Utilizing the COW and ICOW Data Sets

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Outline of Talk

• I. Overview of armed conflict data sets
• II. Overview of ICOW issue data sets
• III. Example: armed conflict over territory since the Cold War
I. Armed Conflict Data Sets

• Useful for identifying & learning from past patterns (causes, solutions)

• Widely used data sets:
  • Correlates of War (COW) war data
  • Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) data
  • PRIO/Uppsala Armed Conflict Data
Comparing the Data Sets

• Differences:
  • Time frames
  • Types of actors
  • Minimum severity threshold
  • Additional details (issue, outcome, severity)

• Advice:
  • Most appropriate for your needs
  • But easy to run robustness checks
II. ICOW Issue Data Sets

• Conflict only one part of a larger process

• Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) project:
  • Explicit contention over specific territory by official govt representatives

• Current status (1816-2001):
  • W. Hemisphere, W. Europe: 191 claims
  • Middle East: approximately 45 claims
  • Rest of world: approximately 300 claims
What is Collected?

• Claim salience:
  • *Tangible*: resources, strategic, inhabited
  • *Intangible*: homeland, identity concerns, historical sovereignty

• Armed conflict: adapted from MID data
  • Around half of all claims have 1+ MID

• Negotiations, mediation, arbitration...
  • Much more common than MIDs
III. Application: Armed Conflict over Territory since the Cold War

• General Procedure:
  • Study influences on conflict (so far)
  • Make projections for ongoing cases
  • Study how worst cases can be managed

• Territory: most conflictual issue
  • 144 claims active between 1990-2008
  • 20 had fatal conflict (39 more non-fatal)
Results

• Fatal territorial conflict:
  • Salience: salience index (+ conflict)
  • Strategic, identity (+)
  • History of sovereignty by both (weak +)
  • Resource, inhabited, noncolonial N.S.

• Controls:
  • Recent fatal conflict (+), greater disparity (-)
Projections: Most Likely Future Territorial Conflict

• Use results to predict probability of fatal conflict for ongoing claims

• Above-avg predicted risk (0.016/yr):
  • Asia [11]: Durand Line (0.198), Korea (0.175), Karabakh (0.157), Kashmir (0.132)
  • Other [8]: Cyprus (0.048), Golan (0.036), Badme (0.026)
Next Step: How to Manage/Settle These Problems?

• Suggestions from other ICOW work:
  • Greater salience reduces effectiveness
  • Past conflict (esp. fatal) reduces chances, but may increase compliance
  • Arbitration/adjudication very successful, esp. by IOs, but requires agreement
  • Mixed record for non-binding (mediation); similar to bilateral