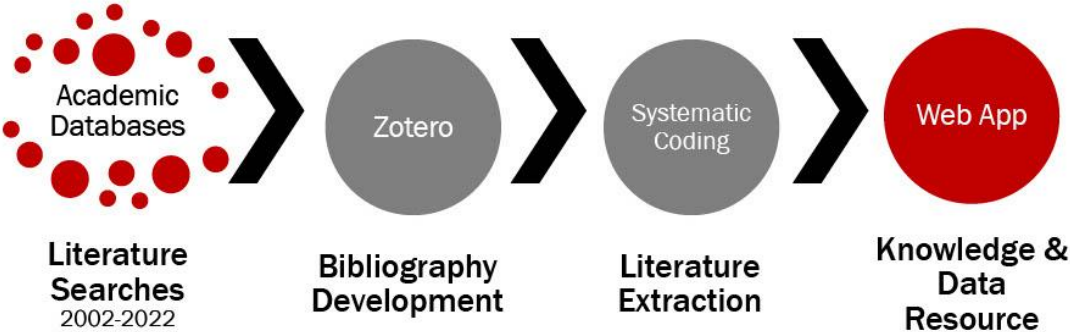# COIN Data Resource Methodology

The IWCAG developed a three-stage process to create a database to analyze the existing state of research on government responses to asymmetric threats focusing on counterinsurgency (COIN). The process consists of identifying relevant literature, developing a bibliography, and extracting data from each piece of literature through a rigorous manual coding process.

Literature Search & Inclusion

In order to maximize the relevancy of our findings to the contemporary global context, the COIN database consists of literature published between 2002 and 2022. We used domain-relevant search strings to conduct targeted queries of academic search engines (e.g., Google Scholar) and online databases (e.g., JSTOR, Academic Search Ultimate). The COIN database is limited to English language texts, including peer-reviewed journal articles, trade magazine articles, book chapters, and reports. We strive to ensure a wide coverage of literature that captures empirical studies as well as pieces evaluating policy conundrums and recommendations.

The team focused on literature that specifically theorized or analyzed cases or phenomena relevant to government responses to asymmetric threats within a COIN context. To improve the reliability of our search and ensure the inclusion of literature that was relevant to COIN but not captured by the string search, we also conducted manual checks of the top political science journals. The process yielded 407 unique pieces of literature for data extraction and analysis.

Bibliography Development

The relevant literature sources were transferred to a collaborative Zotero library, an open-source reference management software, to create a bibliography. Every Zotero entry contains metadata about each publication, such as the author, year of publication, type of publication, among other features.

Literature Extraction

Each piece of literature was coded across several pertinent dimensions. Where relevant, the team recorded the hypotheses, research questions, the dependent, independent, and control variables used to test the hypotheses (for empirical studies) or suggested for the testing of the hypothesis (for theoretical studies). For non-empirical pieces, we inferred variables based on the articles' key concepts and foci. For quantitative studies, the team recorded any datasets utilized in the study (coming soon to the portal). When a publication was policy-focused, the team recorded the problem statement(s) of the piece, as well as the policy recommendations for each problem statement. For all publications, indicators were included to capture the temporal and geographic scope of each piece. The team also coded the characteristics of irregular warfare (IW) being analyzed, including the type of actor conducting the IW; the IW pillar(s) of focus; and the populations being targeted. The national lever of power employed in the response was also recorded, using an expanded DIMEFIL schema. These levers include **D**iplomatic, **In**formation, **M**ilitary, **E**conomic, **F**inancial, **I**ntelligence, **L**aw enforcement, **D**evelopment, and **G**overnance.

For more details on our coding, please check out our Codebook.

Note about Data Consistency

Even though efforts have been made to assure consistency across all extracted literature, users should keep in mind that the collection was done by a team of individuals with different backgrounds including sociology, criminology, political science, and others. Thus, users should note that differences in writing styles, in the granularity of the information captured, and other differences are normal and do not affect the quality of the product being presented.

Citing the GRAT Web Portal

National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), University of Maryland. (2023). Global Responses to Asymmetric Threats [data file]. https://start.umd.edu/grat