

Rivalry and International Conflict

POSC 3610 – International Conflict

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Goal for Today

Discuss why inter-state conflict is not IID (independent and identically distributed).

Pop Quiz!

What do you think are the most confrontation-prone dyads?

Table 1: Dyads with Most Unique Confrontations, 1816-2014

Country 1	Country 2	Num. Confs.	Num. Conf. Years	First Conf. Year	Last Conf. Year
Greece	Turkey	32	48	1829	2014
India	Pakistan	30	50	1947	2014
Syria	Israel	28	60	1948	2007
United States	Russia	25	29	1918	2014
North Korea	South Korea	22	54	1949	2014
Ecuador	Peru	22	25	1891	1998
Russia	China	21	27	1862	1986
China	Japan	21	37	1874	2014
Russia	Japan	20	31	1861	2014
Egypt	Israel	20	44	1948	2006

Note:

Data: Gibler and Miller (Forthcoming).

¹ Excludes dyadic conflict participations without direct hostilities.

Table 2: Dyads with the Most Confrontation-Years, 1816-2014

Country 1	Country 2	Num. Confs.	Num. Conf. Years	First Conf. Year	Last Conf. Year
Syria	Israel	28	60	1948	2007
North Korea	South Korea	22	54	1949	2014
India	Pakistan	30	50	1947	2014
Greece	Turkey	32	48	1829	2014
Egypt	Israel	20	44	1948	2006
China	Japan	21	37	1874	2014
Russia	Japan	20	31	1861	2014
United States	North Korea	15	30	1950	2003
United States	Russia	25	29	1918	2014
Jordan	Israel	11	28	1948	1991

Note:

Data: Gibler and Miller (Forthcoming).

¹ Excludes dyadic conflict participations without direct hostilities.

Table 3: Dyads with Greatest Proportion of Confrontation-Years, 1816-2014

Country 1	Country 2	Num. Confs.	Num. Conf. Years	Num. Dyad-Years	Prop. Conf.
Armenia	Azerbaijan	7	23	24	0.958
Syria	Israel	28	60	65	0.923
North Korea	South Korea	22	54	66	0.818
India	Pakistan	30	50	68	0.735
Russia	Georgia	4	16	24	0.667
Egypt	Israel	20	44	67	0.657
Vietnam	South Vietnam	3	14	22	0.636
Cambodia	South Vietnam	5	10	22	0.455
United States	North Korea	15	30	67	0.448
Thailand	Cambodia	15	26	62	0.419

Note:

Data: Gibler and Miller (Forthcoming).

¹ Excludes dyadic conflict participations without direct hostilities.

MIC of the Day: The Azeri-Armenian War of 1993–1994 (MIC#3564)



The Azeri-Armenian War of 1993–1994 (MIC#3564)

Synopsis:

- *Who*: Armenia (w/ Russia) vs. Azerbaijan (w/ Iran, Turkey)
- *Why*: Consolidation of Nagorno-Karabakh amid splintering of USSR
 - N-K was more Armenian than Azeri, but was administered by Azerbaijan
- *What (Happened)*: CIS-brokered ceasefire; Armenia victory
 - De facto autonomy for N-K (now: Artsakh), unification w/ Armenia
 - Armenian fatalities: 1,732 (min.) to 5,751 (max.)
 - Azeri fatalities: 2,600 (min.) to 4,670 (max.)

(Somewhat) Current Map of the Situation



What is Happening Here?

- A small group of dyads are disproportionately responsible for large conflicts/wars (Maoz and Mor, 2002).
- Seems that previous crises makes future crises more likely (Colaesi and Thompson, 2002).

Some Quick-Cut Stats

Per Gibler and Miller (Forthcoming):

- The top 10 most confrontation-prone dyads are responsible for >18% of all confrontations.
- The top 10 most confrontation-prone dyads are responsible for about 13% of all approx. fatalities.
- 50% of all confrontation dyads have more than one confrontation in their history.

What is a Rivalry?

We call this phenomenon a “rivalry.”

- States view each other as threats and compete against each other.
- This can obviously vary in size and scope (e.g. Cold War vis-a-vis Eritrea-Ethiopia).

Conflict, and esp. conflict recurrence, follows under these circumstances.

- Importantly: conflict is not “IID” (independent and identically distributed).

How Do We Identify Rivalries?

1. Dispute density
2. Diplomatic history

Dispute Density Approach

Most classic rivalry scholarship identified rivalries based on past disputes.

Wayman (2000)

Wayman (2000) used MIDs to identify rivalries on three criteria:

1. Severity: must have at least five reciprocated MIDs.
2. Durability: must be at least 25 years between first MID and the termination of the last one.
3. Continuity: cannot have a gap of more than 10 years between last disputes.

Diehl and Goertz (2000)

Diehl and Goertz (2000) take a different approach in their rivalry classification:

1. Enduring: at least six disputes over a period lasting at least 20 years.
2. Isolated: Two or fewer disputes (i.e. less intense)
3. Proto: More than two, fewer than six.

