UCDP CID Issue Narratives Codebook

Uppsala Conflict Data Program

Department of Peace and Conflict Research
Uppsala University

Introduction

The Uppsala Conflict Data Program Conflict Issues Dataset (UCDP CID) is an extensive dataset detailing the expressed conflict issues of rebel groups engaged in conflicts with states all over the world. The project is based on the statements rebel groups themselves release and have been coded in the UCDP CID version 2023-1. The data presentation article is Brosché, Johan and Ralph Sundberg (forthcoming) "What they are fighting for: Introducing the UCDP CID", *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* DOI: 10.1177/00220027231218633/.

For the final stages of the project brief issue narratives were also written for each rebel group, giving an overview of the various issues stated by the groups, how these changed over the course of the conflicts, and which issues were the most central to the groups. This codebook outlines the process of how these narratives are constructed, how they were written, and how they should be interpreted and used.

The issue narratives found in the UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia correspond to the issues identified by the dataset version 2023-1. The narratives thus include rebels groups active in the 1989 to 2017 period.

Narrative structure

The UCDP CID issue narratives were all written in a similar structure in accordance with a basic structure and template. Each issue narrative is different, however, as each rebel group is different. The narratives were written based on the issue-year format of the CID and largely consist of four parts: narrative descriptions of each group's Conflict Goal issues, Conflict Dynamics issues, and Conflict Resolution issues, and finally a list of the type of conflict issues identified for the group.

The first three parts encompass the three broadest categories of conflict issues, which correspond to the three phases of a conflict cycle, which are, in the CID, subdivided into

specific categories and issues, and were all written with a similar structure. The type of conflict issues is a list outlining all conflict issues stated by the group throughout its existence, which is always located at the bottom of the UCDP page.

The Conflict Goal-, Dynamics-, and Resolution issue sections were written with the same three-paragraph structure, being introduced with a brief description of the groups and their central characteristics, which were also coded by the CID, or, if not coded by the CID, occasionally interpreted by the narrative writer. In this section, the year of the group's emergence and, if different, first year of conflict, was also stated, including its first stated Conflict Goal-, Dynamics-, and Resolution issues, respectively.

In the second paragraph of each section, the evolution of the raised conflict issues over the duration of the conflict is highlighted and analyzed. This is interpreted based on the CID's coding structure, detailed in both the data presentation article and in the project's codebook, whereby issues are coded only if they were explicitly expressed during a specific year. Based on this, the second paragraph attempts to establish a timeline analyzing how the conflict issues expressed by rebel groups changed over time. Most importantly, this section attempts to show how certain issues were more or less emphasized for different parts of the conflicts and, when applicable, attempts to explain this by relevant occurrences in the conflict itself, such as peace agreements, negotiations, or specific conflict-related events.

In the third, and final, part of each section, the main Conflict Goal-, Dynamics-, and Resolution issues were identified by the author of the narrative as well as the coder. The centrality of specific issues is determined by their emphasis, frequency, and continuity, as stated by the group and as coded by the project. Most narratives follow this structure, although in some cases, such as when no issues were stated in specific years, when a group only stated a few issues, when the attributed main issues were also the only issues raised by a group, etc., paragraphs were written together for aesthetic and comprehensibility purposes.

In instances where no Conflict Goal-, Dynamics-, or Resolution issues were identified, either for specific years or for the entire duration of the conflict the narrative simply states: "*The project coded no statements from [GROUP] pertaining to conflict [CATEGORY] issues.*" Occasionally, no apparent emphasis, continuity, or frequency could be identified to indicate the particular centrality of certain issues to certain groups, which means no main issues were attributed. In those cases this is stated in the final parts of the narratives. Specific quotes were often used in the narratives, which were always from first-hand sources in interviews, manifestos, or other forms of communications, from representatives of the rebel groups.

Narrative writing

The narrative writing process followed a fairly simple structure in which four main sources were used. The UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia (http://www.ucdp.uu.se) was used initially for the author to get a brief overview of the conflict itself. The CID was used to identify actor characteristics of groups, and a pivot table to create a timeline of issues stated. Lastly, the code logs (a collection, per group, of coded issues, quotes and sources) from the coders behind the CID were used to get further context for the writing. Whilst the UCDP was mainly used for initial context, the CID and the code logs were used throughout the entire process

of authoring each narrative. In some instances, specific sources behind the coding were also used for further context. After the first rendition of the narratives were written, they were proofread and revised before being published in the UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia.

Main issues

As stated earlier, the main Conflict Goal-, Dynamics-, and Resolution issues of rebel groups were identified through a combination of the author's analysis of the CID and the coder's notes as stated in the code logs. The decisions made in writing the narratives were based on the aforementioned criterion of:

<u>Issue Emphasis</u>: The rebel group describes the conflict issue as imperative to its cause,

<u>Issue Frequency</u>: The rebel group frequently refers to the issue compared to other conflict issues, and,

<u>Issue Continuity</u>: The rebel group refers to the issue continuously over a more extended time period compared to other conflict issues.

Issue Emphasis was the most integral for interpreting the centrality of issues, as the decision was made on criteria (1) (emphasis) being fulfilled and either criteria (2), frequency, or (3), continuity, or both, being fulfilled. In a few instances, main issues that did not adhere to these criteria had to be interpreted from other available data, as the narrative author and coder saw them as important to the group. In these instances, this decision and reasoning is clearly stated in the issue narrative.

Referencing

In terms of referencing to the CID and the narratives, any references should cite the UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia and if necessary the UCDP CID codebook. The current narratives are written in accordance with version 2023-1, which coded issues expressed up to 2017, and newer renditions may have been released since the writing of the narratives and this codebook, including the Type of conflict issues section.