

Codebook for Protest-Dependent Militarized Interstate Disputes (MIDs), 1816-2014

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This document describes the coding procedures used to identify Protest-Dependent (P-D) Militarized Interstate Disputes (MIDs). These P-D cases enter the MID dataset via a clause in [Jones, Bremer and Singer \(1996\)](#) that allows for conflicts to include state-versus-private-citizen actions. We discuss that clause and why we exclude these cases from our Militarized Interstate Conflict (MIC) dataset. We also discuss three additional variables we add to this dataset that provide context for each of these cases. We strongly encourage those users who want to analyze a combined, MIC and P-D dataset to estimate robustness tests with and without these cases.

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Citation

We ask that users of this dataset cite the following article and note the version number of the data they are using in their study:

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Rationale for a Protest-Only Dispute Dataset

Our data collection efforts began with the original Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) dataset from the Correlates of War Project (CoWMID) ([Jones, Bremer and Singer, 1996](#)). During our decade-long review of the dataset we noticed that there were two distinct types of MIDs. The majority of disputes enter the dataset as state-to-state actions—a threat, display, or use of force against the regular forces or territory of another country. These are what users commonly assume to be the bulk of cases when analyzing the data. However, our review also suggested a substantial minority of cases involved no state-versus-state militarized actions. Instead, these cases were actually state-vs-private-citizen actions for which the government of the private citizen (sometimes) protested. Here is the [Jones, Bremer and Singer \(1996, 170\)](#) coding rule that allows these cases:

6) Actions taken by the official forces of one state against private citizens of another state are generally not coded as militarized incidents. Exceptions include seizures (of personnel or material) within the confines of disputed territory, attacks on international shipping, and the pursuit (by air, land or sea) of rebel forces across international boundaries. Further, such incidents are included only when the "targeted" state responded militarily or protested diplomatically.

We have separated these cases because we do not consider these to be *interstate* conflicts and certainly not cases of conflict consistent with other disputes in the MID dataset. Indeed, these cases formed the rationale for why scholars use fatal MIDs as a sample selection tool. The “oddball” cases introduced by this coding rule are filtered out of the data by sampling on fatalities; since these cases are state-vs-citizen, no state fatalities are ever recorded in states labeled as targets. However, there are two problems with this sample selection tool. First, excluding no-fatality cases also excludes many disputes that could have escalated quite easily. Cases that held the potential for war—cases like the Cuban Missile Crisis (MIC#0061) or the Agadir Crisis (MIC#0315)—are excluded when selecting on fatalities. Second, international conflicts are already rare events, and selecting on fatalities drops the number of positive cases which greatly diminishes the power in most analyses. For example, using our Militarized Interstate Confrontation (MIC) data, a move from MIC to fatal-MIC reduces the number of conflict cases from 2,202 to only 532 between 1816 and 2014, a reduction of 76%.

We encourage users to exclude the Protest-Dependent MIDs (PDMIDs) in their analyses rather than selecting on fatalities, and our MIC data does exclude these cases. However, we also realize that some researchers may disagree with this assessment or wish to analyze the PDMIDs separately and for other purposes. Therefore, our dataset of PDMIDs includes information about the nature of cases excluded from our base MIC data, which researchers could use to construct data corollary to the MIC data. The next section details the files associated with the

PDMID data, and that is followed by a section that provides details on the variables included in the data and summary statistics for these cases.

Data Files Associated with the Militarized Interstate Confrontation Data

We provide the following files for users of the PDMID data set. We advertise the data of interest in the list below first as the more accessible comma-separated values file (.csv), but we also have the same data available in a Stata data file format (.dta) or an R serialized data frame (.rds). Please note that we are constantly revising these data; users should report the version number of the dataset used in any research. Future releases of the data will come with a text file summarizing changes to the data.

- `pdmid-[version].csv`: This is the dispute-level PDMID data with one case per MID-dyad.