Klein, Goertz, and Diehl (2006) drop this classification and simply code rivalry for at least three MIDs between 1816-2001.

- Gaps of around 50 years constitute new rivalry onset.

Diplomatic History Approach

A better way to identify rivalries may entail examining diplomatic histories (Thompson and Dreyer, 2012).

- Do states communicate to each other as threats?
- Do their diplomatic offices discuss of others as threats?
- Are their military exercises conducted with a target in mind?

Differences Between the Approaches

There's a clear difference in approach:

- Dispute density: use previous disputes to identify rivals.
- Diplomatic history: read diplomatic documents and make subjective judgment calls.

This does lead to a lot of different identifications.

- Thompson and Dreyer (2012) note six different rivalry measures produce consensus in only 6.5% of cases.

Do We Prefer One Approach to the Other?

Yes generally, Thompson and Dreyer's diplomatic history approach.

- Dispute density approaches identify rivalries where they make no sense (e.g. Ecuador-U.S, Canada-U.S.)
- Diplomatic history requires judgment calls but lends to better face validity.

More importantly: dispute density approaches use past conflicts to predict future conflicts.

- Diplomatic history approaches identify rivalries independent of conflicts.

Classifying Rivalries

Spatial: contest control of territory, broadly defined

- (e.g. Armenia-Azerbaijan)

Positional: competition for relative shares of influence

- (e.g. Russia-U.S. [then and now])

Ideological: contest virtues of competing economic/political systems

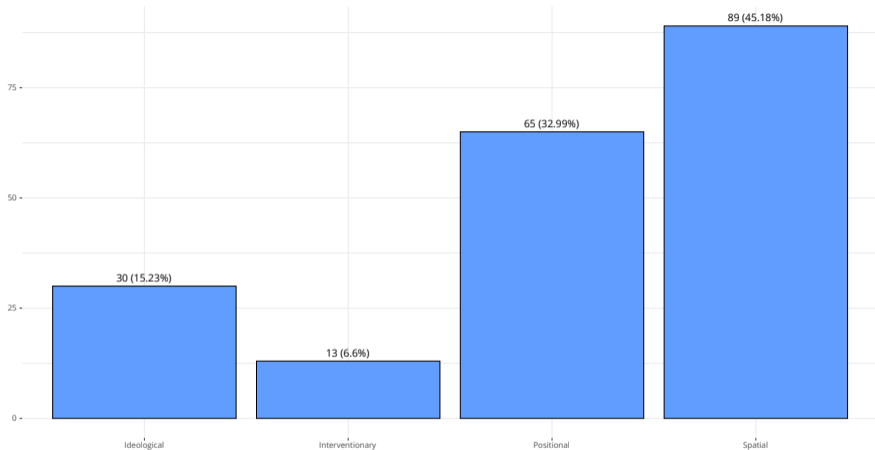
- (e.g. West/East Germany, South/North Yemen)
- Only one ideological rivalry *doesn't* have some other component to it (CRC-Nicaragua, 1948-1990).

Interventionary: states intervene to reduce threat/acquire leverage

- Note: This type is almost exclusively a SSA phenomenon (e.g. DRC-Rwanda).
- Some other rivalries have interventionary components though (e.g. Honduras-Nicaragua in the 1980s)

The Distribution of Strategic Rivalries by Primary Type, 1494-2010

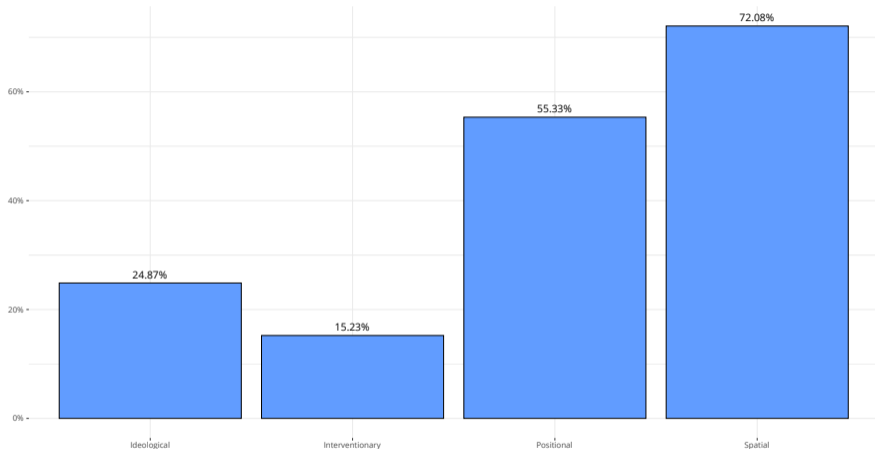
45% of 197 rivalries in the data are primarily spatial. Interventionary rivalries are the rarest, accounting for just over 6% of all rivalries.



