

OSAM Dataset Codebook

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This version is compiled by Roos Haer (2012)

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Introduction

This document describes the OSAM (Organizational Structure of Armed Movements) dataset, part of a PhD project at the chair of International Relations and Conflict Management (Department of Politics and Public Administration), University of Konstanz.

Within the field of quantitative conflict studies, most empirical scholars analyze civil conflicts and human right abuses as being self-contained and homogenous concepts, ignoring the smaller micro-level dynamics in which they are embedded (O'Loughlin and Raleigh 2008). Often, they forget that at a fundamental level, these phenomena originate from people's behavior and the organizations, i.e. armed movements, in which they are embedded.

This lack of attention stems from the fact that the field has been dominated by studies focused on approaches of realism and liberalism, which mainly focus on the nation-state, or on the relations between nation-states in the international system (Carey and Poe 2004). Those studies that moved beyond this theoretical orientation, have primarily argued in line with the so-called new war perspective. According to this perspective, one of the central characteristics of new wars is the blending of the criminal and the political, and all the competing armed groups are expression of this unique process (Kaldor 1999). This idea leads often to the adoption of the isomorphism hypothesis as a central common-sense assumption; armed groups are treated as a constant factor and differences between them are glossed over (Gutiérrez Sanín 2007). Consequently, practitioners and scholars alike lose a significant part in their interest in armed groups. This is surprising, particularly if the international community wishes to influence the behavior of these groups in order to protect civilians. If we aspire to generate a more pragmatic approach to dealing with these groups, the first step is to move beyond this isomorphism hypothesis and examine the difference between armed groups and how these difference influence their (violent) behavior. Only then, the policy community might be able to develop effective warning systems or more capable policies for resolving existing conflicts (Jones and Carter 2001).

This dataset fills this niche by focusing solely on armed movements. More specifically, this dataset is primarily focused on the internal structure of these movements. The composed dataset is especially focused on three aspects of this structure: the recruitment strategy of the groups, the level of hierarchy within these groups, and the level of commitment showed by their active members. This information is collected via a Web survey held among experts (i.e. scholars or policy makers that have published articles on these groups) of more than 70 different armed movements around the world.

Definitions

An armed movement is any non-governmental group of people having announced a name for their group and using armed force (this definition is compatible with that used in the UCDP One-sided violence dataset). They use arms (any material means) in order to exert violent force, resulting in death. Armed movements are then also not part of the government, i.e. the party controlling the capital of the state. However, the boundary between state and non-state is fluid. Capacity wise, they often differ. Notwithstanding, many of the characteristics of a state - such as provision of security and welfare, control over territory, power of taxation, legitimacy - are shared by numerous non-state actors while not all states enjoy all the characteristics they are supposed to have in equal measures (Gunning 2009).

Expert and Aggregation version

In total two versions of the OSAM dataset (version 27.03.2012) are available. One called expert_OSAM and another called aggregated_OSAM. The first version records the entries of the individual experts per armed group, while the second dataset records only the aggregated entries per armed movement. This aggregated dataset was made by first deleting the entries of the experts that did not answer any question and thereafter by choosing the answer that was most often mentioned (or when no answer was mentioned more often by choosing the median – if the answers were ordered). Note that due to the exclusion of certain experts, certain armed groups (the ASG, Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, BLFT, Jemaah Islamiya, NPFL, PAC, TTP) are no longer covered in the aggregated version.

Case selection

The OSAM dataset (version 27.03.2012) includes 72 different armed groups. These groups are known to have targeted civilians during civil wars. However, some groups, such as the FARDC, were added after requests of experts. All these groups were active in the period 1989-2011; some for just one or two years, while others such as the LRA, more than two decades. Experts were asked to generalize across the active years, when answering the questions concerning the internal structure. The table below shows the cases in more detail.

