

Identifying Opportunity for Conflict

POSC 3610 – International Conflict

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Goal for Today

Discuss contiguity and how to identify opportunities for conflict.

Dangerous Dyads

Table 1: Bremer's (1992) "Dangerous Dyads"

Factor	Rank	Relationship
Contiguity	1	+
Major power in the dyad	2	+
Shared alliance	3	-
Joint Militarization	4	+
Joint democracy	5	-
Jointly advanced economies	6	-
Power preponderance	7	-

Types of Contiguity

- Direct land contiguity (e.g. USA-Canada)
- 12 miles or less of water (e.g. USA-Russia)
- 24 miles or less of water (e.g. United Kingdom-France; Russia-Japan)
- 150 miles or less of water (e.g. USA-Cuba)
- 400 miles or less of water (e.g. United Kingdom-Germany)

The Diomedede Islands in the Bering Strait

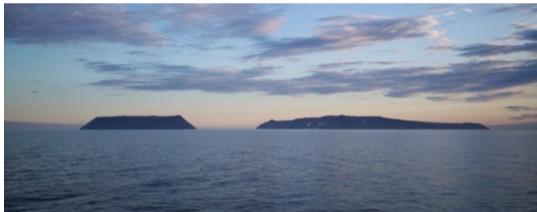


Figure 1: America is on the left; Russia is on the right

Additional Contiguous Relationships

Two states may be contiguous through colonial dependencies.

- e.g. United Kingdom-China [Hong Kong]
- further: U.S.-UK (Canada historically, now the Virgin Islands and Bermuda)

Contiguity rules are the same as before, but stretch to include colonial holdings/dependencies.

Table 2: Contiguity and Militarized Conflict (GML MID Data [v. 2.02])

Contiguous?	1816-1945	1946-2001	2002-2010
No	39.98%	32.02%	18.04%
Yes	60.02%	67.98%	81.96%

Why Are Contiguous States Prone to Conflict?

1. Opportunity
2. Interactions/Willingness
3. Territory

We'll discuss the first two today.

The Opportunity Argument

Contiguous states have more opportunity for conflict.

- Think of this as a “reach” argument.
- Also an argument of necessity.

How can we measure “opportunity?”

Measuring Opportunity

1. Regional dyads
2. Political relevant dyads
3. Politically relevant information environment (PRIE)
4. Political activity

Irrelevant Dyads

This ultimately becomes an issue of a sampling frame with both substantive/statistical concerns.

- Substantive: why bother estimating the probability of conflict between Mongolia and Nigeria?
- Statistical: flooding analysis with “irrelevant” observation artificially deflates standard error.
 - i.e. it makes miniscule/unimportant effects seem “significant.”

Irrelevant Dyads

Our goal: devise a sampling frame that includes *all* dyads that could have or have had at least one MID.

- That's how we will get "opportunity" as "necessary condition" (i.e. without it, a MID cannot happen).

Regional Dyads

Earliest attempt at measuring opportunity came in Bueno de Mesquita's "regional dyads."

- Relied on CoW's classification system.

Correlates of War Regions

Region	ccode Domain	Examples
Americas	[2, 200)	USA (2), CAN (20), MEX (70), ..., URU (165)
Europe	[200, 400)	UKG (200), IRE (205), ..., ICE (395)
Africa	[400, 600)	CPV (402), STP (403), ..., SYC (591)
ME/NA	[600, 700)	MAR (600), ALG (615), ..., OMN (698)
Asia	[700, 900)	AFG (700), TKM (701), ..., TLS (860)
Oceania	[900, 999)	AUS (900), PNG (910), ..., SAM (990)

Table 4: Regional Dyads and MIDs (GML MID Data [v. 2.02])

MID Onset	Different Region	Same Region
0	99.81%	98.95%
1	0.19%	1.05%

How to Read This Table

Goal: we want that “different region” and MID quadrant to be 0%.

