

Online Appendix

Post-Cold War Complex Humanitarian Emergencies: Introducing A New Dataset

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This document contains Parts I and II of the supplementary online appendix. Part I briefly describes the variables in the dataset. Part II describes the coding guidelines for identifying and distinguishing among complex emergencies, and for measuring both overall and annual uncertainty, as described in the article.

Part I: Variables in the dataset

CEName – Unique name for the complex emergency

CEID – Unique identifying number for the complex emergency (From 1 – 61)

Year – There is one observation for each year of each complex emergency

StartYear – First year of the complex emergency

EndYear – Final observed year of the complex emergency (last possible is 2009)

Censored – Coded 1 if the complex emergency continued past the end of 2009; 0 otherwise

CEType and CEType_Annual – Respectively, the type of conflict that best represents the complex emergency as a whole, and the type of conflict that best represents the emergency-year.

As described in the main text, each may take on one of five values:

1 = *International Conflict*: Either inter-state war or a dispute between two actors located in different states in which at least one is not a government.

2 = *Internal Conflict*: Involves the state and at least one organized opposition group, without external intervention in a combat role, typically in the context of a conflict over government or territory. Here I follow Sambanis and do not require the government's armed forces to be directly involved, as long as it is actively supporting a warring militia or militias involved in the fighting.¹ In addition, where there is no effective government, at least one party that claims the state must be involved.

3 = *Internationalized Internal Conflict*: The conflict is based in one state, but with international intervention on one or both sides. Following UCDP's Armed Conflict dataset, I code

¹ Sambanis 2004c, p.829. There may also be multiple opposition groups or militias engaged in fighting with one another. So long as the government is involved in fighting one, however, I still code internal conflict.

intervention when a foreign state(s) deploys troops that participate in combat with the aim of influencing the conflict's outcome and promoting the victory of one side over another.²

4 = *One-sided Violence*: Directed against civilians, and the violence is *not* associated with sustained concurrent hostilities between two or more organized parties or communal groups. Thus, an emergency or emergency-year may involve extensive violence against civilians as part of International, Internal, or Internationalized Internal conflict, but is only coded as *primarily* One-sided Violence if there is not significant parallel violence in one of these areas.³

5 = *Communal Violence*: The primary fault line in the conflict reflects inter-communal tension. In addition, 1) government is not a primary party to the violence, 2) victims are chosen based on their perceived membership in a religious, ethnic, or kinship group, and 3) members of at least two communities participate.⁴

ForeignInterveners – Names of any foreign countries that intervene during an emergency-year, leading to a coding of Internationalized Internal Conflict

OverallCertainty – Measure from 1 (low) to 3 (high) of my certainty that the complex emergency as a whole meets the full set of operational criteria. For more extensive descriptions, please see the operational guidelines below.

1 – A conflict meets the overall quantitative threshold for a complex emergency, but at least one mitigating indicator suggests that it may not truly reflect the definition.

2 – Quantitative estimates are unclear about whether the overall threshold for a complex emergency is met, but at least one confirming qualitative indicator suggests that they may significantly underestimate the true extent of disruption to civilian life. The conflict appears to be consistent with the definition of a complex emergency, and there is strong reason to suspect that the quantitative threshold is met.

3 – There is clear evidence that civilian deaths and/or displacement met the quantitative threshold for a complex emergency, and no significant mitigating evidence. There is every reason for confidence that the conflict reflects the definition.

AnnualCertainty – Measure from 1 (low) to 5 (high) of my certainty that the emergency-year meets the full set of operational criteria. For more information, see the operational guidelines below.

² See UCDP's definitions of 'Third Party,' 'Warring Party,' and 'Secondary Warring Parties' at <http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/definitions/>. Wherever possible I use UCDP's coding, but in a few instances where I code a complex emergency and there is external intervention but UCDP does not code an ongoing state-based conflict (such as Lebanon from 1977-1981 or Afghanistan in 2002), I coded the interveners myself.

