A Random Item Response Model of External Territorial Threat, 1816-2010*

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Multiple scholars have shown that external territorial threat, conceptually the level of concern for a state that its territorial integrity is subject to violent conflict and imposed contraction by other states, has major implications for the state's domestic political environment. However, the strand of scholarship that agrees on the domestic political effects of external territorial threat disagrees on how to code this important concept. These works either rely on binary indicators that do a poor job communicating ''increasing" or ''decreasing" territorial threat, or use dyad-year indicators of conflict propensities as a stand-in for a state-year-level observation. I use this research note to offer an empirical measurement of state-year external territorial threat from a Bayesian random item response model for all states from 1816 to 2010. I assess the face validity and construct validity of the data these models generate, all of which suggest the measure does well to capture the concept in question. I close with a statement of the availability of the data and its potential applications.

Keywords: territorial threat, item response, mixed effects

INTRODUCTION

Disputed territory is central to international relations scholarship on conflict processes between states. Scholars inspired by the robust connection between threatened territory and interstate conflict extended this work into the analysis of domestic political processes, advancing arguments that territorial threat is just the most visible form of external threat in international politics. Thus, territorial threat is a quality indicator for more general arguments that seek to understand how salient, external threats effect all forms of domestic politics. Conceptually understanding "territorial threat" as a state-level phenomenon that the state's territorial integrity is prone to violent conflict and imposed contraction by other states, scholars have developed a battery of analyses showing how territorial threat influences all matters of society and governance. However, these analyses that agree on the effect of territorial threat on domestic politics disagree on how to measure the motivating concept. Each work takes one of several approaches toward operationalizing the concept, all with important limitations.

In this research note, I offer a new data set of state-year-level territorial threat for all states in the international system from 1816 to 2010. The estimates come from a Bayesian random item response model that leverages long-standing and familiar data sets on interstate conflict, territorial claims, territorial changes, and spatial rivalries over the allocation of territory. I assess the validity of my state-year estimates of territorial threat in two ways. First, I do an exploratory data analysis of the data, which suggests the measure has good face validity. Next, I do an assessment of the construct validity of the measure in the form of a replication of a recent analysis linking territorial threats to mass killing onsets (Hong and Kim 2019). The results suggest my measure of territorial threat is valid and also offers more insight about how exactly territorial threat interacts with exclusionary regime ideology to explain mass killing onsets. I close with a discussion of extensions of the data and potential uses for scholarship at the intersection of international relations and comparative politics.

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THE DIFFICULTY OF MEASURING TERRITORIAL THREAT

Territorial threat scholarship has produced multiple findings on a host of different topics. Generally, territorial threat leads to centralization of power in the executive (Gibler 2010) and a unique set of autocratic regimes (Kim 2019a). Individual-level preferences emerge under territorial threat that are sympathetic to autocratic power consolidation (e.g. Miller 2017). Territorial threat leads to increased militarization of a country (Gibler 2012) and a stronger focus on land-based armies that incentivize repression (Wright 2014), mass-killing of regime dissidents (Hong and Kim 2019), and disincentivize armed challenges to the central government's authority (Gibler and Miller 2014). The effect of external territorial threat on domestic political attitudes is wide-reaching. Territorial threat increases individual willingness to fight for the country (Kim 2019b), the ability of governments to mobilize citizens (Hutchison 2011), and even re-orients an individual's identity to the state (Gibler, Hutchison, and Miller 2012). There are greater downstream societal effects as well. Territorial threat increases political intolerance toward outgroups (Hutchison and Gibler 2007), creates miserable conditions at home (Miller 2013), and leads individuals to prioritize more "masculine" values over "feminine" values (Tir and Bailey 2018). The Tir and Bailey (2018) finding would explain why countries under territorial threat have fewer women in national legislatures (Kang and Kim 2020). Overall, this scholarship tends to agree that external, territorial threat creates conditions conducive to autocracy and a domestic political environment that is a far cry from an open, egalitarian, and liberal society.

This agreement on the importance of external territorial threat for domestic politics belies the considerable disagreement on how all these individual works code the motivating concept at the core of their hypotheses. One approach codes territorial threat as the presence of a spatial rivalry for a state in a given year (e.g. Hong and Kim 2019). Another approach codes territorial threat as either a latent (e.g. Miller 2017) or observed (e.g. Hutchison and Gibler 2007) phenomenon based on recent conflicts coded from the CoW-MID dataset. Yet another approach looks to the Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) dataset to code territorial threat by whether the state is a target of a territorial claim (e.g. Wright 2014). Adding to the confusion, some works will even include two or more of these indicators in a given estimation as multiple proxies of territorial threat (e.g. Kang and Kim 2020).

