

**Characteristics of Actors Involved in Social Protest:
An Extension of the Social Conflict Analysis Database**

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The Social Conflict Analysis Database (SCAD) is an event dataset which has been compiled, in part, through work by graduate students and faculty at the University of North Texas (UNT). It includes information on social conflicts between 1990 and 2013 on the African continent, and in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean¹. Instances of protests, riots, strikes, inter-communal conflict, and government violence against citizens are geocoded to make spatial and statistical analysis of social conflict possible. The work being done with SCAD represents exciting new forms of research that take georeferenced events into account (Banks 2011; Gleditsch et al. 2013), and scholars have been utilizing SCAD to understand how food insecurity, climate change, natural resources, and technology effect political violence (Hendrix and Brinkman 2013; Koubi et al. 2014; Meierding 2013; Pierskalla and Hollenbach 2013).

A new project is underway at UNT to extend this. Idean Salehyan and Kelsey Naughton are researching characteristics of the groups and actors involved in the social conflict documented by SCAD. Each observation recorded in SCAD is being assigned an additional specific actor identification code that indicates characteristics of the actors involved in an event. The identification code also shows how the actor is related to other actors in the SCAD dataset. This additional information will allow researchers to analyze when and where particular actors, such as a political party or ethnic group, are involved in social conflict. Data on Nigeria, South Africa, and Mexico is now complete, and data on the actors in Egypt and Haiti is currently being compiled. This paper will outline the structure of the observations being added to SCAD and highlight possible research questions that could be answered using this extension.

¹ Idean Salehyan, Cullen S. Hendrix, Jesse Hamner, Christina Case, Christopher Linebarger, Emily Stull, and Jennifer Williams. 2012. "Social Conflict in Africa: A New Database." *International Interactions* 38(4): 503-511.

Structure of the Data

Each observation in SCAD is an event that designates up to three actors and two targets involved in social conflict. This project extends these observations so that the data reflects both the name of the actors involved in an event (i.e. African National Congress, Boko Haram) and a unique code reflecting information about the respective actor. Each code has at least two sections: the first identifies what country the event occurs in, and the second identifies up to three characteristics of the actor. Some actors, which we refer to as “coherent,” are assigned codes with a third section: a three-digit group code. The specifics of how these three elements are combined into unique actor identifiers are discussed in this section.

Country

The first section of each actor code is a three-digit country identifier. These are taken from the Correlates of War (COW) project². It is important to note that the country code identifies which territory the actor was in during a social conflict event, not the territory where the actor or group originated or is headquartered.

Domains

The second section of each actor code is a combination of up to three “domains” that constitute two-to-six digits. There are sixteen domains which each reflect a characteristic of the actor or group involved in an event. Actors can be characterized by up to three of the following: central government, regional government, security force, legal political, extralegal political, press, labor, business, education, criminal, ethnic or religious, activist, and/or foreign. Three additional categories are included for instances when a concept (i.e. domestic violence) is being

² <http://www.correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/cow-country-codes>

protested, for when groups of citizens not involved in a larger organization are involved in an event, or when a location is observed in the data. Multiple domains allows for a tremendous amount of detail about an organization to be reflected in an actor's group code. For example, an Islamic University would be assigned both an education and an ethnic/religious domain.

Organization Codes

What we term "coherent" groups are given a three-digit organization code. "Coherent" groups are those groups that we can clearly identify, over time, and across different events. Research can provide sources of these groups' existence. Examples include specific political parties, rebel groups, or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Each group deemed "coherent" is given a unique organization code. Additionally, if we can determine that a group or actor is hierarchically related to another group or actor (i.e. Egypt's Ministry of the Interior is a subgroup of the Egyptian Parliament), then each subgroup of the main group is assigned both the main organization code and a subgroup identifier. By assigning subgroup identifiers to organizations that are units of an over-arching group, we are able to observe cases when factions of the same group target each other during social conflict. This will allow for new research to be completed on intragroup organization.

Separating the organization code from the domain allows for very specific differences among groups to be coded. Over time, organizations can often change characteristics. For example, during Apartheid in South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC) was deemed illegal. This changes the characteristic of the group from political extralegal during apartheid to political legal once Apartheid had ended and the ANC became a legally recognized political party. The ANC, in this new dataset, always has the same unique organization code, but its domains are free to change.

Possible Research

This data will allow for analysis of a variety of political and social phenomena possible for the first time. This research is relevant to African studies, political science, and current international relations and public policy.

Most relevant to the symposium on Africa at UNT are additions to African studies that this dataset will make possible. First, an extension of SCAD will allow us to understand social relations across the African continent since 1990. This is important in its own right. The sources collected in the completion of this dataset reflect the varied and prolific civil organizations that exist in African countries. The detail included in each organization code will allow students of Africa to empirically examine questions about labor unions in South Africa, when ethnic groups in Nigeria unify to make a common grievance known to their government, and whether or not African governments are more likely to repress conflicts having to deal with domestic or foreign business, among other things.

Theory presented in seminal works on social mobilization and civil unrest will be able to be empirically tested using this data. We will be able to tell whether or not Lichbach's categorization of solutions to the collective action problem into those of market, community, contract, or hierarchy reflects how groups actually coalesce (1994). Answers to the debate over whether or not civil society organizations are good for democratization can be found through analyzing this extension to SCAD (Booth and Seligson 2009; Diamond 1994). And this is not all, this extension to SCAD holds the answers to a plethora of questions regarding the dynamics of group organization and intragroup conflict. We will be able to find out whether organized groups are more likely to succeed at reaching their goals than unorganized ones, and which type

of groups are more likely to be repressed by their governments. We will be able to understand the conditions under which factions of political parties conflict with one another.

References available upon request.