³ In practice, therefore, it is possible that a complex emergency in which the scale of anti-civilian violence exceeds the scale of violence between the armed parties can be coded as primarily internal conflict rather than primarily one-sided violence. One example, among others, is the Kurdish rebellion and corresponding Anfal campaign in northern Iraq in the late 1980s.

⁴ This does not exclude the possibility that the government intentionally incites ethnic violence without participating directly. Such cases may be difficult to distinguish from internal conflict (see e.g., DRC I/Zaire).

- 1 – There is sufficient uncertainty about the evidence that emergency-years coded 1 may not truly reflect the definition of a complex emergency.
- 2 – There is good reason to suspect a complex emergency is ongoing, but the clarity of the available evidence is limited.
- 3 – There is considerable evidence of an ongoing complex emergency, but there is some doubt about whether the relevant threshold is attained.
- 4 – There is strong evidence of an ongoing complex emergency.
- 5 – We can have a very high level of confidence that a complex emergency is ongoing.

Part II: Operational Guidelines

1) Ongoing Violence & Disruption to Civilian Life

A) Baseline Threshold

A complex emergency displaces at least 500,000 civilians or generates at least 20,000 civilian deaths due to a combination of the direct and indirect consequences of violence within a period of 5 or fewer years.

B) Annual Thresholds

i) Onset

A complex emergency begins in the first year in which it reaches 10% of the overall threshold – either 50,000 persons displaced or 2,000 civilian deaths, during the year, as a direct or indirect consequence of violence.

ii) Continuation / Termination

A complex emergency continues through each year in which the number of newly displaced civilians or civilian deaths reaches 6% of the overall threshold – either 30,000 newly displaced or 1,200 civilian deaths. Thus, the last year of a complex emergency is the last year that meets either of these criteria, although lower-level violence may continue. This requirement ensures that a single complex emergency is characterized by persistent, sustained violence.

2) Episodes of Political Violence

A) Change in Actors / Political Issues

Since it is defined as an episode of political violence, a complex emergency is identified in part by the actors involved and the political issues at stake. Thus, when there is a fundamental change in the basic political issues or the major actors, a new complex emergency is coded thereafter (as long as all the other characteristics are met by the ensuing violence).⁵

For example, although Afghanistan has experienced no significant break in violence since 1978, 3 identifiable complex emergencies occurred during this time:

- 1) 1978 – 1992: The basic conflict was between the USSR and its Afghan puppet regime on the one hand, and the US-supported Mujahideen on the other.
- 2) 1992 – 2001: The basic conflict was between different Afghan groups vying for power with one another.
- 3) 2001 – Ongoing 2009: The basic conflict was between the United States, the Afghan government, and their allies on the one hand, and the Taliban on the other.

⁵ Changes in actors' names are okay, as is the addition/subtraction of some actors over time as long as this does not fundamentally change the nature of the conflict among the others.

B) Breaks in Violence

If a complex emergency experiences a break in violence, a new one begins thereafter if the break in violence lasts at least one full year (assuming all other criteria are met when violence resumes). If the break in violence is shorter, only a single complex emergency is coded.

C) Multiple Complex Emergencies in a Country

When a single country experiences multiple concurrent conflicts, separate complex emergencies are coded if it is possible to identify separate actors in distinct geographical regions, and uniquely identifiable political issues generating the violence (again assuming that each conflict also meets all the other criteria). Otherwise, only one complex emergency is coded.

For example, multiple Burmese ethnic groups distributed in different geographic areas have concurrently fought the Burmese government for greater autonomy or independence. These conflicts generate only one complex emergency, however, because a single, consistently applied policy of heavy-handed government treatment of civilians in these regions is primarily responsible for the extent of disruption to civilian life (see *Complex Emergency Coding Notes* for more information).

In contrast, in Indonesia after the fall of Suharto, the province of Aceh experienced a separatist civil war (1999 – 2004), which – on its own – met all the criteria of a complex emergency. Meanwhile, far away in the Moluccas (1999 – 2002), inter-communal violence between Muslims and Christians separately met all of these criteria. These are coded as separate complex emergencies.