These approaches have important limitations. For one, binary indicators of spatial rivalries or territorial claims may not capture "increasing" or "decreasing" external territorial threat because binary indicators assume only values of 0 or 1. This bogs the measure in a debate whether the binary indicator is merely a special case of nominal measurement akin to "yes"/"no" or "success"/"failure" with no natural ordering. No matter, an information-poor binary indicator could separate a spatial rivalry like Eritrea-Ethiopia from a more peaceful dyadic pairing like Canada-Australia but it would not separate particularly severe spatial rivalries like India-Pakistan from a case like the Argentina-UK spatial rivalry. Further, binary indicators for territorial claims do a poor job distinguishing important territorial claims (e.g. Syria's claim for the return of Golan Heights from Israel) from long-dormant and almost anachronistic territorial claims that appear in the data (e.g. the U.S. claim for Machias Seal Island from Canada).

The use of the CoW-MID data may better coincide with the concept in question, but there are important problems with this approach as well. First, early work on the domestic politics of territorial threat used the `revtype` variables to search for territorial conflicts that would then be aggregated or modeled into a measure of territorial threat (e.g. Hutchison and Gibler 2007), but more recent research emphasizes that the `revtype` variables in the CoW-MID data are so poorly coded that they are almost unusable for this task (Gibler 2017). Efforts to manually code whether a dispute is territorial (and how many dispute are territorial) encounter related difficulties. These include a conflation of state-to-state confrontations with those that are protest-dependent and the heterogeneity of militarized actions within and across hostility level categories (Gibler and Little 2017). They also result in overdispersed counts that necessitate sensitivity analyses. Collapsing these counts into a

binary indicator will address the issue of influential observations (e.g. Kang and Kim 2020), but doing this invites the same interpretation issues as using a binary indicator for spatial rivalries or territorial claims.

These issues are not as pronounced in works using a "latent" measure of territorial threat derived from models of conflict onset (e.g. Miller 2017; Tir and Bailey 2018), but issues arise in this approach as well. First, all these works understand "external territorial threat" as a state-level phenomenon, but they use dyad-level predicted probabilities as a stand-in for this concept. The inputs into a standard conflict onset model lean on unreliable information from CoW-MID about revision type or include information unrelated to the concept. For example, Miller's (2017) latent territorial threat measure includes information about militarization, the level of democracy and economic development in the dyad and Tir and Bailey's (2018) measure includes information about the state's level of militarization, defense pacts, and whether there is a civil war in the state. The latent measures of territorial threat that emerged from this estimation approach were fine for their respective uses, but it would mean using their measures of territorial threat to explain changes in a country's militarization (for example) would be tautological in an important way.

Yet, all these approaches to measuring external territorial threat have some merit because all use various inputs that are in orbit of the concept. The next section proposes a method of including these indicators and more to develop a more sophisticated state-year measure of external territorial threat.

A RANDOM ITEM RESPONSE MODEL OF EXTERNAL TERRITORIAL THREAT

My approach to measuring state-year territorial threat starts with the universe of directed dyad-years from 1816 to 2010. The sources of data I use within this sampling frame are familiar to researchers who work in this strand of scholarship and work more generally on territorial conflict. My primary perspective to measuring state-year territorial threat leans on the territorial claim data from Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) (Frederick, Hensel, and Macaulay 2017) and the strategic rivalry data described by Thompson and Dreyer (2012), which are routinely the data sources that scholars use to approximate the concept of "territorial threat." Information from both data sets and more can be combined into a more informative measure of territorial threat.

For each directed dyad in a given year, I code whether the first state is targeted in a territorial claim, how many targeted territorial claims that state has in the year in the directed dyad, and the total salience of the claim for the target at the directed dyad-year level.[1] The target-challenger distinction in ICOW's territorial claims data here is useful for these purposes because not all disputed territory is disputed in both directions. For each directed dyad in a given year targeted in at least one active territorial claim, I incorporate the GML conflict data (Gibler and Miller Forthcoming; e.g. Gibler, Miller, and Little 2016) and estimate whether there is an ongoing conflict in a given year, whether the severity of the conflict in the year meets the threshold for war, an estimate of how many of the state's troops died in a given conflict that year, and include peace spells for both wars and conflicts at lower levels of severity.

