

## **ITT FAQ**

### **What is the ITT dataset?**

The ITT Data Collection Project measures allegations of state's violations of the Convention Against Torture (CAT) published by Amnesty International (AI) during the years 1995-2005. The data come in two basic units of observations: the Country-Year (CY) and the Specific Allegation (SA).

### **What is the unit of analysis in the ITT data? What is the difference between the CY and SA data?**

The unit of observation in the ITT data is an allegation about torture committed against a (group of) detainee(s). The ITT Project codes two basic units of observation: the Country-Year and the Specific Allegation. Country-year allegations are allegations about the general use of torture across a given country throughout a given year by a given government agency. Specific allegations refer to torture occurring within a limited time (i.e. less than a year) or space (e.g. a region, a specific prison).

### **What is the spatial-temporal domain of the ITT data?**

The ITT project codes torture allegations for all sovereign countries with a population of at least one million for the years 1995-2005.

### **What is a torture allegation?**

ITT codes allegations of state torture, which occur when the perpetrator is an agent of the state, the victim is a person under the state's control, and the alleged abuse meets the definition of torture in the UN Convention Against Torture (CAT). A torture allegation is a unique experience occurring to each detained (group of) person(s) perpetrated by the state. A unique experience refers to the torture experience: the type of torture, the government agency responsible, the government response to the allegation, and so on. A state agent is someone in the state's employ or is directed by a person in the state's employ to act on behalf of the state. A victim is considered to be detained in state control when the state takes custody of the person or when the state targets an individual or group and deprives them of their liberty for a period of time.

### **Where does the information used to create the ITT dataset come from?**

The text source for the ITT dataset is Amnesty International (AI) Annual Reports, press releases, and Action Alerts. Coders performed content analysis on these sources for all variables.

### **Are the ITT data biased since they only code AI reports?**

The ITT data are not a representative sample of the population of levels of torture used by states. Instead, they are the population of AI allegations about states' level of torture. The ITT data are based on the explicit assumption that the actual level of torture is unobservable and thus focuses on what can be measured reliably and validly: AI's allegations of state torture and ill-treatment. The ITT data are therefore an undercount of any state's violations of the CAT. Violations of the CAT are generally hidden from public view. Also, AI is a strategic organization that must balance two goals often in tension with one another (1) accurate reporting so as to maintain their hard won credibility, and (2) the need to raise donations of cash and volunteer labor. Given these incentives, AI is unlikely to report allegations with equal probability across all countries.

Previous torture data collection efforts are often used as measures of a state's behavior or a record of a

state's violations of the CAT. In order to address the potential bias, these projects often rely on more than one source (e.g., US State Department *and* AI reports). Using multiple sources likely produces a more representative measure of the population of state torture. However, because the level of torture in any given state is a latent, unobservable variable, the ITT project collects data on AI's allegations and is best suited for those wishing to study the naming and shaming behavior of AI. We recommend that users who wish to model these allegation counts to study the performance of states (rather than to study NGO naming and shaming processes), recognize that the ITT data are counts of AI's naming and shaming behavior, but that they should be systematically related to state's abuse by some process that can be modeled. However, the ITT data alone are NOT a representative sample of the count of states' violations. For further discussion of the use of AI documents and suggestions for modeling, please see the CY User's Guide (pg. 7), SA User's Guide (pgs. 5-6), the Country-Year Data Introduction Paper, or the Specific Allegation Introduction Paper.

### **How do the ITT data differ from other commonly used measures of torture (i.e. CIRI or Hathaway)?**

The ITT data are conceptually distinct from the Hathaway (2002) and CIRI (2010) torture data. First, Hathaway and CIRI code the level of torture as reported by the US Department of State and AI, while ITT codes allegations of torture made by AI. Second, there is no discussion about whether the Hathaway or CIRI data represent actual levels of abuse or something more akin to allegations of abuse. In contrast, ITT assumes that the actual level of torture is unobservable and instead codes allegations of state torture and ill-treatment. As such, the ITT data are not substitutes for the Hathaway or CIRI data that should be used for robustness checks, but instead are conceptually and operationally distinct data. Third, while the ITT CY data have the same structure as Hathaway and CIRI, the ITT data record the highest Level of Torture for that country in that year. Unlike Hathaway and CIRI, ITT codes AI's allegations, and does so for the CY data only when it is an allegation of generalized abuse that is observed throughout the country. If allegations are limited to a specific agency or a specific region of the country, the ITT CY data do not record the allegation, a distinction that is not made by Hathaway or CIRI. Finally, the ITT SA data codes the torture allegation or event as the unit of observation, rather than the country-year, which is coded as the unit of observation in the Hathaway and CIRI torture data.