D) Cross-Border Violence

Because complex emergencies are defined in terms of a government's responsibility to its own citizens, evidence used to identify them must reflect this. Thus, although inter-state conflicts or cross-border insurgencies are in some sense single episodes of political violence, such conflicts are coded as separate complex emergencies if all of the other criteria for a complex emergency are met on each side of an international boundary. Otherwise, a complex emergency is coded only where the conflict's effects on the population of a single state meet these criteria.

For example, although the Lord's Resistance Army has attacked and displaced civilians in northern Uganda, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, only in Uganda did this conflict clearly meet the quantitative threshold for a complex emergency (at least, through 2009). Thus only one complex emergency is identified related to this group's activities, in Uganda.

3) Incorporating Qualitative Information and Measuring Uncertainty

To incorporate qualitative information about disruption to civilian life and governmental willingness/ability to respond to the threat to civilians, each complex emergency receives a numerical coding based on a combination of the available qualitative and quantitative information. This coding measures my certainty about whether each complex emergency fully meets both the quantitative thresholds and the overall definition of a complex emergency. As described below, it ranges from 1 to 3, where 1 reflects the most uncertainty and 3 reflects the least. A second coding – from 1 to 5 – performs the same function for each individual year of each complex emergency.

A) Types of Information

Qualitative information incorporated in these coding schemas is of four basic types. The first two provide either mitigating or confirming evidence about whether or not the responsible government appears to be unwilling or unable to shield civilians from the worst effects of violence, and the last two provide similar information about whether a conflict generates severe disruption to civilian life. Here, where it is clear that the quantitative threshold is met, mitigating evidence can suggest that a complex emergency is not ongoing. Where there is insufficient quantitative evidence to determine whether a conflict (or a given year within it) met the relevant quantitative threshold, confirming qualitative evidence can increase our confidence that it is likely to have done so.

In general, the more the available confirming evidence, and the less the available mitigating evidence, the more likely it is that a complex emergency is occurring. The coding schemes reflect this basic insight.

i) Governmental Inability/Unwillingness

Mitigating Evidence:

The responsible government's reaction to the violence appears adequate and appropriate to meet civilians' needs. Evidence can include international praise for the responsible government; government success at swiftly ending inter-communal violence; or indications that most displaced persons are adequately cared for.

Confirming Evidence:

A concerted campaign of rights abuses directed against the physical security of civilians serves as *confirming* evidence of a complex emergency. If carried out by the responsible government, we can infer that this government is unwilling to protect civilians. If carried out by another actor, we can infer that the government is unable to protect civilians. Similarly, evidence that a government initiates large-scale hostilities in densely populated areas without attempting to remove or protect vulnerable civilians; or that aid operations are subject to attacks or serious disruption due to insecurity, can serve as confirmation that a government is unable or unwilling to mitigate a conflict's effects on civilians.

ii) Disruption to Civilian Life

Mitigating Evidence:

Occasionally, a conflict that displaces 500,000 civilians in 5 years may not truly represent a severe threat to civilian life, for reasons *other* than effective government response. Typically, this occurs where civilians are able to flee large-scale violence of which they are not the primary targets and also do not experience significant shortages of basic necessities. Evidence that the vast majority of displaced people find housing with individual families (thereby avoiding overcrowded, unsanitary conditions in displaced-person camps) or that almost all displacement is temporary (a few weeks or a couple of months), can thus mitigate a judgment that a complex emergency is occurring.

Confirming Evidence:

Evidence of a widespread and potentially life-threatening shortage of access to the basic necessities of subsistence – food, water, health care, and shelter – can serve as confirming

evidence that the quantitative threshold for a complex emergency is likely to be met, even if clear quantitative estimates are unavailable. Evidence of widespread malnutrition; starvation; outbreaks of disease related to overcrowding and unsanitary conditions; substantially elevated child or maternal mortality or significantly decreased life expectancy; a large population without shelter; or a large population unreachable by humanitarian aid organizations indicates extensive exposure to the dangerous indirect effects of ongoing violence.