I do the same for the strategic rivalry data from Thompson and Dreyer (2012). I code whether the directed dyad is part of a spatial (i.e. territorial) rivalry if the strategic rivalry that Thompson and Dreyer (2012) code is spatial in either the "type 1" or "type 2" field. Each directed dyad includes indicators for whether there is an ongoing conflict in the context of the spatial rivalry, whether there is an ongoing war, an estimate of troop fatalities in a given year in these conflicts, and peace spells for both wars and disputes at lower levels of severity.

Finally, I add two indicators from the territorial change data (Tir et al. 1998). The first is whether Side A in the directed dyad was subject to a violent transfer of territory to Side B in the year. The second is the number of violent transfers for Side A in the directed dyad.

[1] For claims ongoing by the end of 2001, I look carefully at each case and code whether the claim could be extended to the end of 2010 or whether there is an end date for the territorial claim between 2001 and 2010 (e.g. the Lete Island dispute between Benin and Niger, which ended in July 2005 via International Court of Justice ruling).

A Method for Estimating State-Level Territorial Threat

My approach to estimating territorial threat breaks ground from other approaches by considering the role that distance between states should have in altering a level of threat. Gibler (2012) conceptualizes territorial threat as a relationship between land-contiguous states, though territorial threat can span waters. Taiwan, for example, has a real territorial threat from China even though Taiwan is an island. Likewise, Cyprus' lawmakers could perceive a territorial threat from Turkey prior to Turkey's 1974 invasion and subsequent territorial occupation. Distance from a source of threat may dampen a territorial threat but does not eliminate it.

Toward that end, I weight all indicators by the distance between two states in an ordinal ten-category measure. The first half of the scale leans on the CoW contiguity data (c.f. Stinnett et al. 2002), which codes dyadic members as being land-contiguous, separated by 12 miles of water or fewer, separated by 24 miles of water or fewer, separated by 150 miles of water or fewer, or separated by 400 miles of water or fewer. However useful this contiguity value is, more can be done to expand it. For example, France and Morocco are formally not contiguous by this classification scheme, but the minimum distance between them is just 524 miles. Thus, I expand this scale after distance by 400 miles or fewer of water by calculating capital-to-capital distance while also considering cases where the capital moved. For states that CoW's contiguity data codes as not contiguous, I code whether the states' respective capitals are separated by 401 to 750 miles, 751 miles to 999 miles, 1,000 miles to 1,999 miles, 2,000 mile to 2,999 miles, or 3,000 miles or more. This rounds out the ordinal ten-category distance measure.[2] I additionally code whether State A in the dyad is an island in order to approximate the concept that islands buffered by oceans or seas of water do not have the same kind of territorial threat as states with land-contiguous borders (Gibler 2012). While they can still experience territorial threat (e.g. Cyprus, Taiwan), a sea or ocean buffer diminishes the scope of threat.

These distance and island indicators serve as a weighting procedure on the raw data. This has the effect of taking all raw inputs and expanding the number of potential responses for each input, effectively creating an interval-level estimate even for the variables that were originally on a binary scale. From there, I scale each indicator to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1 so that all indicators share a common scale. The peace year variables were multiplied by -1 prior to this scaling because, unlike the other model inputs, higher values indicate less territorial threat. The statistical modeling procedure is a Bayesian mixed effects random item response model (see: De Boeck 2008) in which the distance categories serve as weights on the likelihood function. Random item response models treat the model's items as random effects alongside the state-year effects because modeling the item as a random effect improves the accuracy and stability of the model's parameter estimation (Choo et al. 2014). The state-year estimate is communicated as the mean of the random intercept for the state-year across all simulations, which captures the concept of territorial threat as a state-level, latent phenomenon that a state's territory is prone to violent conflict and imposed contraction by other states given available and observable indicators.

ASSESSING THE VALIDITY OF THE MEASURE

I offer two validity assessments of this measure of territorial threat. The first is a face validity assessment that explores the model's output for particular actors and particular moments of time. The second validity assessment is through replication (and, in one case, clarification) of two findings about territorial threat's effect on domestic politics. Space considerations preclude more replications here, though these are available in the appendix.

[2] The appendix shows using using the minimum distance between dyads offers near identical results, though the minimum distance data extend back only to 1886 (and not 1816).

