DISCUSS DATA

Archiving, sharing and discussing research data on Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia

Data Review

Data Citation

Abstract

The Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes (NAVCO) Data Project is a project by the Harvard Kennedy School Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, that codes both violent and non-violent maximalist campaigns around the globe from 1900-2019. It includes three different datasets (and their previous versions). This review will focus on the latest version of each dataset: the NAVCO 1.3 dataset which analyses campaigns as a whole, the NAVCO 2.1 dataset which disaggregates campaigns at the annual level, and the NAVCO 3.0 dataset which reports daily resistance events (5). The NAVCO 1.3 dataset includes 48 Discuss Data relevant entries spanning 13 different countries, while the NAVCO 2.1 dataset lists 108 entries (30 campaigns) for the same number of countries. The NAVCO 3.0 dataset on the other hand only covers Estonia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The last one of which is not included in either of the other two datasets. As of summer 2024, it is not clear whether work on the data collection for the NAVCO 1.0 or NAVCO 2.0 series is continuing. However, no further versions in the 3.0 series are expected at this time (5). The data review includes a link to the official NAVCO data project website as well as a link to the Harvard Dataverse where both the data and explanatory codebooks are available for download.

Data Review - Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes (NAVCO) data project

The Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes (NAVCO) Data Project is a project by the Harvard Kennedy School Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, that codes both violent and non-violent maximalist campaigns around the globe from 1900-2019. It includes three different datasets (and their previous versions). This review will focus on the latest version of each dataset: the NAVCO 1.3 dataset which analyses campaigns as a whole, the NAVCO 2.1 dataset which disaggregates campaigns at the annual level, and the NAVCO 3.0 dataset which reports daily resistance events (5).

The NAVCO 1.3 dataset creation was led by Erica Chenoweth and Christopher Wiley Shay and covers the time period from 1900-2019. 622 instances of maximalist resistance campaigns are listed in this dataset within that time frame (5), 48 of which cover the Discuss Data relevant region. What constitutes as a campaign in both the NAVCO 1.0 and NAVCO 2.0 series is defined as follows: "A campaign is defined as a series of observable, continuous, purposive mass tactics or events in pursuit of a political objective." (Chenoweth/Shay 2020: 2). To be considered for this inclusion in this dataset a campaign then has to have stated at least one of these maximalist objectives: expelling of foreign occupations, a regime change (removing dictatorship or military juntas), self-determination or seperatism, or any other major types of social change (like anti-apartheid campaigns) (Chenoweth/Shay 2020: 1). It also has to be considered as "mature", meaning that at least 1.000 participants have to have been observed actively confronting the opponent during the course of the conflict (Chenoweth/Shay 2020: 5). As stated, the unit of analysis in this dataset is the campaign. The main reason the research team decided on coding campaigns rather than events is the fact that resistance movements involve more than just events. They require planning, recruiting, training, intelligence, and other operations besides events and their disruptive abilities. Thus, this type of analysis allows more general observations that can then be further explored by in-depth case studies (Chenoweth/Shay 2020: 3).

When considering non-violent campaigns for evaluation, they were distinguished from their violent counterparts based on the following definition: "Nonviolent resistance practices do not directly threaten or harm the physical well-being of the regime, its agents, or its citizens." (Chenoweth/Shay 2020: 4). The sources used to catalogue non-violent campaigns include an extensive review of literature on non-violent conflict and social movements, encyclopedias, case studies and a comprehensive bibliography on non-violent civil resistance by Carter, Clarke, and Randle (for more detailed information please refer to Chenoweth/Shay 2020). After the initial research the cases were circulated among experts in the field of non-violent conflict to receive feedback (Chenoweth/Shay 2020: 4).

Violent campaigns on the other hand were defined as follows: "Violent resistance [...] involves the use of force to physically harm or threaten to harm the opponent." (Chenoweth/Shay 2020: 5). Violent campaign data was primarily collected from different databases including: The UCDP Armed Conflict Database, the Correlates of War database on intra-state wars (COW), Clodfelter's encyclopedia of armed conflict (2002), and Kalev Sepp's list of major counterinsurgency operations (2005) (Chenoweth/Shay 2020: 5).