Data: Thompson and Dreyer (2012)

The Distribution of Rivalry Types Observed by Any Type, 1494-2010

72% of all rivalries have at least some spatial component, and a majority have a positional component as well. Ideological and interventionary components are much rarer.



Data: Thompson and Dreyer (2012)

Table 4: American Strategic Rivalries, 1816-2010

Rivalry	Start Year	End Year	Type 1	Type 2
Britain-United States	1816	1904	positional	spatial
Spain-United States	1816	1819	spatial	positional
Mexico-United States	1821	1848	spatial	
France-United States	1830	1871	positional	spatial
Germany-United States	1889	1918	positional	
Japan-United States	1898	1945	positional	spatial
Germany-United States 2	1933	1945	positional	
Russia-United States 1	1945	1989	positional	ideological
China-United States 1	1949	1972	ideological	positional
Cuba-United States	1959	2010	ideological	positional
China-United States 2	1996	2010	positional	
Russia-United States 2	2007	2010	positional	

Note:

Data: Thompson and Dreyer (2012).

¹ End years of 2010 indicate ongoing rivalries.

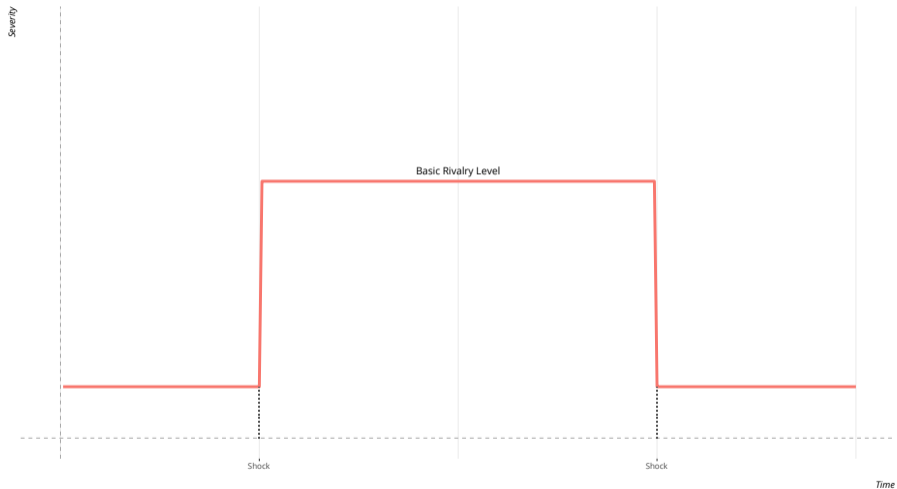
How Do Rivalries Form/End?

Rivalry scholars assume two models for rivalry formation.

1. Punctuated Equilibrium
2. Evolutionary

Punctuated Equilibrium Model of Rivalry

Exogenous "shocks" explain rivalry onset and termination, sandwiching baseline levels of hostility/severity.



“Shocks” and Rivalry Formation/Termination

“Shocks” that began rivalries:

- Cold War, generally (e.g. take your pick among the former Cominform states)
- The world wars (e.g. Russia-United States 1, Germany-Poland, Hungary-Serbia)
- Regime change (e.g. Iran-Iraq 2, Iran-Saudi Arabia)
- Territorial annexation (e.g. Japan-United States)

“Shocks” that ended rivalries:

- Cold War, generally (e.g. Russia-United States 1)
- The world wars (e.g. Germany-United States [1,2])
- Other wars (e.g. Mexico-United States, North Vietnam-South Vietnam)
- Regime change (e.g. SAF-Zambia; SAF-Zimbabwe)
- Territorial annexation (e.g. Spain-United States)

Evolutionary Model of Rivalries

Hensel (1999) argues rivalries follow a life cycle.

- i.e. early, intermediate, and advanced
- Disputes become more likely and more severe the further along in the life cycle.

Implication: rivalries are more likely to end the longer they last (see: Bennett 1998).

Rivalry Context, Conflict, and Termination

Category	No. of Confs.	Avg. Fatalities (in Confs.)	No. of Terminations at Stage
Early [0:2]	283	1,372.95	53
Intermediate [3:5]	278	7,294.38	40
Advanced [6:13]	276	2,738.06	24
Advanced [13:Inf]	227	6,637.26	12

Note:

Data: Gibler and Miller (Forthcoming); Thompson and Dreyer (2012)

¹ Treat with some caution. Results tentative. Statistics on terminations omit rivalries ongoing as of 2010.

^a Rivalry stage determined analogously to Hensel (1999), but also Diehl and Goertz (2012).

Conclusion

Why do disputes recur? Rivalry is one explanation.

- Disputes lead states to view each other as threats, which begets more disputes.
- There are several identification schemes, but diplomatic history approaches do best.
- Inter-state conflict is not IID.

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