Assessing the Face Validity of the Territorial Threat Measures

An exploration of the model's output will suggest the measures of territorial threat are intuitive and capture the concept of state-level territorial threat. First, Figure 1 plots the mean level of territorial threat for all states in the international system from 1816 to 2010. A few patterns emerge that are intuitive. First, there is a climb in the average level of territorial threat around the 1860s. This would coincide with several wars across the international system over the distribution of territory, including the Paraguayan War, and the various wars of Italian and German unification. The average level of territorial threat in the international system spikes during World War I and is in fact higher than the average level of territorial threat during World War II. This reasonably suggests that while World War II was the deadlier war, the territorial implications of World War I in a then-smaller international system may have been larger. Finally, the graph suggests that the average level of territorial threat has been declining in the international system since World War II. It surpasses zero in the 1990s, suggesting a yearly average level of territorial threat below the global mean observed across all observations (in part including the periods with much greater threat before it). There are still prominent territorial problems in places like South Asia and the Middle East, but this post-World War II trend would be consistent with the Goertz, Diehl, and Balas (2016) argument that the grisly nature of World War II resulted in norms discouraging territorial conquest. Certainly, zones of territorial peace emerged, prominently in Western Europe, that can account for this trend.

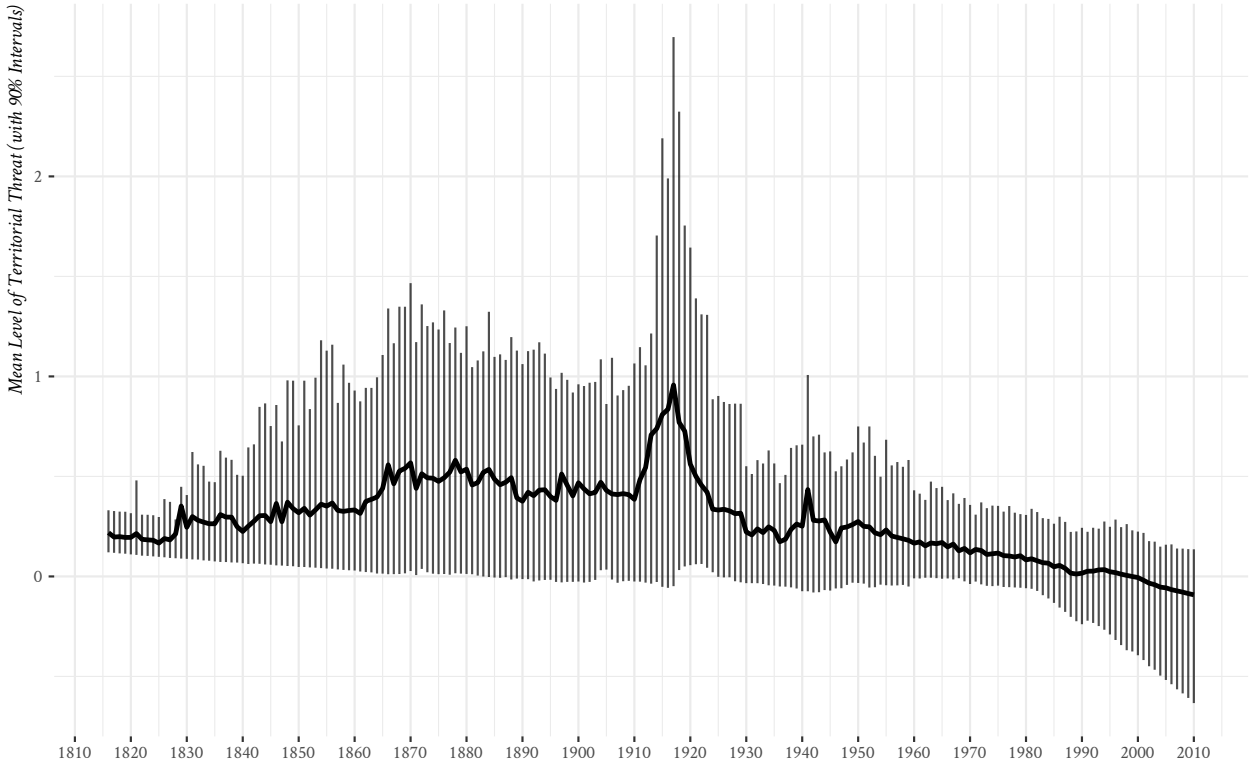

Figure 1: The Average Level of Territorial Threat, 1816-2010

Figure 2 is the estimated territorial threat over time for some select state pairings. The top-left plot in Figure 2 is the estimated territorial threat for India and Pakistan. The top-right plot is the estimated territorial threat for the triad of Egypt, Israel, and Syria. The bottom half of Figure 2 is the estimated territorial threat for 19th century European great powers of Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom from 1816

to 1920 and, below them, Russia and Turkey (Ottoman Empire) during the same time frame. The estimated territorial threat for all these observations has considerable face validity. Observe that India and Pakistan have similar (and high) levels of territorial threat over time, though India had higher levels of threat than Pakistan as a result of the Sino-Indian War in the early 1960s. The trend line for Israel in the top-right of Figure 2 is worth highlighting. The results from the random item response model have Israel at the highest levels of territorial threat in the few years after its creation for any state after World War II. This is intuitive. Israel was born from war, immediately surrounded by three hostile neighbors, and was even the target of four territorial claims by its neighbors before 1950. That Israel would score this high in a state-year measure of territorial threat is intuitive. It is also something that using a dyad-year measure as a stand-in for a state-level phenomenon might miss. Israel's territorial threat after its formation comes from the full scope of its rivalry relationships with its land-contiguous neighbors.

