.31.12
Sudan –2019.04.01 to 2020.31.12

Year:
Year in which the visit took place.

Outgoing_Incoming:
The direction of the visit from the perspective of Country. It is a categorical variable which tells whether the Country received its Partner ("Incoming"), the country visited the partner ("Outgoing"), the Country visited the Partner in a third state ("Outgoing (third country)").

ISO_Partner:
It refers to the ISO code of the state that Country has interacted with.

Partner:
The state that Country has interacted with. Any UN member can be included in this list, included Palestine and the Holy See (here called "Vatican") as UN non-state members. Somaliland, despite not being part of the latter group, is also included.

Partner_Region:
The region of the partner state. The categories in v1.1 are: America, Asia, Central Africa, East Africa, Europe, North Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa, West Asia. Note that Russia is under Asia, Turkey is under West Asia, and the boundary between Asia and West Asia is Iran and the Caucasus (West Asia).

Partner_RegimeType:
The regime type of the partner state in a given year according to the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index. It is a categorical variable which tells whether the partner state is "Authoritarian", "Hybrid Regime", "Flawed Democracy", "Full Democracy".

Partner_Democratization:

The democracy score of the regime type of the partner state in a given year according to the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index. It is a 0.00-10.00 scale where 10.00 corresponds to "Full Democracy".

Partner_Freedom:
The aggregate score for political rights and civil liberties of the partner state in a given year according to Freedom House's Freedom in the World Index. It is a 0-100 scale where 100 corresponds to maximum respect for political rights and civil liberties.

Partner_Dem_Dummy:
It is a dummy variable created on the variables "Partner_Democratization" and "Partner_Freedom". If the former is equal to or higher than 6.01 and the latter is equal to or higher than 50, then the partner state scores 1, otherwise 0.

Actor_(Country):
The name of the highest-level figure of the Country who takes part in the visit.

Actor_(Country)_Position:
The position covered by "Actor_(Country)" at the time of the visit.

Actor_(Country)_Others:
Other high-level figures of the Country who take part in the visit. It generally mentions the position rather than the family name. Note that most of the time this variable is an understatement: news outlets and/or diplomatic sources hardly mention all the components of a delegation besides the highest-level figure. Please, do not interpret empty cells as a proof that no other figure was involved in the visit except the main figure.

Actor_(Partner):
The name of the highest-level figure of the partner state who takes part in the visit.

Actor_(Partner)_Position:
The position covered by "Actor_(Partner)" at the time of the visit.

Actor_(Partner)_Others:
Other high-level figures of the Country who take part in the visit. It generally mentions the position rather than the family name. Note that most of the time this variable is an understatement: news outlets and/or diplomatic sources hardly mention all the components of a delegation besides the highest-level figure. Please, do not interpret empty cells as a proof that no other figure was involved in the visit except the main figure.

Highest_Level:
It indicates, *for Country only*, which was the highest-level position involved in the visit.
The coding rules are as follows:
1- The Head of State and Government of Country is the highest-level position involved in the visit. Irrespective of whether the Country's system is a parliamentary or a presidential system, namely of whom actually holds executive power, both prime ministers and presidents are coded as 1. For Ethiopia, then, both the Prime Minister (who holds executive power) and the President are coded as 1. The same coding is true for Egypt despite the inverted roles (the president holds executive power). For Sudan, whose system is currently transitional, both the Head of the Sovereign Council (President) and the Prime Minister are coded as 1. For Arab monarchies, Crown Princes are coded as 1*, as they are closer to level 1 rather than 2, considering they are kings- or emirs-to-be.
2- The Minister of Foreign Affairs or a Deputy Head of State or Government is the highest-level position involved in the visit. For Ethiopia, Presidential Adviser Yemane Gebreab is coded as 2 in light of his frequent description as the President's right-hand man.

3- Another Minister or a Deputy Minister part of the Cabinet is the highest-level position involved in the visit.
4- A high representative of the military or security apparatus is the highest-level position involved in the visit.
5- Other political figures such as advisers, special representatives, heads of regional states are the highest-level position involved in the visit.

HoSG_1_Level, MFA/Deputy_2_Level, OtherCabinet_3_Level, Military_4_Level, Other_5_Level:
These are dummies related to the Highest_Level value.

HoSG_1_Level_Both:
It is a dummy variable which codes as 1 those visits in which both the Country and its Partner have HoSG_1_Level.

Notes:
It contains some additional details related to the visit. In many cases these details are related to the topics discussed during the visit. Because of the lack of systematic data on this, it was impossible to create a categorical variable on the topic. Therefore, the extent of the information contained under Notes varies from case to case.

Sources

The data in the Diplomatic Outreach dataset derives from multiple sources. There is no single source or reference list from which to collect data on diplomatic visits. Diplomatic or government websites (primary sources) are important sources as much as information distributed by press agencies (secondary sources). As a result, no comprehensive list can be included here, yet the most relevant sources for the three countries of v.1.1 were:

Eritrea – Ministry of Information
Ethiopia – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia
Sudan – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sovereign Council, Prime Minister of Sudan

With regard to the additional variables on democracy and freedom included in the dataset the sources are the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index (2018-2020) and Freedom House's Freedom in the World Index (2018-2020).

Note that the dataset is not fully comprehensive. It is likely that not all the actual visits have been captured in the dataset, especially lower-level ones. Please, get in touch with the author to report missing data and help make this dataset more complete and correct.

Author

The project is led by Tiziana Corda, PhD Candidate at the University of Milan, Italy.
Further details about the dataset, its possible uses, and data visualizations are available at: bit.ly/2LjKznv.