Table 1. Case selection

Armed group abbreviation	Official full name	Country	Comments
AAI	Ansar al-Islam	Iraq	
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces	Uganda	
AFDL	Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire	DR Congo	
	Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya	Egypt	Only included in the expert version
	Al-Shabaab	Somalia	Also known as Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen (HSM)
	Al-Qaida (The Base)		
AMB	al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades		
AQIM	Al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb	Algeria	
ASG	Abu Sayyaf	Philippines	Only included in the expert version
AUC	Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia	Colombia	
AWB	Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging	South Africa	
	Bakassi boys	Nigeria	
BIAF	Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces	Philippines	Military wing of the MILF
BLTF	Bodo Liberation Tigers	India	Only included in the expert version
CNDP	Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple	DR Congo	
	Cobras	Congo	
CPI-M	Communist Party of India-Marxist	India	
DHD	Dima Halim Daogah	India	
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia	Colombia	
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo	DR Congo	
FARF	Forces Armees pour la Republique Federale	Chad	
FDD	Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie	Burundi	
FDLR	Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda	DR Congo	
FIAA	Front Islamique Arabe de l'Azawad	Mali	
FPR	Front Patriotique Rwandais	Rwanda	

GIA	Groupe Islamique Armé	Algeria	
HAMAS	Ḥarakat al-Muqāwamah al- 'Islāmiyyah	Israel	
HPC	Hmar People's Convention	India	
INPFL	Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia	Liberia	
	Interahamwe	Rwanda	
JAM	Jaish al-Mahdi	Iraq	Also known as the al-Mahdi army
	Janjaweed	Sudan	
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement	Sudan	
	Jemaah Islamiya	Indonesia	Only included in the expert version
JVP	Janathā Vimukthi Peramuṇa	Sri Lanka	
KNU	Karen National Union	Burma	
KR	Khmer Rouge	Cambodia	
LeJ	Lashkar-e-Jhangvi	Pakistan	
LeT	Lashkar-e-Taiba	Pakistan	
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army	Uganda	
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam	Sri Lanka	
	Mai Mai	DR Congo	
	Mau Mau	Kenya	
MCC	Maoist Communist Centre	India	
	Medellín cartel	Colombia	Also known as Los Extraditables
MFDC	Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance	Senegal	
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe	South Africa	Military wing of the ANC
MNJ	Mouvement des Nigériens pour la Justice	Niger	
MPGK	Mouvement Patriotique Ganda Koi	Mali	
MS-13	Mara Salvatrucha	USA	
	Mungiki	Kenya	
NDFB	National Democratic Front of Bodoland	India	
NLFT	National Liberation Front of Tripura	India	
NPA	New People's Army	Philippines	Military wing of the CPP
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia	Liberia	Only included in the expert version
NSCN	Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland	India	
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation	Ethiopia	

	Front		
OPC	Oodua Peoples Congress	Nigeria	
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress	South Africa	Military wing of APLA; only included in the expert version
PIJ	Palestinian Islamic Jihad	Israel	
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan	Turkey	
PLA	People's Liberation Army	Nepal	Military wing of the CPN-M
PULO	Patani United Liberation Organization	Thailand	
PWG	People's War Group	India	
	Ranvir Sena	India	
RCD	Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie	DR Congo	
RENAMO	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana	Mozambique	
RUF	Revolutionary United Front	Sierra Leone	
	Salafia Jihadia	Spain	
SB	Shanti Bahini	Bangladesh	Military wing of JSS
SIMI	Students Islamic Movement of India	India	
SL	Sendero Luminoso	Peru	
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army	Sudan	
SSDF	South Sudan Defence Forces	Sudan	
	Taliban	Afghanistan	
TTP	Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan	Pakistan	Only included in the expert version
ULFA	United Liberation Front of Assam	India	
UNITA	União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola	Angola	