The bottom half of Figure 2 includes the historical territorial threat estimates for six important European/Eurasian countries. The first part includes a comparison of the scores for Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Observe that the United Kingdom has similar levels of territorial threat as Austria-Hungary, France, and Prussia/Germany through the first half of the 19th century. No state was targeted in more territorial claims in the data than the United Kingdom. Indeed, the United Kingdom was targeted in at least ten—and as many as 25—territorial claims every year from 1841 to 1967. By comparison, no other state in a given year was targeted in more than seven territorial claims.[3] However, the UK's distance from these states reduces the effect of these claims and the disputes that emerge from them. Changes in territorial threat for the three other countries shown alongside the UK are intuitive, coinciding with major confrontations in the context of spatial rivalries and claimed territory. These include the unification conflicts in the 1860s and 1870s and World War I.

The bottom of Figure 2 is a comparison of Russia and the Ottoman Empire/Turkey during the same time frame as the 19th century European great powers. Notably, the trend line for the Ottoman Empire visualizes how scholars understand the Ottoman Empire as the "sick man of Europe" during this period. The Ottoman Empire's territorial threat substantially increases as a result of Greek independence and increases further because of successive territorial contractions in the Balkans and the Caucuses. Russia is largely if not exclusively responsible for the Ottoman Empire's territorial contractions during the 19th century. The losses Russia imposed on the Ottoman Empire do not manifest in the same kind of increases of territorial threat for Russia as we observe for the Ottoman Empire. However modest Russia's territorial threat vis-a-vis Turkey during the 19th century, the violent end of the Russian Empire resulted in a massive territorial contraction that results in comparable levels of territorial threat observed for the Ottoman Empire around the same time.

Assessing the Construct Validity Through a Replication of Hong and Kim (2019)

The previous section suggests the estimates of territorial threat gathered from the random item response model have high face validity. Next, I assess the validity of the measure through a replication of Hong and Kim's (2019) analysis of the effect of territorial threat on violent repression.

Hong and Kim's (2019) analysis is challenging in both substance and measurement. Substantively, the territorial threat scholarship has yet to reach a consensus on the exact relationship between territorial threat and repression, more generally (Gibler and Miller 2021). Amid this, Hong and Kim (2019) argue external territorial threats increase mass killing episodes, a particularly severe form of repression, during episodes of state failure and when government elites hold exclusionary ideologies that justify efforts to exclude whole categories of people and belief systems. The main evidence in favor of the hypothesis comes in a statistically significant

[3] China was targeted in seven unique territorial claims from 1943 to 1945.

