

SIPRI Military Expenditure Data: A Primer for Researchers

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Abstract:

SIPRI are one of the leading providers of military expenditure data worldwide, which is used extensively for econometric analysis. In conducting such analysis, it is important for the researcher to be aware of the nature and limitations of this data. The coverage, reliability and consistency of SIPRI milex data has improved considerably in recent years, but there are still numerous pitfalls involved in interpreting and using this data. This paper looks at some of the methodological issues involved in producing and using SIPRI milex data, including a discussion of the sources and definition used by SIPRI, and problems of reliability, historical consistency and international comparability. A planned project to reconstruct historical milex data series back to 1950 for most countries is also discussed.