Variables in the OSAM dataset

Variable name	Wording of question	Coding
recruitment	In general, are members of the <i>Armed Group</i> abducted or did they join voluntarily?	(1) All of them are abducted, none of them joined voluntarily (2) Most of them are abducted, few joined voluntarily (3) Some of them are abducted, some joined voluntarily (4) Very few are abducted, most of them joined voluntarily (5) None of them are abducted, all of them joined voluntarily
recruitmentlife	Some armed groups recruit their members for a lifetime, i.e. once they join they are expected to stay forever with the group. In general, are members of the <i>Armed Group</i> recruited for life?	(1) Always (2) Usually (3) Occasionally (4) Rarely (5) Never
socialcohesion	Some armed groups try to recruit potential members from specific ethnic and/or religious groups. To what extent does the <i>Armed Group</i> try to attract recruits with the same ethnic and/or religious backgrounds?	(1) Always (2) Usually (3) Occasionally (4) Rarely (5) Never
politicalgoals	To your knowledge, does the <i>Armed Group</i> have clear defined political goals, such as separation of a particular territory, replacing the government, or implementing particular laws?	(1) Yes (2) No
awarepolitical	To what extent do you think 'regular' members are aware of these political goals? (Filter question, only answered when 'yes' on 'politicalgoals')	(1) Not at all aware (2) Slightly aware (3) Somewhat aware (4) Moderately aware (5) Extremely aware
imppolitical	Some people join an armed group because they experience political repression and/or political exclusion. How important do you think	(1) Very unimportant (2) Unimportant (3) Neither

	are these political reasons for the recruit's decision to join the <i>Armed Group</i> ?	(4) Important (5) Very important
impethnicity	Some people join an armed group because they experience inter-ethnic and/or inter-religious hatred. How important do you think are these ethnic and religious reasons for the recruit's decision to join the <i>Armed Group</i> ?	(1) Very unimportant (2) Unimportant (3) Neither (4) Important (5) Very important
imprevenge	Some people join an armed group because they seek to revenge past humiliations and defeats. How important do you think revenge is for the recruit's decision to join the <i>Armed Group</i> ?	(1) Very unimportant (2) Unimportant (3) Neither (4) Important (5) Very important
impeconomic	Some people join an armed group because they are discontent about existing economic inequality. How important do you think economic inequality is for the recruit's decision to join the <i>Armed Group</i> ?	(1) Very unimportant (2) Unimportant (3) Neither (4) Important (5) Very important
materialbenefits	To your knowledge, are recruits offered material benefits such as money drugs, food, and/or livestock in return for joining the <i>Armed Group</i> ?	(1) Never (2) Rarely (3) Sometimes (4) Often (5) Always
looting	To your knowledge, how often is the <i>Armed Group</i> engaged in plundering?	(1) Constantly (2) Frequently (3) Sometimes (4) Hardly ever (5) Never at all
lootingpromoted	Is plundering promoted by the commanders of the <i>Armed Group</i> ? (Filter question, only answered when not answered 'no' on	(1) Always (2) Often (3) Sometimes

	'looting')	(4) Rarely (5) Never
genhierarchy	In general, how hierarchical do you think the <i>Armed Group</i> is organized?	(1) Not at all hierarchical (2) (3) (4) (5) Very hierarchical
bookofrules	In some armed groups there are rules written down that prescribe how a recruit should behave in particular situations. Do such written rules exist for the <i>Armed Group's name</i> ?	(1) Yes (2) No
hiring	In some armed groups there are standard procedures for hiring new recruits. For instance, recruits are interviewed by one of the commanders or they have a kind of trial-period. To your knowledge, does such a standard procedure exist in the <i>Armed Group</i> ?	(1) Yes (2) No
appointment	To your knowledge, how are commanders of the <i>Armed Group</i> generally appointed?	(1) They appoint themselves by means of force (2) They are appointed by their unit (3) They are appointed by their superiors (4) They are appointed another way
militaryrank	Does the <i>Armed Group</i> make use of military language for their ranks, such as 'officer', 'sergeant', or 'general'?	(1) Yes (2) No
decisionmaking	To what extent do you think that individual members of the <i>Armed Group</i> can make their own decisions concerning the use of violence against other armed groups?	(1) Always (2) Frequently (3) Occasionally (4) Rarely (5) Never
punishment	To your knowledge, are members of the <i>Armed Group</i> punished for	(1) Yes (2) No