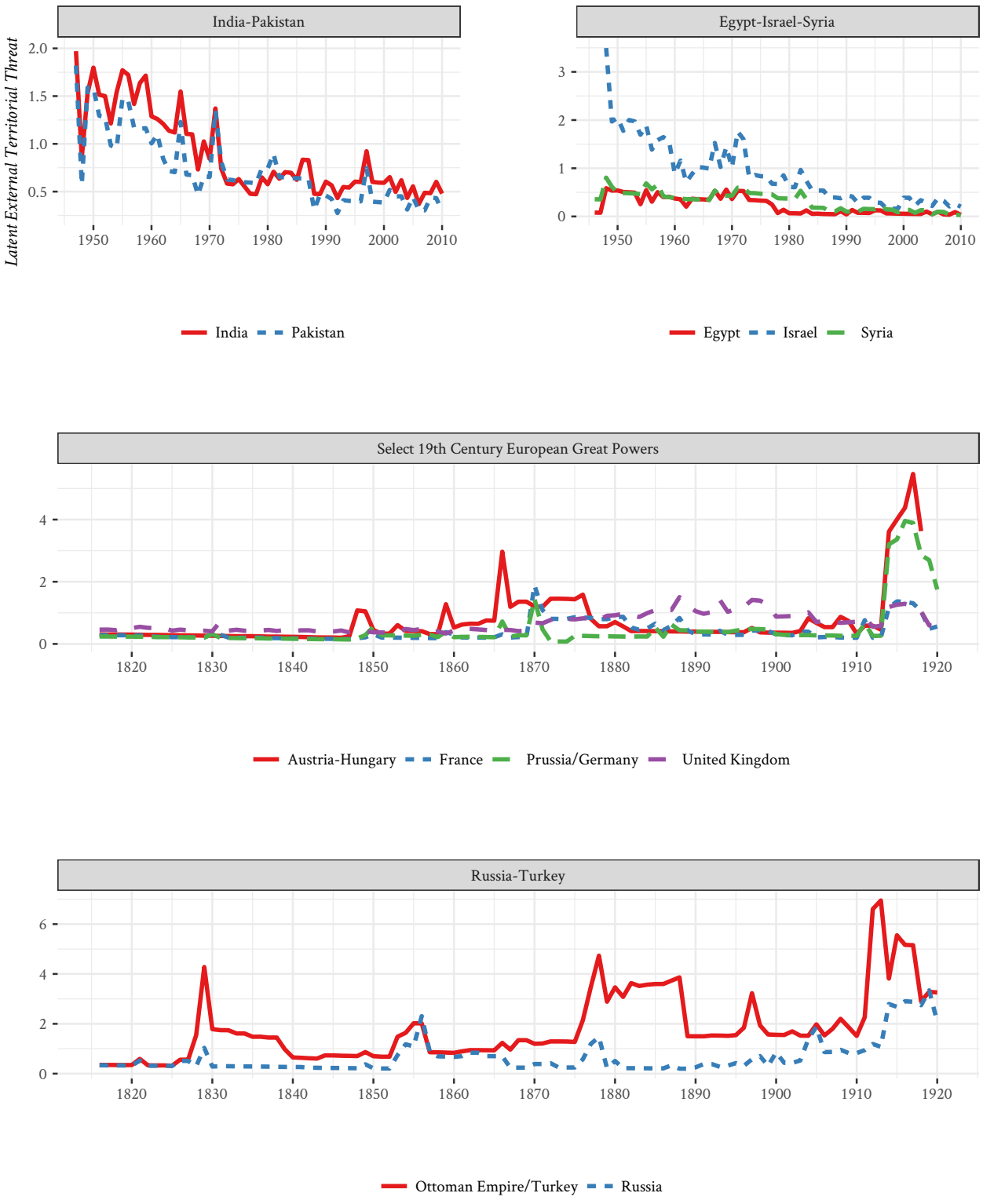

Figure 2: Estimated Territorial Threat Over Time for Select State Pairings

interaction between a measure of exclusionary ideology and a binary measure of territorial threat (namely the presence of territorial [i.e. spatial] rivalries). This offers a unique opportunity to evaluate my measure of territorial threat on two fronts. First, the rivalry data serve as an information-poor metric of territorial threat since binary indicators do not necessarily capture "increasing" or "decreasing" the same way they capture "there"/"not there." Second, the main effect in Hong and Kim (2019) is an interaction. My measure of latent territorial threat offers new opportunities to understand the effect of territorial threat on violent repression across a continuum of threat and as it interacts with other phenomena.

I offer a replication of the main finding, best seen in their Model 3 of Table 1, as Table 1. The first model offers a near identical reproduction Hong and Kim (2019) as they represent it. Model 2 substitutes the latent territorial threat measure for the territorial (spatial) rivalry measure in Hong and Kim (2019) and re-estimates the statistical model.[4] A few interesting things are happening here. Importantly, for the author's argument, there is still a statistically significant interaction between territorial threat and exclusionary ideology on violent repression. However, the coefficients for the constituent terms are much more precise in Model 2 than they are in Model 1. The effect of increasing territorial threat (in states without exclusionary ideologies) is negative and statistically significant in Model 2 ($p = 0.033$) whereas the effect in Model 1 is just outside a more generous threshold for statistical significance ($p = 0.133$). Likewise, the effect of exclusionary ideology (where the appropriate territorial threat variable is zero) is more precise as well. The effect of exclusionary ideology in states without territorial rivalries is effectively zero in Model 1 ($p = 0.906$). By comparison, the effect of exclusionary ideology in states with the average level of territorial threat in Model 2 is positive and significant at the .10 level ($p = 0.081$). This would be consistent with the authors' treatment of the importance of exclusionary ideology to understanding violent repression episodes.

