Coding Document for the Militarized Compellent Threats Dataset

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Updated January 1, 2013

Overview

This coding document describes the purpose, structure, and variables of the Militarized Compellent Threats (MCT) dataset.[1]

Location of the Dataset

The MCT dataset is freely available for scholarly use. It may be downloaded from http://dvn.iq.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/tsechser. The original article describing the dataset may be found at http://cmp.sagepub.com/content/28/4/377.

Citation

Users of the dataset are asked to please use the following citation:

> Sechser, Todd S. 2011. "Militarized Compellent Threats, 1918–2001." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 28(4): 377–401.

Purpose

The MCT dataset is designed to help scholars test theories about the use and effectiveness of coercive threats. Its creation was motivated by two observations. First, our understanding of compellence has not kept pace with the study of deterrence. This is problematic because the dynamics of deterrence and compellence are thought to be very different.[2] Findings from the large body of deterrence research therefore may not be applicable to compellence. Second, the dominant datasets used in quantitative studies of threats and coercion – namely, the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) and International Crisis Behavior (ICB) datasets – do not distinguish between deterrent and compellent threats, making dedicated research about compellent threats difficult.[3] The MCT dataset is intended to help address both problems, providing a quantitative resource for scholars who wish to study the dynamics of compellence in international politics.

[1] For additional details and examples of applications, see Sechser (2011); Downes and Sechser (2012); and Sechser and Fuhrmann (2013). The MCT dataset is based on data collected for the author's doctoral dissertation (see Sechser 2007).

[2] See, for example, Schelling (1960, 1966); Art (1980); Petersen (1986); George and Simons (1994); Freedman (1998); Art and Cronin (2003); Sechser (2010).

[3] Indeed, as Downes and Sechser (2012) demonstrate, these datasets contain very few coercive threats at all.

Structure of the Dataset

The dataset contains contains 210 distinct interstate compellent threat episodes occurring between the end of World War I and 2001. Each episode contains only one target, but may involve multiple challengers.

The dataset is organized dyadically, so that each observation contains one challenger and one target. A single compellent threat "episode" therefore may contain several observations if there were multiple challengers involved. The dataset contains 242 total observations.

Each compellent threat contains two elements: an explicit substantive *demand* for a material change to the status quo, backed by an explicit or implicit *threat* to use military force. Multiple compellent demands issued together are considered one episode if a single threat of military force backed them. Threats against leaders of rebel organizations, terrorist groups, intergovernmental organizations, and other nonstate actors are not included. However, a demand need not be communicated among heads of state in order to be included in the dataset, so long as the target believes that the demand was authorized by the challenger's government.

Key Definitions

1. **Militarized compellent threat:** an explicit demand by one state (the challenger) that another state (the target) alter the status quo in some material way, backed by a threat of military force if the target does not comply.

2. **Compellent demand:** an explicit demand for a material change in the status quo. Demands for policy reversals are insufficient if the policy in question has not yet been implemented, or if the material effect of that policy is functionally nonexistent. This criterion excludes incidents in which a state delivering a threat has already seized the item in dispute. It also excludes threats which lack explicitly enumerated demands.

3. **Threat of force:** an assurance of future military action if the demand is not met. In contrast to demands, threats need not be explicit: they may be transmitted through explicit verbal communication or through public military maneuvers or demonstrations that coincide with the demand. Threats transmitted among combatants during wartime, however, are not included in the dataset.

4. **Challenger:** a state is considered a challenger if it threatened to participate in the use of military force in support of the compellent demand.

5. **Target:** a state is considered a target if the compellent demand requires that it take action or relinquish a possession.

Variables

- CASE ID. Contains an identifying tag for each episode. Episodes are ordered chronologically, using the numbering convention MCT-XXX. Episodes involving multiple challengers are broken into multiple observations (one per challenger), each with the same identifying tag.

- YEAR. Indicates the year in which the case first qualified as a militarized compellent threat.

- CCODE_A. Correlates of War (COW) country code for up to three challengers per episode.

- CCODE_B. COW country code for the target of the threat.

- PRIMARY_CHALLENGER. COW country code of the primary sender of the compellent threat. This is defined as the state likely to contribute the most military effort to executing the threat against the target.

- ISSUE TYPE. Codes five non-exclusive categories describing the substantive issue(s) of the compellent demand.

  - TERRITORY: demands for control over disputed land or ocean territory. This includes episodes in which the challenger demanded the withdrawal of opposing military forces from disputed areas.
  - LEADERSHIP: demands to remove or replace particular individuals within the target's government.
  - POLICY: demands related to national policies other than the possession of disputed territory.
  - REPARATIONS: demands for money or other non-territorial concessions to compensate the challenger for perceived injustices.
  - OTHER: denotes demands that do not fall into one of the other four issue categories.

- DEMONSTRATION. Dichotomous variable denoting episodes in which the challenger employed demonstrations or shows of force or conspicuous military mobilizations in conjunction with the compellent demand.
- FORCE. Dichotomous variable indicating whether violent military force was used by the challenger at any point during the threat episode.
- TARGET_FATALITIES. Dichotomous variable indicating whether the target suffered 100 or more military fatalities due to military action associated with the compellent threat.
- COMPLIANCE. Denotes the target's level of voluntary (i.e., non-forcible) compliance with the challenger's demands.
  - **0** *Non-compliance*: no demands met
  - **1** *Partial compliance*: some but not all demands met
  - **2** *Full compliance*: all demands met
- VERSION. The current version of the MCT dataset (as of January 1, 2013) is 0.9.

Future Work

The next step of this project involves the completion of written narratives for each of the 210 episodes in the MCT dataset. These narratives will be posted in an updated version of this document, along with a list of sources.

Acknowledgments

A number of students at the University of Virginia have been involved with this project at various stages. Thanks to Lauren Corbett, Callum Ingram, Zuri Linetsky, Nicholas Meros, Hannah Moody, Jerome Moriarty, Jonathan Shoup-Mendizabal, Anant Shukla, and Brandon Yoder for their expert assistance and meticulous research. Thanks also to the Vice President for Research at the University of Virginia for supporting portions of this research.

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