To note is that should a campaign at some point during its lifespan shift from a non-violent campaign to a violent one or vice versa, that this campaign is then coded as two separate campaigns (Chenoweth/Shay 2020: 7).

The dataset aims to identify the level of success each campaign achieved (by 2019) according to their stated objective (Chenoweth/Shay 2020: 1). The outcomes are categorized as either a "success", "Limited", or a "Failure" in order to identify the number of successful campaigns of both violent and non-violent campaigns and to "test whether the rate of success varies on the purposes of the campaigns, support from third parties, and campaign participation, among other factors." (Chenoweth/Shay 2020: 7).

The NAVCO 2.1 dataset was assembled by Erica Chenoweth and Christopher W. Shay and compiles annual data on 384 nonviolent and violent mass movements (disaggregated to 2.717 campaign years) aiming for maximalist goals in the time period from 1945-2013. 108 of these entries are relevant for the region covered by Discuss Data. The unit of analysis in this data set is the campaign year meaning, unlike in the NAVCO 1.3 dataset, attributes are coded for each calendar year of the campaigns lifetime separately (Chenoweth/Shay 2019: 2), which enables the user to track changes within a campaign over time (5). This includes early years when the campaign had not yet reached 1.000 observed participants if the following criteria were met: (A) temporal continuity, meaning no significant gaps of activity were observed between the earliest and latest campaign year, (B) continuity in leadership cohorts between early and subsequent mobilization, and (C) the early mobilization must have been extra institutional, meaning it has to have differentiated itself from regular politics in a way in which it undermined the authority of regime-sponsored institutions (Chenoweth/Shay 2019: 4).

Since determining a clear termination point of a campaign can be challenging the following factors were employed as a guideline on determining campaign terminations: (A) a campaign can be coded as ongoing even with little to no activity, given the fact that campaign activity can be observed in the following years. The break however can be no longer than three years. If the gap is longer than that the last campaign year in which activity was observed will be designated as the end-year. (B) A campaign is considered as terminated when there is strong evidence that suggests that campaign activity has ended (Chenoweth/Shay 2019: 4).

On top of the information gathering process used for the 1.3 dataset, several more sources were added this time around. Those include, but are not limited to, the MEC (Chenoweth and Ulfelder 2017), SCAD (Salehyan et al. 2012), ACLED (2018), and the Swarthmore Nonviolent Action Database (for more detailed information please refer to Chenoweth/Shay 2019) (Chenoweth/Shay 2019: 2, 5).

The dataset analyzes attributes such as: "participation size and diversity, the behavior of regime elites, repression and its effects on the campaign, support or lack thereof from external actors, and progress toward the campaign outcomes." (Chenoweth/Shay 2019: 2) while adding variables such as: "[...] more precise participation figures, more nuanced data about the scope, intensity, and degree of violent flank behavior and state repression, and further information about the parallel or alternative institutions developed by the campaign." (Chenoweth/Shay 2019: 2). A full list of variables can be found in the NAVCO 2.1 codebook (Chenoweth/Shay 2019: 8ff).

The NAVCO 3.0 dataset covers 26 countries in the time timespan from 1990-2011. It was compiled by Orion A. Lewis, Erica Chenoweth and Jonathan Pinckney and reports on daily resistance events, focussing on the type, scope and category of each event (5). The 26 covered countries include three that are a part of the region covered by Discuss Data. Namely Estonia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Unlike the previously discussed datasets, this one has a less strict definition of what constitutes as a campaign. It also includes: "[…] contentious actions from actors of any size and level of organization, as well as the responses to these actions by governments, international actors, and non-aligned domestic groups and individuals." (Lewis et al. 2016: 34-35). The event in question must however still be reasonably connected to an anti-government campaign of some kind. This kind of approach allows independent researchers a broader scope of analysis (Lewis et al. 2016: 35).