Figure 3 leverages the increased information from the territorial threat measure to show how exactly territorial threat interacts with exclusionary ideology to increase the likelihood of mass killing onsets during episodes of state failure. Here, I run 1,000 simulations of the model's output through a multivariate normal distribution in what amounts to an informal Bayesian approach to generating quantities of interest (c.f. Gelman and Hill 2007). Each simulation produces the probability of a mass killing onset in the model across the range of the territorial threat measure, altering whether the regime was exclusionary or not exclusionary for what would otherwise be a typical case in the data. An important caveat emerges that would not otherwise be evident in Hong and Kim's (2019) analysis. In the absence of a better measure like I provide here, Hong and Kim (2019) rely on information-poor binary stand-ins for territorial threat (here: spatial rivalries). However, spatial rivalries include both hot (e.g. India-Pakistan) and cold (e.g. Bolivia-Chile) rivalries and their model cannot elaborate what severity level of territorial threat is required to raise the probability of a mass killing episode. Consider that the mean level of territorial threat from my measure for states Hong and Kim (2019) code as having territorial rivalries is 0.258.[5] This would incidentally coincide with about the level of territorial threat that Cambodia has in their data (given my model) when the mass killing of Khmer Rouge dissidents started in 1975. The authors mention the important connection to the threat from Vietnam that Khmer Rouge officials made in instigating these killings (Hong and Kim 2019, 534), but my data and model suggest there is a discernible difference between exclusionary regimes and non-exclusionary regimes only at much higher levels of territorial threat. Considering the (mercifully) rare nature of this grisly kind of event, the Cultural Revolution in China might actually be a more informative case for understanding how territorial threat interacts with exclusionary regimes to explain onsets of mass killing. Here, the mass killings in China began in 1966 amid a backdrop of the emerging Sino-Soviet split (and onset of a China-Soviet Union spatial rivalry), a recent invasion from India

[4] The territorial threat variable is mean-centered in Model 2, which is generally good practice for modeling continuous components of interactions even as the territorial threat measure does have a naturally occurring zero (c.f. Gelman and Hill 2007).

[5] The appendix contains how this is calculated along with other assessments of how the territorial threat measure is not simply synonymous with other inputs in their data.

Table 1: Territorial Threat, Exclusionary Ideology, and Mass Killing Onsets (1956-2010)

	Replication of Hong and Kim (2019) Table 1, Model 3	Territorial Threat Measure
	Model 1	**Model 2**
Exclusionary Ideology	−0.075	0.833+
	(0.638)	(0.477)
Territorial Threat Variable	−0.824	−1.191*
	(0.549)	(0.559)
Post-Cold War	−1.607*	−1.564*
	(0.508)	(0.521)
Civil War	−0.404	−0.470
	(0.536)	(0.526)
Interstate War	0.924	0.974
	(1.138)	(1.150)
GDP per Capita	−0.202	−0.315
	(0.277)	(0.291)
Liberal Democracy Index	−2.461	−2.174
	(1.836)	(1.940)
Ethnic Fractionalization	0.142	−0.025
	(0.718)	(0.711)
Territorial Threat*Exclusionary Ideology	1.976*	2.048*
	(0.834)	(0.840)
Constant	−1.315	−0.823
	(1.983)	(2.068)
Num.Obs.	991	991

Cubic polynomial of years since last state failure omitted to save space.
+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$

in 1961 (Great Northern Push), and a still tense relationship with Taiwan that resulted in a series of crises in the mid-1950s. The simulations suggest only particularly severe conditions like that, and not a more general rivalry relationship, are likely to coincide with differences between exclusionary regimes and non-exclusionary regimes in their proclivity to instigate a mass killing episode. This is useful information for scholars interested in understanding and preventing mass killing onsets. It would also not be evident from an analysis that uses a binary stand-in for territorial threat that lumps together both hot and cold rivalries over territory.