	disobeying orders?	
decisionpunish	How is the punishment decided upon? (Filter question, only answered when answered 'yes' on 'punishment')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) The commander alone decides (2) A commander from another unit decides (3) There are trials within the unit (4) There are public trials in front of civilians (5) Other
punisher	Who, generally, carries out this punishment? (Filter question, only answered when answered 'yes' on 'punishment')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) The commander (2) A commander from another unit (3) Armed group members with a lower rank than the punished person (4) Armed group members with a higher rank than the punished person (5) Other
gencommitment	To what extent do you think that members of the <i>Armed Group</i> are committed to the organization?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) A great deal committed (2) Much (3) Somewhat (4) Little (5) Not at all committed
contactoutside	Some armed groups forbid their members to have contact with their family members, friends, and/or other people that are not part of the group. To what extent do members of the <i>Armed Group</i> have contact with people from outside the armed group?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Always (2) Often (3) Sometimes (4) Rarely (5) Never at all
leaving	In general, how hard is it for members to leave the <i>Armed Group</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Impossible (2) Very hard (3) Somewhat hard (4) Not really hard (5) Not hard at all
contactcomrades	If members have left the <i>Armed Group</i> , to what extent have they still contact with their former comrades?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Always (2) Often (3) Sometimes

		(4) Rarely (5) Never
fate	Do members care about the fate of the <i>Armed Group</i> ?	(1) Extremely (2) Very (3) Somewhat (4) Slightly (5) Not at all
proud	How proud are members to be part of the <i>Armed Group</i> ?	(1) Extremely (2) Very (3) Somewhat (4) Slightly (5) Not at all
loyal	To what extent are members loyal to the <i>Armed Group</i> ?	(1) Extremely (2) Very (3) Somewhat (4) Slightly (5) Not at all
publicservices	Some armed groups are engaged in the provision of public services to civilians. They provide for instance healthcare and education. Is the <i>Armed Group</i> engaged in such public services?	(1) Yes (2) No
politicalparty	Is the <i>Armed Group</i> official affiliated with a political party?	(1) Yes (2) No
khintention	To your knowledge, does the <i>Armed Group</i> harm or kill civilians intentionally?	(1) Yes (2) No
nrtarget	How often do you think are civilians targeted by the <i>Armed Group</i> ? (Filter question, only answered when answered 'yes' on 'khintention')	(1) All the time (2) Often (3) Sometimes (4) Rarely (5) Never at all
order	To what extent do you think that members of the <i>Armed Group</i> use	(1) Always

violence against civilians because they have been given orders to do so?
 (Filter question, only answered when answered 'yes' on 'khintention')

- (2) Usually
- (3) Occasionally
- (4) Rarely
- (5) Never

Armedmovement ID number of the armed movements

- (1) ADF / (2) AFDL / (3) PAC / (4) AQIM / (5) ASG / (6) AUC / (7) AWB / (8) Al Qaeda / (9) Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya / (11) Al-Shabaab / (12) AAI (13) BLFT / (14) Baskassi Boys / (15) CNDP / (16) CPI-M / (17) NPA / (18) Cobras / (19) DHD / (20) FARC / (21) FARDC / (22) FARF / (23) FDD / (24) FDLR / (25) FIAA / (26) FPR (27) GIA / (28) HAMAS / (29) HPC / (30) INPFL / (31) Interahamwe / (32) JEM / (33) JVP / (34) Janjaweed / (35) JAM / (36) Jemaah Islamiya / (37) KNU / (38) KR / (39) LRA / (40) LTTE / (41) LeT / (42) LeJ / (43) MCC / (44) MFDC / (45) BIAF / (46) MNJ / (47) MPGK / (48) MS-13 / (49) Mai Mai / (50) Mau Mau / (51) Medellin cartel / (52) Mungiki / (53) NDFB / (54) NLFT / (55) NPFL / (56) NSCN / (57) ONLF / (58) OPC / (59) PAC / (60) PIJ / (61) PKK / (62) PLA / (63) PWG / (64) PULO / (65) RCD / (66) RENAMO / (67) RUF / (68) Ranvir Sena / (69) SIMI / (70) SL / (71) SPLA / (72) SSDF / (73) Salafia Jihadia / (74) SB / (75) TTP / (76) Taliban / (77) ULFA / (78) UNITA / (79) MK / (80) AMB