### **What is the difference between the User's Guide and the Coding Manual?**

The [ITT User's Guide \(UG\)](#) is a document designed to assist those wishing to use and analyze these data in their own research. As such, the ITT UG briefly describes key variables of interest to the researcher, identifies the datasets available for use, and provides suggestions for merging ITT data with other datasets. [The ITT Coding Manual](#) is a much more extensive document describing the coding rules followed by coders to assign values to the variables in the ITT dataset. As such, this document provides extensive descriptions of definitions, source documents used to perform content analysis, and the variables in the dataset to aid coders in making coding decisions. The ITT UG is best suited for those using the ITT data in their research, while the ITT Coding Manual should be used by those interested in the replication of the ITT data.

### **How do I cite the ITT data?**

Please feel free to use the citation style of your choice, given the following information:

Dataset Name: Ill-Treatment and Torture (ITT) Dataset  
Principal Investigators: Courtenay R. Conrad and Will H. Moore  
Current Version Copyright: 2012  
Dataset Version: 2012.7.13

URL: [http://www.politicalscience.uncc.edu/cconra16/UNCC/ITT\\_Data\\_Collection.html](http://www.politicalscience.uncc.edu/cconra16/UNCC/ITT_Data_Collection.html)

### **What is ITT's missing data code?**

The ITT data assigns a value of -999 to the CY level of torture (LoT) variables when a foreign state occupies the country and a value of -777 when the central government has collapsed.

### **Are there codes in the dataset other than variable values or the missing data code that users should be aware of?**

AI sometimes makes an allegation about the level of torture (LoT), but does not identify a level of violation (i.e., the level of torture). The ITT data codes an additional value of -99 when there is an allegation of torture, but AI does not distinguish the LoT.

The ITT SA data record a value on the Magnitude variable of -9 when AI alleges that torture has occurred, but does not indicate whether tens, hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, or millions of people were victimized in any given allegation.

The ITT CY data record the LoT as reported by AI, however, AI also sometimes makes reference to the change in the level of violation without referencing the status quo prior to the change. For example, AI might allege that the situation in a country's Immigration and Detention Centers "improved" or "worsened." When in the year prior AI had made an allegation, ITT assigns a LoT value by adjusting the value from the previous year. Unfortunately, the preceding year did not always have a value: in many cases the value was missing (either because AI had not made an allegation in that year or because the year with one of these values was 1995, the first year in the ITT dataset). In these cases, the following values are assigned:

-6 = "Continued" / "Persisted" / "Further" / "Sustained" / "Remained" / "Still"

-7 = "Improved"

-8 = "Increased" / "Worsening"

Please see the CY User's Guide (pg. 11) for more information and suggestions related to negative values on the LoT variable.

### **What are the certainty variables in the SA data?**

When coding the ITT SA data, coders were instructed to assign a "certainty" value to several variables for which they were required to use their judgment to assign a value. Three levels of certainty are used: A (the information was written in the report), B (the coder was fairly certain of this information based on the context), and C (the coder was less certain about the information based on the context). The ITT data provide this information to researchers interested in adjusting their estimation procedures to account for the certainty of coders.

### **How do I download ITT data?**

To download the ITT data, please go to the *Data* tab on the top of any ITT page and find the dataset you are interested in using. Click on the relevant dataset and a zip file containing the data in CSV (comma separated value) or Stata format is available for download.

### **What datasets are available for download?**

There is a single specific allegation dataset available for download, recording AI's allegations of torture events from 1995-2005.

There are four country-year datasets available for download. More information on these datasets is available in the CY User Guide.

Country-year (CY) dataset: includes the highest level of violation reported by AI in that country for that year

Country-year Agency of Control (CYAoC) dataset: records the highest level of violation reported by AI for a given Agency of Control (AoC) in that country for a given year

Country-year Victim Type (CYVT) dataset: records the highest level of violation reported by AI against a given type of victim

Country-year Agency of Control Victim Type (CYAoCVT): reports the highest level of violation reported by AI for the intersection of each AoC and VT

### **How do I report that I've used the ITT data in an upcoming publication?**

We are happy to list your publications using the ITT data on our [ITT Publications and Press](#) page. To report a publication, please contact Courtenay Conrad at [courtenayconrad@uncc.edu](mailto:courtenayconrad@uncc.edu).

### **Who do I contact if I believe I've found an error in the ITT data?**

If you think you've found an error in the ITT data, we would be glad to hear from you as we would like our data to be as accurate as possible. Please contact Courtenay Conrad at [courtenayconrad@uncc.edu](mailto:courtenayconrad@uncc.edu).

### **Who do I contact in case of technical difficulty with the ITT website?**

If you are having a technical difficulty with the website, please contact Courtenay Conrad at [courtenayconrad@uncc.edu](mailto:courtenayconrad@uncc.edu).