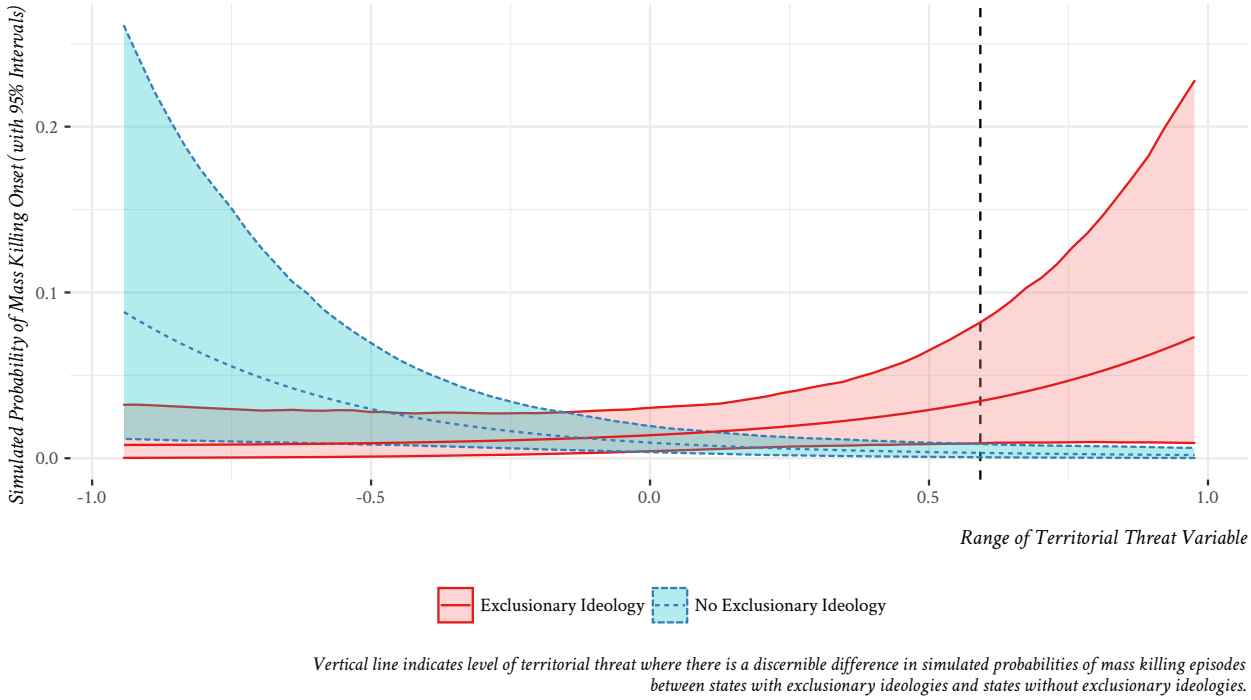

Figure 3: Simulated Probability of Mass Killing Onset by Range of Territorial Threat

CONCLUSION

Researchers in the territorial conflict literature have long-agreed on the basic importance of territorial threat and almost unanimously agree on the scope of its effects on domestic politics. However, researchers encounter an uncomfortable situation where they almost unanimously concur on a concept's importance but disagree on how to best operationalize the important concept in question. I change this by providing a continuous measure of territorial threat for all states in the international system from 1816 to 2010. I also offer an expansive analysis of the data, including some exploratory data analysis and several empirical replications.[6] The central takeaway is the measure I provide is both valid and illustrates important heterogeneity in the concept of "territorial threat" that is not evident in information-poor indicators like spatial rivalries or counts of militarized interstate disputes.

The potential uses for these data are multiple. The data are ideally best used for analyses looking at the effect of territorial threat on state-level outcomes, like militarization, democratic backsliding, or individual-level outcomes in which state-level territorial threat is an important contextual influence (e.g. political intolerance,

[6] Space considerations force these other empirical replications to the appendix.

support for autocratic governments). There is already considerable work on this front, but the measure I provide offers several important extensions. For one, the temporal domain is much greater than what is typically available in other latent, or more granular approaches to modeling territorial threat. These either look at recent MID counts in a narrow time frame prior to a given observation year (e.g. Hutchison and Gibler 2007; Miller 2013) or lean on estimating territorial threat, only after World War II, and with information unrelated to the concept (e.g. Miller 2017; Tir and Bailey 2018). The temporal domain I offer here includes all state-years from 1816 to 2010, allowing for more general analyses of territorial threat's effects. Additionally, the measure is a major improvement because it is continuous whereas other standard approaches are often discrete or binary indicators of territorial claims and spatial rivalries. Scholars can use these data to show not only the effects of territorial threat, but the effects of particularly severe cases of territorial threat. This distinction has important implications as the replication of Hong and Kim (2019) shows.

There is also great potential of this measure for scholars more interested in the effect of "external threat," more generally understood, on domestic political processes. Scholars steeped in the territorial threat research program understand well that the focus on territorial threat is not just about territory. Instead, territorial threat scholarship has long contended that this type of external threat just happens to be the most obvious and important form of external threat from the international relations literature. The measure may be focused on disputed territory, but the arguments advanced by the likes of Hutchison and Gibler (2007) and Miller (2017) have always been more general. Gibler (2010) and Tir (2010) make this point explicit in their analyses and emphasize the difficulty for more general arguments linking external threat to domestic political processes has been identifying important forms of threat, ex ante. Scholars developing arguments that connect external threat to domestic political processes should find this data useful for evaluating their arguments. The measure offers more opportunity for scholars working at the intersection of international relations and comparative politics; both have much to learn from each other.

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