- If regions are an adequate sampling frame, there would be *no* cross-region MIDs *ever*.

What we find: .19% of all dyad-years had MIDs between two combatants from different regions.

- Not bad. But...

The Problem of Regions

Regions are arbitrary and miss a lot of detail.

- e.g. Canada and St. Lucia share a region, but the probability of a MID is zero.
- Russia-Turkey is the most war-prone dyad and are incidentally coded in different regions.
- We're going to miss just about everything interesting the U.S. has been doing since the 1900s.

Political Relevant Dyads

Weede's "politically relevant dyads" offer a refinement, whereby "political relevance" includes:

- Contiguous dyads of any type, and/or:
- At least one "major" power in the dyad.

Table 5: The Major Powers, 1816-2016 [CoW, v. 2016]

stateabb	styear	stmonth	stday	endyear	endmonth	endday
USA	1898	8	13	2016	12	31
UKG	1816	1	1	2016	12	31
FRN	1816	1	1	1940	6	22
FRN	1945	8	15	2016	12	31
GMY	1816	1	1	1918	11	11
GMY	1925	1	1	1945	5	7
GMY	1991	12	11	2016	12	31
AUH	1816	1	1	1918	11	3
ITA	1860	1	1	1943	9	2
RUS	1816	1	1	1917	12	5
RUS	1922	1	1	2016	12	31
CHN	1950	1	1	2016	12	31
JPN	1895	4	1	1945	8	14
JPN	1991	12	11	2016	12	31

Table 6: Politically Relevant Dyads and MIDs (GML MID Data [v. 2.02])

MID Onset	Politically Irrelevant	Politically Relevant
0	99.94%	97.61%
1	0.06%	2.39%

Assessing Political Relevance

Political relevance better captures opportunity than regions. Yet:

- It's still missing several prominent cases (e.g. Israel, Iraq)
- Not all "majors" have the "reach" of the U.S. (see: Austria-Hungary, Germany, Japan).

Politically Relevant Information Environments (PRIEs)

Maoz (1996) offers a refinement of political relevance with PRIE. Namely:

- Disaggregating majors to regional/global.
 - e.g. USA was almost always a regional power before Spanish-American War.
- Qualifies “major” status for several “majors.”
 - e.g. Japan is a “major” power, but only in Asia.
 - Same for Austria-Hungary in Europe.
 - Russia is a global major only for Cold War, a regional major in Europe/Asia every other time.

Table 7: PRIEs and MIDs (Quackenbush, 2006)

MID Onset	PRIE = 0	PRIE = 1
0	99.92%	96.55%
1	0.07%	3.45%

PRIE does about the same as political relevance and it's still imperfect.

Political Activity

Quackenbush introduces “politically active dyads” as a refinement of these measures.
Codes activity if:

- Dyads are contiguous, directly or through colony.
- One of the dyad members is a global power.
- One of the dyad members is a regional power in the region of the other.
- One of the dyad members is allied to a global power. Or:
- One of the dyad members is allied to a regional power in region of the other.

Table 8: Politically Active Dyads and MIDs (Quackenbush, 2006)

MID Onset	Politically Inactive	Politically Active
0	99.96%	98.54%
1	0.03%	1.46%

Table 9: An Empirical Test of Necessary Conditions (Quackenbush, 2006)

Presence of..	Necessary for...	K/N = e(p)	P_{i}	P_{ii}
Political Relevance	MID	357/3002 = .12	.109	.00
PRIE	MID	425/3002 = .14	.131	.00
Regional Dyad	MID	248/3002 = .08	.074	.00
Political activity	MID	150/3002 = .05	.043	.00

Conclusion

Contiguity is the most important correlate of conflict.

- More for MIDs, less for war.
- Common (mis)perception: contiguity proxies opportunity/“reach”.
- Isolating opportunity may be best done through measuring political activity.
 - At the least, don't flood your sampling frame with irrelevant cases (e.g. Mongolia-Nigeria).

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