Variables in the PDMID Data

We include the following variables that identify the PDMID cases:

- `pdmidnum`: This is unique identification number for the protest-dependent militarized interstate dispute. Cases with `pdmidnum` entries in the 9000s are cases that we found that should also be included in the base CoWMID data (consistent with CoWMID's coding rules).
- `sidea`: This is CoW state code (or codes) of the initiator(s) of the PDMID. Almost all entries here are bilateral. Exceptional cases of multilateral initiators that appear are coded as the Correlates of War state codes, separated by a comma. These cases, where they do occur, are ordered numerically by the lowest state code. Note that in all cases the initiation was against private citizens of `sideb`.
- `sideb`: This is CoW state code of the state (or states) whose private citizens were targeted by the initiator identified in `sidea`. Almost all entries here are bilateral. Exceptional cases of multilateral targets that appear are coded as the Correlates of War state codes, separated by a comma. These cases, where they do occur, are ordered numerically by the lowest state code. Note that in all cases the initiation was against private citizens of `sideb` and the government of `sideb` did not threaten, display, or use force against the official forces of `sidea` in response to these incidents.
- `action`: An action code associated with the protest-dependent incident initiated by `sidea`. See the base MIC data codebook for possible action values, but understand the nature of these types of disputes typically focus on a handful of actions. Action codes one might expect in these types of disputes, based on our exhaustive review of these cases, are shows of force (7), border fortifications (11), border violations (12), seizures (15), attacks (16), and clashes (17).
- `startdate`: a start date of the PDMID. Cases where the day is not known with precision are recorded with -9s in the date.
- `enddate`: an end date of the PDMID. Cases where the day is not known with precision are recorded with -9s in the date.
- `privatetarget`: a description of the private citizen(s) or property targeted in the PDMID. There are five categories for this variable.

- rebels: These are cases that are “hot pursuits” of rebels across an international border.
 - citizen(s): These are cases in which forces crossed the border in pursuit of private citizens.
 - shipping: These are cases in which boat(s), ship(s), or other water-borne vessels were seized or attacked by another state’s forces.
 - airliner(s): These are cases in which private aircraft were attacked or seized.
 - other: This value labels three difficult-to-contextualize cases in the data. MID#3341 describes Romania seizing a German train in 1914. The other two cases involve Sudan seizing an Egyptian university in 1993 (MID#4286) and an Egyptian club in 1994 (MID#4287).
- context a category describing the context in which the PDMID occurred, when that context is available. We have identified eight types of context from our archival research:¹
 - Tanker War: As the name implies, these were attacks on or seizures of shipping by Iran or Iraq during their 1980s war (MIC#2115).
 - World War I: The attacks/seizures on shipping as part of World War I (MIC#0257) have this value.
 - World War II: The attacks/seizures on shipping as part of World War II (MIC#0258) have this value.
 - international war: The attacks/seizures on shipping as part of international wars, but not World War I or World War II have this value.
 - civil war: The attacks/seizures on shipping as part of an ongoing civil war have this value.
 - fishing: These are cases in which the vessels seized or attacked were fishing boats actively fishing or attempting to fish disputed waters.
 - territorial waters: These describe the seizure of ships that violate a state’s territorial waters.
 - airspace: These are seizures and attacks that occurred because an airplane violated the state’s airspace.
 - illicit cargo: These are cases in which the seizure targeted drug trafficking or contraband material such as weapons. We include in this category one case involving a seized Brazilian slaver ship in 1845 (MID#1625).
 - stated policy: Specific state policies often prompted attacks and seizure. State policies include South Korea’s Rhee Line or Taiwanese policies regarding aid to Communist China in the 1950s.
 - other: These cases are protest-dependent cases with no clear context.

¹Note that all `privatetarget` values of “rebels” have no context information because that context is already included by noting rebel pursuit and the states involved.

References

- Gibler, Douglas M and Erin K Little. 2017. "Heterogeneity in the Militarized Interstate Disputes (MIDs), 1816–2001: What Fatal MIDs Cannot Fix." *Political Science Research and Methods* 5(1):189–199.
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