The primary source of information were newswire reports taken from LexisNexis Academic, more specifically newswire reports from the Agence France Press (AFP). To locate reports of interest for the dataset the researchers searched for the term "HLEAD" in combination with the country of interest as well as terms related to campaigns such as: protest, riot, strike, violence, demonstration, attack, assassination, bomb, clash, repression, negotiation and defection (Lewis et al. 2016: 34).

As stated, the unit of analysis in this dataset is the event day, meaning that events that last for multiple days are separated into individual lines of code for each day (Lewis et al. 2016: 35). While coding a basic event coding structure was followed: LTG (Location, Time, Geographical scope of event) + ACTOR (the actors position within a conflict. Includes: State, Non-state, International, Non-aligned and Local state actor) + VERB (Specification of the action) +

TARGET + AUX (Consists of rich additional detail including but not limited to: An event description, the campaign goals, tactical choices and the number of participants) (Lewis et al. 2016: 2).

Known issues for the NAVCO dataset that users should be aware of while utilizing include: (A) an ambiguity during the coding of the variable "progress". Said variable measures the success of a campaign by assigning values between one and four. The values three "significant concessions" and four "full success" were assigned somewhat ambiguously in some cases, meaning while some cases were coded as a "full success" in the NAVCO 2.0 series they might have been coded as "significant concessions" in the NAVCO 1.0 series and vice versa. Thus, the research team suggests that: "[…] researchers might consider creating a dichotomous "strategic success" variable in which values of 3 and 4 indicate a strategic success and values of 0, 1, & 2 indicating otherwise if the observation occurs in the final year of the campaign. In ongoing campaign years, however, researchers should not view a progress value of 3 as equivalent to full success, since the campaign has not yet concluded." (Chenoweth/Shay 2019: 6).

(B) A possible underreporting bias. There is concern that the campaigns included in this dataset may be biased toward success since only the large, mature campaigns which are most commonly reported are included. Meaning that small (especially non-violent) campaigns that are crushed in their early stages (and therefore fail) are not included in this dataset (Chenoweth/Shay 2020: 7-8). For a full list on how the research team tried to mitigate this bias please refer to Chenoweth/Shay 2020.

Discuss Data relevant country coverage:

Country	NAVCO 1.3	NAVCO 2.1	NAVCO 3.0
Armenia	2	2 (1)*	
Azerbaijan	1	4 (1)	
Belarus	2	13 (3)	
Estonia	2	13 (2)	168
Georgia	7	13 (4)	
Kyrgyzstan	4	5 (4)	
Latvia	2	9 (2)	
Lithuania	2	16 (2)	
Moldova	3	1 (1)	
Russia	10	28 (5)	
Tajikistan	2	6 (1)	
Ukraine	6	6 (3)	3752
USSR	6	5 (1)	
Uzbekistan	-	-	1066
Total entries	48	108	4986

*Figures in parenthesis indicate the number of campaigns listed

Sources:

(1) Chenoweth, Erica and Christopher Wiley Shay. 2020. NAVCO 1.3 Codebook. Available for download here: https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/ON9XND. Last accessed 27.09.2024.

(2) Chenoweth, Erica and Christopher Wiley Shay. 2019. Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes (NAVCO) Data Project: Version 2.1 Campaign-Year Data Codebook. Available for download here: https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/MHOXDV . Last accessed 27.09.2024.

(3) Lewis et al. 2016. Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes 3.0: Effects of Tactical Choices on Strategic Outcomes Codebook. Available for download here: https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/INNYEO. Last accessed 27.09.2024.

(4) Chenoweth, Erica. 2019. The NAVCO Data Project: Version Histories. https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/CQFXXM . Last accessed 27.09.2024.

(5) NAVCO Data Project. Harvard Dataverse. https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/navco. Last accessed 27.09.2024.