B) Measuring Overall Uncertainty

Coding of 1: A conflict meets the overall quantitative threshold for a complex emergency, but evidence of at least one mitigating indicator – either about the government’s ability / willingness to respond to civilians’ needs, or about the extent of disruption to civilian life – suggests that it may not truly reflect the definition.

Example: Israel’s 2006 war against Lebanon, in which the vast majority of displaced people were able to return home quickly (see *Complex Emergency Coding Notes*).

Coding of 2: Quantitative estimates are unclear about whether the overall threshold for a complex emergency is met. There may be multiple competing estimates, or available estimates may be slightly below the threshold. However, at least one confirming qualitative indicator suggests that the available quantitative estimates may significantly underestimate the true extent of disruption to civilian life. In general, these events appear to be consistent with the definition of a complex emergency, and there is good reason to suspect that the quantitative threshold is met.

Example: Violent Iraqi suppression of the Shiite community, 1990s (see *Complex Emergency Coding Notes*).

Coding of 3: There is clear evidence that civilian deaths and/or displacement met the quantitative threshold, and no significant mitigating evidence. This represents the highest level of certainty that a conflict reflects the definition.

Example: Sierra Leone’s civil war, 1991 – 2001 (see *Complex Emergency Coding Notes*).

C) Measuring Annual Uncertainty

Coding of 1: There is evidence that the quantitative threshold is met, but there is at least one form of mitigating evidence – either about the government’s ability / willingness to respond to civilians’ needs, or about the extent of disruption to civilian life – to suggest that it may not truly reflect the definition.

Emergency-years coded 1 may not truly reflect the definition of a complex emergency.

Coding of 2: There is *either* some quantitative, *or* some confirming qualitative evidence of an ongoing complex emergency, but it is unclear whether the quantitative threshold for onset or continuation is met. Specifically, there is at least one major confirming qualitative indicator, or at least one of two kinds of quantitative information:

1) There is some new displacement and/or civilian deaths, but it is unclear whether they exceed the relevant threshold (such as when “Tens of thousands were displaced during the year”).

2) There is a single estimate for deaths or displacement over multiple years that include the year in question, where the *average* number displaced or killed over this period exceeds the relevant quantitative threshold. For example, if there are an estimated 50,000 deaths over 5 years (including the emergency-year in question), the average is 10,000 / year, well over the threshold for onset (2,000) or continuation (1,200). If this is the only information for any of these years, they are coded ‘2.’

Emergency-years coded 2 reflect good reason to suspect a complex emergency is ongoing, but the clarity of the available evidence is limited.

Coding of 3: There is at least *some* quantitative evidence of a complex emergency, *and* this is supplemented with at least some confirming qualitative evidence. Specifically, there is at least one of the two kinds of quantitative information just described, *and* at least one confirming qualitative indicator.

Emergency-years coded 3 reflect considerable evidence of an ongoing complex emergency, but there is some doubt about whether the relevant threshold is attained.

Coding of 4: There is at least *some* quantitative evidence that a complex emergency is ongoing, *and* this is supplemented by multiple forms of confirming qualitative evidence. Specifically, there is at least one of the two kinds of quantitative information just described, and at least two confirming qualitative indicators.

Emergency-years coded 4 reflect strong evidence of an ongoing complex emergency.

Coding of 5: There is clear evidence that the relevant quantitative threshold (for onset or continuation) is met and no significant mitigating evidence. Thus, the onset year is coded ‘5’ if there is clear evidence of 50,000 newly displaced or 2,000 civilian deaths. Each subsequent year is coded ‘5’ if there is clear evidence of 30,000 newly displaced or 1,200 civilian deaths.

Emergency-years coded 5 reflect a very high level of confidence that a complex emergency is ongoing.