Crisis Bargaining Data Base (CDBB) Codebook

Purpose

The purpose of this data set is to map the outcomes of cases from the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) project onto the outcomes of a crisis bargaining game between two states. The structure of the game is depicted below. The game begins when a state makes a challenge, defined as verbal or military act made with the intent of altering the status quo relationship between two states and backed by the threat of force. The target of the challenge then chooses either to acquiesce to some or all of the challenger’s demands or to resist. In the event of resistance, the challenger can either stand firm by implementing the threat or back down. Thus, an event can have four possible outcomes: no militarized challenge (NMC), acquiescence by the target (ACQ), back down by the challenger (BD), or stand firm by the challenger (SF).
Coding of Cases

The coding of each case begins with an effort to determine whether a militarized challenge occurred. The following definition was used to identify challenges:

**Challenge:** Any verbal or military act that is made deliberately by a central state authority with the intent of altering the status quo relationship between any two states, and backed by the threat of force. The threat of force may be either overt, as when the challenging act takes the form of a military mobilization or limited attack, or verbal, as when the challenge takes the form of a diplomatic ultimatum. Incidents of violence caused by non-state actors such as rebel groups, assassins, or maverick military commanders in the field are not considered challenges, though they may provide an opportunity for a challenge to arise.

Because challenges are intended to alter the status quo, a threat or militarized action taken with the intent to deter an attack on one’s own country is not considered a challenge. The same is true of a threat that simply reiterates an existing alliance commitment. If a deterrent threat is made in response to a challenge, this indicates membership on target side (see below). There are a number of crises in which all states make only deterrent threats, often accusing the other of intending to attack. If no state make a challenge, but all threats are deterrent in nature, then no challenge is coded. These cases referred to as “scares.”

If no challenge is identified, the outcome is coded as no militarized challenge (NMC). Note that cases so coded may involve demands pursued diplomatically or through non-militarized means.

If a challenge is identified, we code

**State A:** The state that initiates the challenge. Note that the challenger is not necessarily the instigator of the crisis.

**State B:** The state that is the target of the challenge. Although a challenge may be considered threatening to the interests of multiple states, we restrict attention to states that were directly targeted by the threat or use of military force.

While the game presumes an interaction between only two states, many crises involve more than one dyad, and there may be multiple states on either side. In this event, we code multiple dyads, each of which may have its own outcome. The following rules were applied
• If a third party joins the challenge or puts up resistance to the challenge prior to escalation to war, then that country is added on the challenger or target side, as appropriate.
• In the event of a war between two states, if a third party attempts to coerce one of the participants into stopping, then this constitutes a new challenge (e.g., China in Korean War, US in the Korean and Vietnam Wars, US in Gulf War).
• If third parties simply join one side of an ongoing war, then they are not considered to have issued a new challenge (e.g., Italy in WWII)

Once a challenge has been identified, the game can have three possible outcomes:

**Acquiesce (ACQ):** Code ACQ when State B gives in to Player A’s demands wholly or partially. The key criterion here is whether the outcome of the crisis was materially better for state A than the pre-crisis status quo, without state A having to fully implement its threat. An example is case #69, Memel. Germany (A) issued Lithuania (B) an ultimatum to return Memel to Germany. The Lithuanian cabinet met and accepts the ultimatum.

In some cases state B initially resists but then acquiesces after subsequent pressure. We still code these as ACQ as long as the subsequent acquiescence was not due to military defeat. An example is case #79, Closure of Burma Road. Japan (A) demanded that the UK (B) cease assistance to Chiang Kai-shek, withdraw its troops from Shanghai, and close the transit routes for supplies to China through Hong Kong and the Burma Road. The UK resisted, looks for support from the US, and the Hong Kong military destroyed the frontier rail and road bridges over the Shumchun River. Japan then demanded reconsideration, after which the UK yielded to the demands.

**Back Down (BD):** Code BD when State B resists and State A withdraws the challenge or otherwise fails to follow through on the threat of military force. An example is case #266, Uganda Claims. Uganda (A) issued a claim to disputed areas in Kenya, and threatened war in order to recover the territory. Kenya (B) resisted, stating its readiness to fight to protect its territorial integrity. The crisis ended when Kenya receives a message from Uganda disavowing any intention to seize territory from Kenya.

**Stand Firm (SF):** Code SF when State B resists and State A takes military action to implement the original threat, in the face of active military opposition by State B. Although all wars fall in this category, the SF outcome does not require a full-scale war. Nor does it require that State A successfully achieve its desired outcome militarily. This outcome reflects State A’s decision to implement its threat and attempt to attain the object of its threat in the face of Stat B’s resistance.